

ANS 401 - Knowledge of Native Elders
Eliza Jones & Tassie Saunders
By: Donna John
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Overview of Athabascan culture.

Eliza Jones showed a map of Alaska and explained how the Athabascans had a nomadic life style. People moved around all the time. Summer time the natives moved from one fishcamp to another fishcamp. First they fished for salmon and later on for whitefish. Long time ago, willow bar fish nets were used, instead of the nylon fishnets they didn't last too long.

Fall time people moved to trapping cabins or tents (those days). The men trapped and the women sewed clothes. They stayed in camps from fall to the month of December. They told many stories.

Fall stories were told, called Kkedon - Sednee which were stories of animal people. Everything had life.

The other stories are recent historical stories, **personal stories**, hunting, fishing, war and famine. They were called yooghedona stories.

Children were instructed to listen to all stories, they were educational plus entertaining, traditional Education.

About December the people got together for one week with other families (there were no permanent villages then or no christmas celebration) to celebrate and have potlatch. They would have fiddle music and visit before moving on to the the next camp.

Sometime in late January or early February whole families would travel and camp where the caribou lived. Women would trap devil fish (oonyeeyh) or black fish, these were used for survival when other foods were scarce. These little fish would come up for air that is when the women trapped them.

We discussed how baby baskets were made, of birch bark which was shaped like the baby carriers nowadays. Ashes and moss on top of that, were used at the bottom of the baby basket and sometimes short grass were used also.

Families traveled around following game. Many stories were told of famine and extreme hardships.

Caribou was important not only for food, but for the skin to make clothing. The sinew was used fom the back of the to sew with, the marrow was use to make Indian ice cream