*Mendees Cheeg Naltsiin Keyh'*

An Oral History

of the People of Healy Lake Village

Annotated and edited by Donald G. Callaway and Constance A Miller- Friend

*Blln,Demit*





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**The People of Healy Lake**

**Village**

**An Oral History dedicated to all the**

**generations of people of Healy Lake Village.**

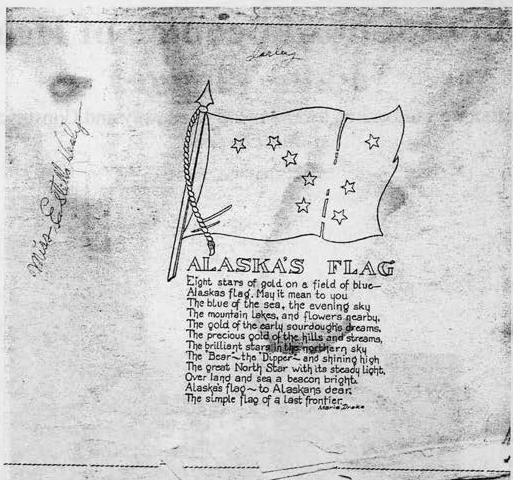
Annotated and edited by Donald G. Callaway and Constance A. Miller-Friend

*HealylaJce Village circa /939*



Tbis project was prepared with a grant from the Humanities Forum, 421 West First Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 and suppon from theHealy Lake Traditional Council, The Te1lin National Wildlife Service, the Na1ional Park Service, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska Native Language Center. The editors would like10express our deepest appreciation 10 all of these entities. Electronic copies of the book will be furnished 10 these organizations and the University of Alaska, Fairbanksarchives. Each interviewee will also receive a copy of the book. The Laser Yukon fon!S used 10 print this work are available from Linguist's Software, Inc., PO Box 580, Edmonds, Wa 98020-0580 USA tel (425) 775-1130.

*Below: first page from Stella Healy's autograph and picture album from her high school daysat Mt. Edgecomb boarding school in Sitka, Alaska*



### Abbreviated Genealogy

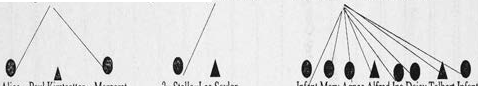
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AgD*=*C! 0115Jacob Maggie= JohnHealy=JeanieSam Frank Felix=Ellen= HerbeltDemit

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##### Table of Contents

Preface ii

Dedication iii

[Abbreviated Genealogy v](#_TOC_250001)

[Table of Contents vi](#_TOC_250000)

Ust of Figures vii

Forward by Donald G. Callaway viii

The HealyLake Language by Gary Holton ix

Guide to the Healy Lake Writing System by GaryHolton x

Biography of Ellen Demit 2

Interview with Ellen Demit Tape 1 3-22

Interview with Ellen Demit Tape 2 23-58

Interview with Ellen Demit Tape 3 58-76

Ellen Demit's Speech to Relatives 77-99

Biography of Patrick Saylor I

Interview with Patrick Saylor 102-109

Biography of Agnes Henry 11 l

Interview with Agnes Henry 112-121

Biography of Paul Kirsteatter 123

Interview with Paul Kirsteatter 124-133

Biography of Fred Kirsteauer. 135

Interview with Fred K.irstealler 136-139

Biography of Lee Saylor 141

Interview with Lee Saylor 142-151

Biography of Jo Ann Polston 153

Interview with Jo Ann Polston 154-159

Bibliography 160-162

Appendix: Healy Lake Traditional Use Area Map 163

Afterword by Constance Miller-Friend 165

List of Figures

*Ellen Demit at her cabin in Tok, Alaska Cover*

*Alaska's Flagfrom Stella Healy's autographand photoalbum* ii

*Healy La/re Village circa 1939* iii

*Mapof Athabascan Place Namesand Traditional Use Areas. iv*

*Abbreviated Genealogy v*

*Goh/Snowshoe Hare. I*

*Ellen Demit at her cabinin Healy La/re* 2

*Saleha 1919 Annie Lu/re, Old Lu/re,Frank Luke and Abraham Luke 3*

*Healy La/re circa /920 Selene, Ellen and Jimmy 4*

*Big Delta circa 1900 Alex Joe, Arthur Healy, SilasSolomon, John Healy 4*

*Up Li1tle Gerstle circa /930* 6

*Logan Luke, Ada Lu/re, Lucy Luke, Bentley Mcintosh, Frank Luke, Joe luke 8*

*Old Chief Healy* 11

*Dzanh!Muskrat.* 13

*Rosehips 18*

*Tsii't/Porcupine* 21

*Dats'iig/Moose* Ca/f 38

*Wudzih/Caribou. 100*

*Benjamin and Patrick Saylor at Healy lake Potlatch. JOJ*

*Dleg/Squirrel JJO*

*Shos/Bear. 122*

*Paul Kirs1ea11er. 123*

*Healy River circa /940 124*

*Ch'ets'lldz/Bu/1Moose J34*

*Fred Kirsteauer. 135*

*Niiduey/Lynx J40*

*lee Saylor 141*

*George Lake: Johnny Healy, Alex Joe, Arthur Healy,Frankluke 142*

*Healy River Trading Post circa 1920 143*

*Healylake circa 1920: Kataba J44*

*Healy Lake circa 1940, Left to Right: Logan Luke, Ada Luke, Lucy Luke, Bentley Mclntosh, Frank Luke and Joe Luke /47*

*Jeanie (Sam) Healy. Johnny Healy and infant J48*

*John, Maryand Paddy Healy*1927 *149*

*Tikaan/Wolf J52*

*Jo Ann Polston J53*

*Healy lake Clinic and Tribal Office-Mary Kwarr, Tetiin NWR. Healy Lake Community Hall.Healy lake.Old Teacher's House-Healy lake. Melissa Erickson-Healylake*

*Resident, Ray Fifer-Healy Lake Resident /64*

Healy Lake Forward:

In 1997 1he communi1y of Healy Lake presen1ed a proposal to the National Park Service (NPS) reques1ing "residenl zones1atus" for their community. Under curren1 NPS regula1ions all residenls of a resident zone community are gran1ed eligibility (in conjunclion with 01her de1ennina1ions)10 harvcs1wildlife resources within park boundaries. To achieve resident zone status HealyLake needed 10 demonstra1e a historic and cus1omary use of wildlife resources within the boundaries of Wrangell-St. Elias national park. For Healy Lake, which is dependent on a subsis1cnce lifestyle, cligibiLity 10 hunl and fish in the norlhem part of Wrangell-St. Elias would be of considerable benefit. For example, some partsof their traditional use area have been impac1ed by incorporation within an air force gunnery range while in other partsof their iraditional home range1hey faceconsiderable compe1ition from sports hunters. Thus the park by excluding non-eligible users provides special prolection for the continuance of 1heir iraditional lifestyle.

