

Knowledge of Nature Elders with Johnson Moses

Class Summary

April 25, 1989

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Today was the last day that Johnson Moses talked to us about his life experiences. ~~I'm sure that everyone in the class learned something from him during his stay, I know I did.~~

The first question asked was, "How far up the ~~Koyukuk~~ main branch of the Koyukuk could the barges go?" The barges could go all the way up to Wiseman but they had to be pulled along with horses. The Yutane Barge lines ~~was~~ made trips with supplies to Allakaket until about 1967. The reason why the barge lines quit running was that one barge got into shallow water on a gravel bar below Allakaket and had to unload ~~the~~ the supplies on the gravel bar. The residents of Allakaket, who had supplies on the barge, tried to get them, ~~unsuccessfully~~ The barge had already unloaded and started downstream. Within 3 days the water level rose and washed all the freight down the river. Today the freight is shipped by air. The Demientieffs are trying to restart the barge lines this summer.

HP Pets were the next subject he talked about. They used to raise hawks or Falcons along with their children. He said that this was for the children's luck. The birds were raised for about a month and then set free when they were able to fly. The birds became accustomed to human contact and would stay around the fish camp. When Johnson's family travelled or picked berries, the birds would fly along the trees with them.

HP There was another bird they raised which is the size of a Grey Jay, "camp robber." Even though the bird is quite small, it can still kill a rabbit.

Cont.

~~The bird is a fact story~~

The reason why the birds were raised was for the children to become good hunters.

Johnson's mother told him to never kill the birds because they are his brothers.

¶ There were 3 ^{hawk} nests in the area of Alkekakut but they were destroyed. One of them, Johnson guesses, was cut down by surveyors the summer before Johnson started working with ^{the} Fish + Wildlife Service. The Fish + Wildlife Service has been watching the areas where there had been nests in the previous years a lot more closely.

¶ Foxes were raised for fur-bearing only and not for pets. Dogs were also ~~not~~ not used for pets but for working.

¶ Johnson's Grandfather told a story about a person who raised two wolves. They were hard working animals but they were dangerous. The person tied them up to a post with a piece of wood tied to the post and the wolf, so that the wolf would not get to the post. When the wolves were two years old, the person brought the wolves to a potlatch. They were caged in a wooden ~~box~~ box tied together on the outside. They became uncontrollable after two years, so the person brought them out into the wilderness and let them go. Johnson's father had dogs that were half wolf, but they could never really work because they were still wild. They had to be bred again. to 1/2 wolf. ~~The dogs were always moody around their posts.~~ Johnson remembers that he had dogs that were from the family. The dogs would never keep still, they were always moody around

their posts. Their chains had to be watched
carefully ~~to keep the dogs from getting loose~~ ~~B~~
→ to be changed when worn out so that they
don't get loose.

Cont,

11 There were family dogs that kept watch over children. Whenever the children were going off the campgrounds the dogs would go after them.

Dogs were used to pack muskats or other things while travelling during the summer. Packs were made with caribou skins, dried, hair removed but not tanned.

11 Domestic animals were brought by the white people in 1898. Johnson's father would not eat bacon. He told of a story while he was working on a barge, they would throw anything to the pigs and they would eat them. He did not eat bacon ~~either~~ ^{again.}

11 When the water is high in the mountains and the rapids are fast, they would not travel on them. Only when the water level was right would they go down stream.

Red Rocks were used for ~~point~~ ^{ing snowshoes} ~~(snowshoes)~~ other Rocks were used for soil lamps, net sinkers and anchors. They were also used for ~~net~~ what stones to sharpen knives. Rocks were also used for tanning moose and caribou hides. A medicine person would use obsidian to operate on the sick. Hatchets were made with rocks tied to a piece of wood.

11 Baby beaver paws were tied to the youngest child's wrists to let them be hard workers. The reasoning being that since beavers are such hard workers, the child will ~~be~~ also be a hard worker when he/she grows up, always using their hands.

11 I'm sure that everyone in the class learned something new during Johnson's stay with us, as well as from Larry and Martha Moffat.