

Knowledge of Native Elders ANS 401
 Tatiana Saunders
 Summary by Beverly Simon 9/21/89

Tassie started the class by talking about summer food preservation for the winter. She talked ^{about} under ground storage called tsoken'onh. ^{Various} ~~Varies~~ food, such as berries, fish ^{and} eggs ^{were} were stored there, mostly in birchbark baskets.

Some of the dog salmon were cut and dried for eating and some were cut for dogs. Next came silver salmon, which were cut and dried in the smokehouse. Dry standing ^{cut and dried} cotton trees from ~~around~~ the hillsides ^{is} used for smoking the fish. Smudge ^{was} is also made under the fishracks where the fish ^{were} were dried in the open air before they ^{were} are put in the smokehouse to keep the flies away. After the fish ^{were} is dried, they ^{were} are bundled by a home made fish bailer that is no longer used. Some of the fish were sold to the stores to pay the bill accumulated over the summer. In the days before the "kicker boats" dogs were sometimes used to check the fishwheel. ^{The men hunted} Ducks and geese were ~~hunted by men for immediate use.~~ ^{clucks and} They would hunt geese and ducks in the late fall. Some of these were plucked, gutted and hung by the necks in the cache to save for winter.

In the late fall people would go to Nulato River to fish for graylings and little white fish to freeze. Some people went down ~~early in the morning~~, as early as 5 a.m. ^{They} catch graylings, loche, trout, and little white fish, and little white fish called flat fish. ^{Rabbit remember that when she was} When she was little she remember ^{little people caught as many as 500 fish.} people getting as much as 500 fish all together.

After freeze-up, rabbit snares were made from ~~with~~ twisted or plied sinew. ^{The people} They would set spring pole snares with these. There ^{were} was two reason for using spring pole snares: a) to prevent the rabbit from chewing the snares, and b) ^{so} the animal ^{would stay} suffer less and thus the meat ^{is} in good condition. Spruce grouse and ptarmigan were also caught in the snares.

Real strong bear hunting spears were made of spruce, which was then greased and heated and made even stronger. Men used to talk to bears ^{meet} when they ^{as} meet them or even when they attack ^{these} them. ^{of a hunter who} She told a story ^{who} who said to a brown bear, "Come on down and let's fight." The hunter then planted the spear as the bear attacked him and it ^{pierced} pierced itself through the chest. She told another story about a man, George Halfway, ^{who} also got in a fight with a bear. He killed it by grabbing it around the waist and wrapping a rawmaine around the bear's waist and ^{ing} tightened it as tight as he could. The bear snapped its own back when it straightened up.

In another story she told, a young married woman was beaten up by her ~~very very~~ jealous husband. She was so hurt and ashamed of what he did to her that she left him and her family. She moved far ~~far~~ away to live by herself. As she was travelling to a new place on foot, she met a bear. She talked to it, saying, "We are friends," ~~which it~~ ^{the bear} understood and left her alone. She healed her wounds by treating ~~it~~ ^{her} with leaves and the juice from the leaves. She ~~far~~ ^{went} into the mountain and found a crevice in ~~rock~~ ^{the} at the head of a stream. She turned the crevice into a shelter for herself by building a roof ~~over~~ ^{over} the place and an entrance ~~way~~ ^{way} which was barely wide enough for her to squeeze through moving sideways. She made a fishnet with twine made of twisted willow bark. She set the fishnet in the creek and caught a lot of fish. ~~with it~~. Later in the fall she made snares with sinew and caught ~~a lot~~ rabbits. ~~in snares~~. She also put up ~~a lot of~~ berries for the winter.

One day she was out picking berries ~~again when~~ she sensed that a bear was stalking her. She quickly picked up her things and ~~pour~~ ^{put} the berries into one big container and started home, going as fast as she could without running. She was trying not to show that she sensed the bear's presence. She knew the bear was following her. When she got close to her house, she dropped the berries and started running. The bear chased her. It tried to follow her into her house ~~and~~ ^{but} its head got stuck in the entrance ~~way~~. She quickly lit a bundle of paper-thin birchbark, stuck it on the end of a stick and pushed it into the bear, twisting the stick in the fur. The bear's fur caught ~~on~~ fire and it pulled its head back out from her entrance ~~way~~. She heard it hollering and thrashing around outside. When she ~~out~~ ^{went} later, it was dead. She skinned it and butchered it. She ~~build~~ ^{built} a cache for it and dried the meat. She also saved and dried the front and back paws.

She lived there most of the winter, ~~meanwhile~~ ^{was} her family were concerned about her and her brothers were searching ~~all over~~ for her. Finally, on a clear, cold winter day, ~~they~~ ^{her brothers} climbed a mountain peak and saw smoke rising from where she lived. They came to her and prepared to ~~bring~~ ^{take} her home. They took all the food she had preserved, including the bear meat and ~~its~~ paws. They made a potlatch when she returned home. She told her brothers to bring all her food to the hall, ~~that she brought back~~. She also soaked and cooked the bear paws. It took a whole day ~~to cook~~. When it was time to go to the hall, she brought ~~it to the hall~~ ^{the bear} herself. She had to haul it on a sled it was so much. When she got to the hall, she looked around until she saw her husband, then she hauled ~~it~~ ^{the bear} over to him and said, "This is the kind of animal you are ~~supose~~ ^{supposed} to use a knife on, not a human being, not on me." That is how she shamed her husband in public for what he did ~~to~~ her. Only after that did she ~~even~~ ^{tell} her parents what a terrible thing he did to her.

She never did go back to him.