In order to analyze and respond to Healy Lake·s request Don Callaway, Senior Anthropologist for 1he Alaska Systems Support Office (AKSO), and Connie Friend. who was 1hen liaison for 1he Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), collec1ed community histories, genealogies and key informant interviews in the Upper Tanana and Ahtna regions. The analysis also relied on public 1es1imony taken and recorded a1 Healy Lake and earlycensus and e1hno-his1orical data1hat was recommended and distilled by Bill Simeone of the Alaska Departmen1of Fish and Game. In addition, keydiaries and wrinen recollec1ions, principally by LeeSaylor, provided invaluable insight into thestructure of the community during the last several decades.

h was during this process that conversations with elders and traditional council members indicated the strong need for 1he preservation of memories and experiences from 1he residents of Healy Lake, principally through the means of oral his1ories.

A gram was wrinen to the Alaska Humanities Forum to cover lhe expenses of conduc1ing such oral histories. These expenses, principally for informant fees and iranscription cosis, were kindly supplied by the Forum under one of their small grants. Callaway's labor and travel expenses were borne by the NPS, while much of Ms. Friend's time was contributed by the United Slates Fish and Wildlife Service, Teliin Refuge where she now works as a liaison.

Elders and 01her informan1s were paid for theirservices. In addition theysigned an informed consenl protocol. which allowed us to publish theircontribulions in this formal or for scientific venues. This signed protocol also reserved, for them. their copyrighl and intellectual property righ1 in any commercial use of 1his material.

Connie Friend iranscribed all of the oral history 1apes. In lhe case of the elder Ellen Demit, Ms. Friend decided 10 alter theformat in10 more of a free form presen1a1ion that includes some grammatical edi1ing for easeof reading. We, and others believe this approach captures more fully the cadence and meaning of Ellen's 1es1imony. Very special thanks also need to be made to Gary Hollon of the Alaska Native Language Center at 1he University of Alaska. Fairbanks for doing all of the iranslation. 1ransli1eration and editing of lhe Athabascan segments in 1hisoral

history testimony .Thanks to Ed Merritt, Tctlin National Wildlife Refuge Manager who allowed countless trips to Healy Lake and work hours to Ms. Friend for the project, and lastly to MeHnda Rallo whose unfailing suppon and expen.ise were fundamemally essential to the publication. to Aleta Lavender, Karyn Barnett, Laura Whitehouse and Chuck Ardizzone in the US Fish and Wildlife Service for assistance in editing and publishing the tmnscripts.

Don Callaway Anchorage, Alaska August, 2001.

Healy Lake Hfatoric Overview:

The following brief chronology of Healy Lake is provided as a structure to helpthe reader10 place the events of people's lives in an organized tempora.l context.

Healy Lake prior to the 20"' Century:

The archeological record revealed at Healy Lake indicates that thissite provides the best evidence for observing the development of an Athabascan tradition within the state of Alaska (Cook 1969). Fred Kirstealler, who found the original lithies that sparked the archeological investigation, speaks of his contribution to this discovery in his oral history. Based on radiocarbon chronology this community and its environs represent perhaps 11,000 yearsof continuous occupation. Underlying substrata reveal microblades. ''Campus-type cores", and lanccolate projectile points (Griffen 1990).

At the time of contact with western culture the inhabitants of Healy Lake were hunters and gathersdependent upon a seasonal migration pa11em that began with the harvest of freshwater fish and occasionally Copper Riversalmon in the early spring and summer (with ice-fishing in mid-winter), whitefish in the latesummer and fall, sheepand bear in the fall, caribou in the fall and winter and moose throughout the year. Other species such as waterfowl, furbearers and vegetable foods were taken when seasonally available. Traditional se11lemen1s consisted of winter villages with well-built, semi-subterranean multi-family st.ructures while in the spring, summer and fall nuclear or extended families would split from the winter settlement and set up temporary camps to harvest the seasonally available subsistence resources.

A set of interrelated local families obtained a "band" identity by the sustained use of a particular territorial range over several generations. The Healy River-Joseph band was informally recognized 10 utilizea section of land of about 3,000 square miles.' On the northern boundary of their band territory was the "village"of Joseph. a seasonal caribou huntingcamp about 50 miles northeast of Healy Lake. Healy Lake "residents" would often over-winter in Joseph and subsist on dried caribou that had been taken in great numbers by the use of fences when the animals migrated south. Kechumstuk (about 30 miles southeast of Joseph) served a similar function for Mansfield Lake band members (i.e., the Mansfield Lake-Kechumstuk band although the Mansfield and Healy Lake bands sometimes cooperated in caribou hunts in the Molly Creek area).The current year- round seulements of Healy Lake.Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin,and Northway represent a consolidation of a formerly fluid band residence pauem.

Healy Lake: early 20" Century.

