

H90-06-199

Margaret L. Evon
ANS 401 Tape Summary
Oscar Nictune
April 14, 1988

How does one build an emergency shelter when stranded out in the wilds? Oscar told us how one can build an emergency shelter. If you are near spruce trees, make a shelter under the tree by cutting down the branches and leaning them against the tree. Both the entrance and the fire should be away from the wind. The flooring should be cleared of snow and should be either spruce or willow.

If you are in an area where there are no trees, a cave could serve as an emergency shelter. But Oscar said that you have to be careful of the rain for it causes erosion.

Another type of shelter that Oscar talked about was a snow cave. This type of emergency shelter can smother you, so you should always carry a pole to make air holes. You can also use the pole to keep on checking the air holes. Oscar said that he has not utilized a snow cave as an emergency shelter, but knows that it can serve as one as the need arises.

When a boy catches their first big game, a potlatch is provided by his parents. Oscar went on his first sheep hunting trip in 1912 and brought back a sheep. The sheep was brought back to the community hall where it was cut in half. The skins were not kept by him, but were give away.

Oscar told how one could dry sheep skin. Lay the skin on the ground and then hang it on a willow where it could be dried by the wind and sun. To tan sheep skins, scrape off the dead membranes carefully so as not to rip the skin. Salmon eggs are rubbed on the surface and remain overnight. The next step is scraping the fish eggs off the surface of the skin. To measure the skin, fingers were used.

Oscar told us a story of an animal who was a beaver in the bottom half of his body and the remaining half of his body was that of a marmot. In that story, there were three hunters who saw this animal and were killed. No one returned to this place after this incident until one day, a man flew in with an airplane. He starved there when something was wrong with his airplane.

One of the people in class asked a question of when the snowmachines were first introduced in Alatna. Oscar said that they were first introduced in 1955 or 1956. He only knows that it was at the time when he got out of the hospital after being treated for tuberculosis.

Oscar told of Lt. Allen, who was the first white man who went up the Koyukuk River, doing a land survey of that area. Lt. Allen did this land survey in 1898...