Thischange from a seasonal to a sedentary residence pattern was the outcomeof several historical economic and social processes. Beginning with W.H. Newton at Healy Lake in 1907 a number of trading posts were set up along the Tanana River to service the fur industry. As McKennan (1981:567) notes:

1 For a detailed map of the boundaries of the Healy Lake-Joseph band see McKennan, Robert, A.. (1981:564),"Tanana" in Handbook of North American I'ndians. Volume 6, Subarctic, Smithsonian Institution, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C. 20402

**Thedevc:IOpmcnt of thefur trade not onlybrought obvious changes in Tanana material culture but also affected profoundly thesubsistence pattern. round of seasonaJ activities..social organization. 3nd demography. Scmi-pennancnt villages (Healy Lake.Tanana crossing. Nabesna ) grew up inthe**

neighborhood of lhc u-adingl)OSIS-

Mining in the late 19 century and Protestant Episcopal missions and mission schools (e\_g., Tanana Crossing in 1912) all acted as centripetal forcescentralizing formerly dispersed residence patterns. Also aiding this processof centralization were introduced technical innovations such as the fish wheel.

ln addition, disease introduced by contact with Whites decimated whole communities. McKennan (1981:566) writes that:

**Thebands were of such sm3U size that periodic famines, warfare.and la.1er. diseases introduced by Whites**

**oould easilyreduce them 10 a point where they v.•ere no longer viable. Thesurvivors would be forced to joinanotherandlarger band orstarve.**

Becauseof proscribed cultural marriage patterns individuals were required to marry outside their band (bandexogamy). For example, the 1937 Census lists Laura Healy's binhplace as Mansfield Laura, who was married to Anhur Healy, is the granddaughter of Chief Isaac(from the Mansfield/Kechumstuk band) while Anhur is the grandson of Chief Healy (from the Healy Lake/Joseph band). Numerous other marriages that occurred during this period link Healy Lake/Joseph, Mansfield/Kechumstuk, and Tanana Crossing residents with Ahtna band members now residing in Mentasta Lake, Batzulnetas, Chistochina and Copper Center. As a consequence of these residence and marriage patterns early census data from 1910, 1920and 1937 for the community of Healy Lake might list a variety of binhplaces for theirinhabitants.

Healy Lake: mid 20'" Century.

The community of Healy Lake wasdisbanded almost entirely in the mid 1940's due to an epidemic that killed many residents. Paul Kirsteatter, in his oral history, describes what happened:

**Stanley Youn,g waslhctrader downthereat th3t time. He told me hetried and tried 10 getdoctors inhere**

... **and there was entire familie$ was dyin' and layin' in theircabins, Thiswas uh, my wife was hereat that lime. Shewasone of the survivors. Entirefamilies lyin"dead in their cabins and lhere was no way to bury"em and uh new white tradersand others was. was livingdown here by the trading post. John Knight, Stanley Youngand olhers washelpin' bury 1hepeople 3nd theyfinallygot a doctor in by lhe nextSpring. Hecame up, anannydoctorcame ou1of what is now Ft. Greeley. Hecame in. Burt Hansen brought him up bya dogteam. up here. thedoctor and thedoc1or. by that timethe epidemic wasalmostover. No tests wereever bade, butby the, bythe symptomsand all he thought lt might bediphtheria and measlestogether. The Native people hnd very littleresistance to White·s diseases.**

John Healy, Chief of the band during this period, lost his children. (Bessie, Sarah, Lena, Louie and Marilyn all died). After the epidemic Chief John Healy moved the survivors to the Little Gerstle on the Alaska Highway. In her oral history Ellen Demit painfullydocuments this move

,i

and the lossof her twins. She alsodescribes how her adoptive father, Old Blind Jimmy, was one of the last to die.

Contributing to thisdiaspora were BIA policies that forced relocation of families with school age children to Tanacross. As Logan Luke (I 999:11) testified ··11<.now I h,·e ;nTaoacross bccaust **somebody named BlA forced mydad 10move the kids,otherwise you lose them". Thus BIA policy required** parents to move to established communities that supported schools or face the forced removal of theirchildren from theircustody.

During this period fonner Healy Lake residents, along with families from Tanacross and Mentasta, contributed to the founding of Dot Lake (McKennan 1981:566) and also provided the coreextended familygroup in the development ofTanacross.

Despite their migration to other Upper Tanana communities such as Tetlin, Tanacross and Northway some Healy Lake families periodically returned to the lake for summer fishing. In addition, Paul Kirsteaner describes how he established a year around residence in Healy Lake during the period from 1947 to the present.

Finally, the imposition of a western game management regime altered irrevocably opportunities to live and hunt in the traditional lifestyle. As McKennan (1981:567) reports:

**Followingstalchood in 1958 theenforcement of fish andgai:ne** Jaws. **equally applicable toboth Indians and**

**Whiles.,.sounded the death knell to the old pauemof livingoff lhe land.**

Thus, the opportunity to live a seasonal residence pattern and harvest resources as they became seasonally available was lost. ln addition, the formation of the Wrangell St. Elias National Park in 1980excluded any individual not in a resident zone community or lacking a 13.41 permit 10 harvest resources in the park. Currently Healy Lake is being granted residence zonestatus and recent customary and traditional determinations favoring Healy Lake have been approved by the Federal Subsistence Board.

The Contemporary Community of Healy Lake.

A resurgence in population for Healy Lake began in the 1980's. All of the families involved in the rees1ablishmcn1are related 10 families documented 10 reside there since at least 1910. At the time of the lastdecennial census the population of Healy Lake was 48 peopleconsisting of 12 total families residing in 14 households. Of the 48 people residing in the community. 42 (or 88%) classified themselves as Alaskan Native and 20of these individuals (48%) were under the age of 16.

The current community of Healy Lake is located about a half mile from the traditional siteof the old village. Healy Lake is now inhabited bya variety of Athabaskan Indians who trace their genealogies 10Tanacross speakers of the Healy Lake/Joseph and Mansfield/Kechumstuk bands, but also to the Upper Tanana speakers of the Te1lin. Nabesna, and Upper Chisana bands and 10 the Upper Ah1na speakers of Mentasta, Batzulnetas and Sanford River bands.

Median household income in HealyLake in 1989 was$5,841. at the same time median household income for Alaska was $41,408 and for the U.S. as a whole $30,056. Median household income for Alaska Natives in 1989 was$24,152. Seventyone percent of the households were below the poveny level.so even by the depressed economic standards of rural Alaska, Healy Lake is a very poor community.

In 1989 no houses were plumbed for running wateror sewerandall of the houses heated with wood. However, since 1990 there have been considerable improvements to the community's infrastructure from a variety of development grants. At present the majority of families in Healy Lake have running waterand sewerage treatment faciLities.

Although no systematic harvest surveys havebeen completed for households in HealyLake, public testimony indicates that a majorityof their diet is derived from wildlife resources.

Accessible by an ice road in winter and by planeor boat in summer, with no store. few amenities. and very little employment Healy Lake residents in the words of Department of Community and Regional Affairs (1999)"livea subsistence lifestyle."

The Cultural Context of Healy Lake. an Athabascan Community.

Thefollowing section providesa brief introduction to Athabascan cultural practices and values. Marriage, Kinship and Descent:

The area occupied by the Upper Tanana bands (which include Healy Lake) experienced harsh

winters and severe fluctuations in the natural resource base that might lead to starvation. In addition, a varietyof imponant subsistence species were not uniformly distributed throughout the region. for example, salmon were not availableto all bands, in addition, ducks, muskrats and white fish were locally concentrated and not available to all.

Under thesedifficult circumstances a number of cultural institutions developed that lowered risk and opened access to resources across band territories. A chief adaptation to fluctuating and concentrated resources was a constellation of cultural practicescentered on marriage, descent and residence. As McKennan (1981:572) notes:

**Tanana soci11lorganization featured exogamous matrilincal desccn,groups... The malrilineal descent groups wereregarded as largeconsanguineous families thatcul acrossgroup boundaries, and when inoecd m Indian could look 10his fellow moiety members orcla,nsmen forhelporhospilality. Inuddilion 10 his clansmenan Indiancould lum for aid to his formalized "partner," whowasoften both hiscross-cousin and his brother•in-lawduelo the practice of prefercn1ial cross-cousin marriage. Rightsand duties were reciprocal between pannersand included lhespecifieddivision of anygametaken byeither.**

What does this mean and what are its implications? A young man from Healy Lake belongs to his mother's clan. Aclan in this case would be a groupof individuals. related through the female line that specified theirdescent from a distant female ancestor. These clans existed in a variety of bands from the "Tanacross". "Upper Tanana" and"Upper Ahtna•·linguisticgroups. These clans were funheraggregated into1wodistinctive "moieties" or "sides". In this case

seven clans fonned the "nalcin" [Raven or Crow] moiety and about ten clans fanned the"ca" [Sea Gull or Wolrside] moiety.

When a young man or woman from Healy Lake was ready to marry, their spouse would have to be selected from the clansoutside or their moiety. Given low population densities the number of eligible men or women was quitesmall. In addition, all bandsengaged in the explicit tactic of establishing ties10groups in more distant areas, a kind of insurance policy. For example, if the caribou didn't come by your residence one year then access 10sheepor fish in one's spouse's band's es1a1e would be available. Thus.descent (clan/moie1y) and exogamous marriage (the rule requiring marriage outside of one'sdescent group) established a wide network of kin tiesand access10 resources across an area broader than the territory of any one band.

As mentioned earlier, these practices are clearlyconfinned in the early censuses from this region where gene.1logies indica1e that men and women from Healy Lake are married 10spouses from Kechums1uk, Mentasta, Nabesna, or Ba1zulne1as.

BrideService:

In addition. 1here existed the cuilural ins1i1u1ion of bride service -

**Forthe first few years3rter marriage the youngcouple normally lived"'1th thegirl'sparenlSor with their**

b,nd.(McKcnnan 1981:571).

Thus,af1er marriage a young man might spend a coupleof years working with his father-in-law, harvesting resources, learning the land and becoming a known quantity to his spouse's family. When bride service is over these experiences and ties are often activated on an annual basis. For example, Ahlna infonnant's men1ioned the seasonal use of fish wheels in Ba12ulnetas by kin from Healy Lake.

Post-nuptial residence, Kinship Terminology and Marriage Preference:

Murdock (1967:102) indicates that the final post-nuptial residence, i.e.,1he pennanent residence of a couple after marriage and bride service was completed was quite fluid. There was a strong tendency 10 se11le near1he wife"s relatives but depending on circumstances (need for labor. the personalities involved, adequacy of resource base,etc.,) the couple might alsoend up living with the husband"s kin (in anthropological tcnns,"uxorilocal" residence was the first preference with

••virolocaJ" residence as a cul1urally pallemed allema1ive).

The maintenance of these inter-band and inter-language relationships through time was supported by another cuhural practice mentioned by McKennan - cross-cousin marriage. For a young man or woman their father'ssister'schildren (i.e., paternal cross-cousins)or their mother's brother's children (i.e., maternal cross-cousins) were a preferred marriage panner.

This panem expanded relationships over lime because one's cross-cousin. e.g.. mother's brother's children were always of a different clan (i.e.. the clan of the bro1her's wife).

These preferences are reinforced by the e,dsting kinship terminology. Iroquois cousin terminology uses thesame term for brother or sister and parallel cousins (father's brother's children, mother's sister'schildren). Cross-cousins on the otherhand are designated by a term indicating maniageeligible.

Language boundaries and mutual linguistic intelligibility across bands.

These broad marriage, kinship and resident connections between Healy Lake, Mansfield, Tetlin. Nabesna, Chisana, and Upper Ahlna are consistent with linguistic panems identified by McKennan's informants:

**Indeed, both Tanacrossand Upper Tanana speakers told McKennan that theyareabletoconverse with Lower Tanana speakersless easily thanwilh speakers of Han,Ahtna and Southern Tutchone... (McKennan** 1981,562)

Later discussions with informants at Tanacross, Doi Lake, and Healy Lake confirmed the fact that the cuhure of their group was almost identical with that of the Upper Tanana although their languagediffered.

Ceremonial integration - the Potlatch.

Ellen Demit and other panicipants in these oral histories make mention of the potlatch. Ellen, despite living on a minimal income, intended to contribute10an upcoming potlatch that was10 occur shonly after these interviews werecompleted. Simeone (1995:>tiii) sees the potlatch as a community ritual that provides"a positive sense of identity through a synthesis of the past with the present." The potlatch is essentially a publicdistribution of gifts.

**Giftsarc dis1tibuted. forexample.on theoccasion of a young person·s first successful hunt. to cetebrate lhe returnof a person aftera longabsence orrecovery from anacute illness Usually lhe mostcompelling**

**reason for holding a potlatch is thedeathof an incli\lidual. (Simeone 1995:xvii)**

In the activities preceding a memorial potlatch. members of the moiety (see above) opposite to 1ha1 of the deceased. assume a numberof responsibilitiesincluding caring for the COfllSC, building the coffin, digging the grave, and constructing a fence around the grave. Kinsmen within the moiety of the deceased demonstrate their respect and gratitude for this care byholding a potlatch. Thus:

**Through singing. dancing.oratory. and thedistribution of giftsand food. people a.lsoshowtheir love and respect ror kinwho forma web of relationships extending farbeyond the immediate familyand village.** (Simeone 1995,164)

Simeone (1995:162)sees the potlatch as ·,he rnost significon1cultura.l event in1he life of theTanacross people"". A variety of items are gifted including rifles, blankets and cash. Simeone sees these items being:

**symbolically transformed intoe:itprcssions of emotionand used to createand maintain vitalsocial Linkages. What is com·eycd in modem potl3tch gifts, then. is anaffirmation of sh:trcd valuesbased on reciprocal obligations... (which) ... arcexpected to rcficclcraditional va.Jues by placing the welfareof thecommunity abo..,tself•inlerest... Nati..,e people sec themselves :,.sadhering to the tradilional valuesof kinship.sharing. reciprocny. lovc and respect. and compc:1enice. which arein opposition 10 the individualistic.self.cenrered values of non·Nati...esociety, (Simeone 1995:163)**

Other research has alsodemonstrated the importance of the potlatch as a region wide ceremonial activity that cemented links among the Tanacross, Upper Tanana and Upper Ahtna speakers.

The stability of these links is verified bya series of nine potlatches auended by Guedon between

1969-1970. Guedon (1982:577) notes that the potlatches involved:

**speakers of the Upper Tanana.Tanacrws. and Ahtna languages. Thepa.rticipants came from the villagesof Tedin,Northway, andTaoacross- the last 1wo including thepeople formerly at Mansfield. Kechumsruk. Last Tedin and Healy Lake- andaJsofrom Mentasta, an Ahtna s village.**

In addition. as Guedon (1981:579)states:

**A serious potlatch inthe upperTanana area includes guesu fromal leaslallupperTanana groups and most of the northern Copper River villagesof theAhtna Indians.. Upper Tanana Indiansareoften invi1cd to potlatchesg.ivcn bythe Ahtn.1 Jndians... In thepas.1. guests were probably grouped according to eta . regardless of the locaJe fromwhich theycame.**

A fundamental tenet of the potlatch (although this discussion is oversimplified) is that the guests who are feasted and given giftsareone's "cross relatives", i.e., members of clans that are from the other side (the moiety opposite of one's mother's).

lt is evident thatexcept for natural boundaries such as high mountain ranges. it is extremely hard10 draw precise territorial limits for these nomadic people. Adjacent local bandsoften came together for purposes of communal hunting, trade, or potlatch ceremonies ... Intermarriages between bands often took place, as the native genealogies attest. Indeed the small sizeof thelocal bands,some 20 to 75 people(McKennan 1969a: 102-103), combined with the clan exogamy that prevailed would make some out­ marriages inevitable. (McKennan 1981:565)

**`The Healy Lake Language**

*by Gary Holton*

The language spoken by Ms. Ellen Demit and others of the Healy Lake area is pan of the Tanacross Athabascan language. Tanacross itself is distinguished from other Athabascan languages in Alaska by the presence of high tone where other languages have low or no tone.For example, Tanacross *shtti'* 'father' hashigh tone. whereas Upper Tanana Athabascan-spoken in Tetlin, Northway, Scottie Creek and Beaver Creek-has lowtone on the word for fanher. namely. *shtti'.* Tanacross is the only Athabascan language in Alaska to have high tone on words like 'father'.

There are two primarydialectsofTanacross. The Mansfield-Ketchumstukdialect is the ancestral language of the Mansfield and Ketchumstuk bands and is today spoken primarily in Tanacross village. The HealyLake-Joseph Village dialect is the ancestral language of the HealyLake and Joseph Village bands and is today spoken primarily in Healy Lake and Dot Lake. Ms. Demit is one of the last remaining speakers of this dialect. The primary linguistic feature which distinguishes the Healy Lake dialect from the Mansfield dialect is the retention of a final "echo" vowel following words which end in a voiced consonant, such as *lu11g* 'fish', which is pronounced more like *l1111ga* in HealyLake.Thislinguistic feature even permeates Ms. Demit's English speech. For example, Ms. Demit pronounces the words 'our culture' as *011,a cu/111,e.*

The extra vowel in her English pronunciation reflects the linguistic process that associates an echo vowel with a voiced consonant. There are other differences between the dialects as well. Forexample, Healy Lake often has *ab* where Mansfield has *m.* Thus Healy Lake *k'titbah* 'willow ptarmigan' vs. Mansfield *k'itmah.* Thisexample alsoshows some of the vowel differences.

11should be noted that thedifferences between HealyLake and Mansfield dialects are not random but rather reflect the geographic position of HealyLake between the Mansfield dialect

of Tanacross to the east and the former Saleha dialect of Lower Tanana to the west. Where Healy Lake differs from Mansfield, it is moresimilar to Saleha, which *also* has the echo vowel and the *b* rather than *m.* Clearly the Healy Lake dialect was once pan of a large dialect chain which estended along the length of the Tanana river.

Guide to the Healy **Lake** Writing System

*by Gary Holton*

The transcriptionsof Healy Lake words used in this book make use of the symbols in the standard English alphabet plusa few special characters. The two most significant special

characters are the "barred-I"' (/)and the"nasal hook''( , ). There are alsoseveral "accent'" marks which are used to mark tone on vowels (a.a).

**Sounds which are written and pronounced as in English**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Consonant | **Examole** | **Meaning** | Similar English sound |
| cb | cbox | big | choke |
| t | tUU | **water** | too |
| s | saa | sun | son |
| h | hen | creek | hen |
| m | menh | lake | men |
| n | naho2 | outside | now |
| sh | **sheen** | **summer** | she |
| th | lhiit | embers | thin |
| y | vaadiimeev | nonhem lights | yell |
| k | k6n' | fire | cool |
| I | laalilel | butterfly | look |
| i | ievh | **mittens** | jay |
| w | wudzih | caribou | woo |

Somesymbols represent sounds which occur in English but are not found at the beginning of a word. In Tanacross these sounds can occur at the beginning of a word.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Consonant | Examole | Meaning | Similar English sound |
| ts | tsa | beaver | cats |
| dz | dzeen | day | adze |
| di | Diel!. | squirrel | padlock |
| nd | ndii2 | creek | banda2e |

Sounds which occur in English but arc spelled differently in Healy Lake

Consonant Exam le Meaning Similar English sound dh Nadhaa liver this

Sounds which do not occur in English

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Consonant | Example | Meaning |
| *I* | k!ii | dog |
| ti | Tlaa | friend |
| tth | tlhee | rock |
| ddh | ddhel | **mountain** |
| X | xos | thorns |
| !th | 11hah | for |
| oh | menh | lake |
| vh | aavh | snowshoe |

One verynoticeable set of sounds which do notoccur in English are the gloualized consonants. These sounds are a feature of all Athabascan languages (and many other Native American languages). When the apostrophe follows certain consonants. it indicates a glottalization,a "catch-in-the-breath"sound formed by usingthe closed vocal chords10compress the air in the vocal tract. Glottalized sounds are sometimes found at the end of English words (forexample, some speakers' pronunciationsof"back").

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Consonant | **Example** | **Meaning** |
| LI' | t)uul | rope |
| uh' | Chiubee | **sinew** |
| *C* | 1aath | couonwood |
| k | **Ka** | gun |
| IS | tsevh | **canoe** |
| ch | chox | quills |

The aposuopbc a.nd the hyphen

The apostrophe (·)has aspecial meaning in the Tanacross alphabet. By itself it indicates a glottal stop. thesound which occurs in the middle of theEnglish exclamation *uh-oh.*Sometimes it is necessary to indicate that a glottal stopis not panof the previous letter. In thiscase, a

hyphen(·) is used to separate the previous letter and the glottal stop. An example is nek-'eh 'I see· It would be wrong to write this as nek'eh because this word does not contain a gloualized-k (k').

**The underscore**

The underscore U is used in combination with certain leuers and le11er combinations 10 indicate that a sound begins voiceless and becomes voiced as it is pronounced. Thus, thesound *IlJ.*sounds very much like *shy* and thesound r sounds very much like *sz.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Consonant | Examole | **Meaning** |
| I | wuJno· | hisdog |
| *§* | wu ee•· | hissaliva |
| Jb | JMt | liver |
| §h | §hli | **in** |
| **X** | xdelxos | they are olavine. |

**Vowels**

Healy Lake has five vowel symbols: i, *e, a, o, u.* All but *o* can occureither long or short.The long vowels are wriuen double. The exact pronunciation of long versus short vowels may vary depending on context.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vowel | Examole | Meaning | Similar English sound |
| **ii** | !ii | dog | me |
| i | sint'eh | **it is** | in |
| ee | ·eel | trap | **mane** |
| e | sen' | **star** | men |
| aa | 1saa1h | **roots** | on |
| a | k'a' | gun | pol |
| 0 | k6n' | fire | **cone** |
| uu | tl'uul | rope | loolh |
| u | T1hii11l' | **Tanana River** | two |

Nasalization

Vowels may be nasalized. that is. pronounced with air coming ou1through the nose as well as the mouth. This is indicated with the nasal hook.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Vowel | Example | Meaning |
| i | k'ii | birch |
| e | oe vh | dry |
| a | ch'et'a"a | **leaves** |
| u | OU U | **worm** |

Tone

Vowels may also be marked for tone

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tone | Vowel | Example | Meaning |
| low tone | e | nen | you |
| hi•h tone | e | nen' | land |
| fallin• tone | e | ie• | berries |
| **risin2 tone** |  | ts'M' | blanket |

Consonant Chart

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | -;;  :;;  "" | -;;  E  'O" | :.  8>  -;; | ]  ."; | -;;  g.;\_ | -;;  .; | :. | ]j  -1:5:-. |
| Stops/ unaspirated Affricates aspirated  glottalized | b | ddh  Ith 1th' | d  I  I' | di ti  ti' | dz  IS  ts' | j  ch  ch' | g k  k' |  |
| **Fricatives** voiced  semi-voiced  **voiceless** |  | dh  !h  th |  | I  l  I | z  s | fill  sh | gh  JI.  X | h |
| Nasals voiced  voiceless stopped | m  mb |  | n nh nd |  |  |  |  |  |
| Approx voiced  **voiceless** | w |  |  |  |  | y  vh |  |  |

**xxi**

# Gah

. r \-

, - . - "

\

'I '\.

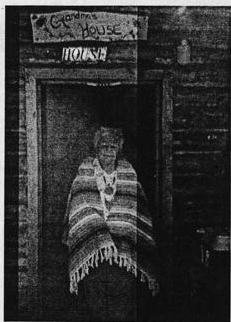
# Snowshoe Hare

###### Ellen Demit born May 13,1913

*Ellen was bom May 13, 1913 to Eva and Julius Joh11 i11the old village of Chena, Alaska which is now encompassed by the city of Fairbanks.*

*Al the age of three Ellen was "adnpted" by Chief Luke and his-wife, AnMfrom Goodpaster,*

*Alaska, a common c11/tural practice. Following the deathof his wife. Anne,Chief Luke allowed Elle11 to be adopted again,this time by Selene and(Old 8/i11dVimmy of Healy 1.Ake. Ellen re/ls her own storyof her incredible childhood, of her affection for her adoptive father and mother and their stn,gglesto survive in a h11111ing a11d gathering society. Today Ellen is the highly respected matriarch of Healy 1.Ake and her legacy is cherished and emulated by her children, grandchildren, great-gra11dchildre11, niecesand nephews.*



2

Interview with Ellen Demit Healy Lake, Alaska August 15, 2000

Interviewers: Don Callaway and Connie Friend

This is Don Callaway. It's the 15"' of August. It's a Tuesday. We're talking here in Healy Lake with Ellen Demit. My name's Don Callaway. Connie Friend is with us and Ellen's daughter, Agnes is also with us and we're here 10 have Ellen talk about her life history. Ready.

Ellen: I was born in Fairbanks

in Chena,

old village I was born.

My mother's name Eva John.

My daddy's name, Julius John and my grandma say Helen.

Helen. Yeah right.



*;:: :: ! -:::.*i:::*Old wk,. Frank*

And she die, she's over 'hundred.

And I grown up in our adopt way at Chena village. I was adopt way to ...

The creek's name, say Indian name,

*Jeez Ndiig* and we call,"Camprobber Creek".

And Chief Luke1 and Anne Luke pick me up, adopt me. The reason I was adopt way and...

Abraham Luke's sister die six o'clock in the morning and

on that even' I was born so he planon goin' raise me up and then she die. Then from there maybe I'm two years old,

my old auntie' send message to from Healy Lake.

And Healy Lake and man and wife, husband blind', pick me up. I choose to be my dad and my mother.

He brought me up and I got married and I had children.

And all way up to in my life very painful sometime but I go through.

'Chief Luke wasalso known as ·'Old LukeJohn'" in Athabascan *Niltaanci;,azaa 1868- 1925.* (from Mishler, Craig W.1986:23) He wasconsidered a very powerful medicine man as well as a chief.

'This was Ellen's second adopted mother, Selene.

'Ellen·sadopted father"Blind Jimmy" was blind from birth. He was brother 10 Old Chief

Healy.

And some special day...

Idon't know what to think, but I made it.

I talk about my history for everybody to listen, and also I growi·n up

with my mother, Seline, and Jimmy.

And once again, my daddy's blind.

I grown up over there and I got married and I had children.

And after all the way through 10 village and he has sickness come

**out'**

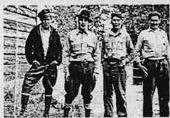


***Healy circa 1910***

***St:ltnt, Ellenand Ji'lrlmy.***

I loose all my children, and all my girls.

And I end up with...

I move to this village to 1946 with try 10 save my daughter Agnes and my daughter, Daisy. Move out 10 this village.

And from there we moved to Big Gerstle.'

Wesit way in the back on the tent.

Me and my husband. my two daughters.

Wesit in the tent for a while and then one person name's Alex Joe.

He'salready sick, but his wife and sister-in-law take him, but, take him away from this village, but yet he die at Big Gerstle.

He take the body back to Tanacross. Been buried up there.

And me and my husband. weend up with my two daughters.

We raise our two daughters. Still have my two daughters.

And I loose my son 'sixteen years ago, lastone.

***Big Dttracirca t90<J***

***11/txJtn, Artlmr Htaly, Sllas Sc,lomon, .John Healy***

And also we liveon the land over there in the village. Springtime I dig the "gardeny" for my mother anddaddy.

I plant seed for my mother and daddy 'cause he's soold to do anything. After my plant seed and all we gotour vegetable.

'Ellen and her husband lost three of their eight·childrcn in the epidemic of 1943. Not long after they had moved to the Gerstle River toescape the epidemic her husband became ill and subsequently died.

'It is about founeen river miles from Healy Lake to the Gerstle River bridge. 'This was Ellen's son Talbert Felix.

4

We put it away.

Back days there's no deep freeze, no nothing. So my daddy didn't have basement.

We putour vegetable in there 7 and we live on meat and potatoes all winter.

And from begin my story, the man goin' adopt me, he's, I should say he's kind of like"medicine

**man"8•**

But back days, maybe good 'n reason, had to be doctorin'. I don't know.

But he's the one bring me to my mother and daddy 'cause his wife die and he can't raise me up. And I have two half brothers and he can't take care of me and I'm two years old and I move to other village where I'm really adopt way.

And with (indiscernible)around Pall time we go out. When [ get grown up, I takecare of my mother and daddy.

Turn around. take care of them

with wood, and go out fishin' for them, pickin' berries for them.

[ do lot of things with old people.

I put all my life, I.every one of them over there in the village. I give a hand every one of them.

I do that 'cause I love them.

And today l don't have even a relative, close relative.

But l havea lot of my niece's•children from out there.

All the way through m my life

**togrown up.**

Like f say alone to Big Gerstle we loose one person. Out theretoo we move to Little Gerstle.

And then my husband10 became sick and I had three kids. l don't know what to do when my husband sick.

Idon't know who to turn to.

'Ellen is referring to a root cellar. 'Chief Luke of Goodpaster

'Stella (Healy) and LeeSaylor's children: Patrick and Ben Saylor and Jo Ann Polston.

Also Margaret (Jacob) Kirsteatter and Paul Kirsteatter's children: Fred Kirsteauer and Linda Erickson as well as their children and grand children. Gary Healy.Mike and Ray Fifer, Minnie Healy's children as well. Ellen is related to nearly everyone in Healy Lake.

'°Ellen's husband was Frank Felix.

And I take my husband in the bus to Doi Lake, around people.

I though!, "Beiter way if my husband die wi1h me all by myself; I don't know what 10 do." Nobody around me.

I just sit

with my kids.

I put my husband in the bus and l got three dogs.

He don't accept my dogsin thebus, so I walk

all (the) way up from the Little Gerstle. I walk with my three dogs.

All (the) way up I walk

to Sam Lake 11

in the road.

I been so tired I spenl the night there. Se1 my mosquito net.

I resl good.

Next day I wen1to Dot La.kc. Where my kidsgoin' go school.

***UpUnit* GerstlecircaI930**

We stay and my kids all finish school D01 Lake, and my husband died,

Doi Lake.

One liu.le house my friend. she's while woman. her name's Jackie. Her husband die. She lotta back me up when l need it.

Thisone gave me littlepiece of meat, little pieceof thing to keep it up.

And my husband died.

Took my husband back to Tanacross. He buried there.

From there I was out in brush all time.

My oldest daughter, Agnes take care o' Daisy and my son.theonedie. She's always there for me, my oldest daugh1er.

She's notmy oldest daughter, middle daughter. She's always there for her brother and her sister.

From there I slayDoiLake.

Some reason I don't want siayDot Lake. I take my kids.

"From the Big Gerstle to Sam Lake is approxima1ely twenly-three miles. The place where Ellen camped is about four miles from Doi Lake.

I callsome my friend pick me up. Back to Little Gerstle."

And I was out there in brush all (the) time. There's nothin' my kids couldn't eat. Sometime I come back twelve o'clock at night.

That's mykids I camper.

Exactly how the Native people's life. It's hard to get,to eat good whatever you want. We have to know what we do out there.

That's howI raise up my three children.

Many times I got lost out there on the brush meandmysnowshoes.

That many times I come back eleven o'clock at night or two o' clock in the morning.

I goin' tell thisstory.

This story reach out to someone's life10 be strong.

If you have to be woman, you had to be man.

I'm a woman. Igo through this lot of pain. But I made it. I always think I get up, '1 can't do."

Ialways think,"Yeah,I could do."

I goout see my trap line, my rabbit snare. I do anything for my kids to eat. Not for my kids (to)

be hungry.

I don't have welfare check, rdon't have food stamps like other peopledo.

I have hard life. I raise up my kids with trap line. Out thereon the land.

I raise my children with fish and ducks. Moose.caribou, everything what's in myway, I get it for my children

to eat.

Back days we don't have a 'frigerator.

When I got my food I had to stay on myfeet round the clock to dry my meat. My food, my fish,everything. I goua take care o' my berries the special way".

Too bad, I hope1 talk my native tongue, but it's hard for other people, English, can't understand. I'm Native. Here I have to talk to English. I really don't care that much, but it's okay.

I really work hard all pansof mylife.

"Following the epidemic in 1946 Ellen moved with her remaining family to the Little Gerstle where Chief John Healy moved his people. During her husband's subsequent illnessshe moved to Dot Lake to be near more people in the event of his death. At his death his body was iransponed to Tanacross where he was buried among his people. Following her husband'sdeath Ellen was mistreated at Dot Lake and moved with her children back to the Lillie Gerstle where she supponcd thementirely from the land. Later she moved to the Tok area and supponed herself and her children by working as a maid and cooking in a restaurant.

''Traditional Native peopleare very meticulous about food preparation and preservation.

We go out hunt.

My mother and my daddy go out, line(trapline). I'm 100 young. I can't help. I had 10 stay home. My mother and daddy had babysiner for me.

Sometimes my mother use gun.

The hardest one right there, my mother, she put gun in my daddy's hand.

He's blind.

He point that gun 10 moose and my mother say," Ready."

Mydaddy goin' pull trigger and my daddy goin' **get**

moose.

The greatest day he got that moose.

My mother and daddy work hard for that meat. They're both very old.

It's hard for me to talk about my back life. I force myself even 10 do this.



***Logan /.Mh, Ada Luke. Lucy Lu«.8 111lq***

***Mdntosh, FronkWU ,J /..Mu.***

Sometime, one day I don't know what to do. Some in the morning

!just don't know what 10 do.

Half an hour time I know what I goin' do. Get mysnowshoes and out.

Lucky sometimes two hours I sleep.

I come in and I have to cook for my kids. Whatever I got I have 10 cook for my dog. Take care of my animals best as I can.

It's hard if my husband die, butto me I'm verystrong 10 handle everything. I always think, "My culture, Native life very precious to me."

Weputour food.

You go out in the brush. I go OUI in the brush.

I begin learn and I go out in brush I know which one.

If you got no bucket, you know what you doing. You know how to cook out there.

You got out there and you got no nothing.

You takesome part out o' moose. You goin' wash it. You goin' dig theground. You heat up you rock. With clean stick you put you rock in that thing and meat already in thin' cook for yourself if you know what you doing.

You anention, you listen 10 grandmother and grandfather, you goin' **learn.**

That's way I grown up. It is hard to look back. I goin' skip it lillle bit.

My word it's kind of hard for me. Some part I have to bequiet.

'Cause when I was small my mother die. And Idon't know I'm just three yearsold. Some reason been blessed.

I'm just three yearsold, my mother die. This one goin' adopt me.

M.y step-brother" pack me around. He's not my brother, just a step-brother. He pack me around. Nobody around.

He's twelve yearsold. I'm three years old.

His father, Chief Luke and Frank Luke go to Healy Lake. They both run, father and brother run intosome woman. The old man, his wife ready to die.

He left his wife with us, with his son. And by time I bury.

Don't know what to do.

We have my mother's body in the back bedroom and my step-brother shut"curtainy" and no fire going. It's cold.

I ask my brother,"Where's our mother?" I thought she's really our mother. I don't know. I'm just very young.

And my brother told me my mother sleep.

I'm three yearsold and I can't believe that my mother sleep all time. My mother make me blanket. Little rabbit robe, crochet.

That's my favorite blanket.I'm not shame of whatever I have to say. I sleep behind stove.

That's where l want.

I got lit1le homemade bed, but I don't sleep in the bed. I always sleep behind stove on the floor. That's where I want it. Nobody make me do.

And I growin' up.

Lateron I asked my step-brother again. He don't know what to tell me.

One night I want sleep with my brother. My brother's only twelve yearsold.

I hold my brother's neck. l went to bed. I fell asleep and cried. I want know where's my mother.

J was crying and went 10 bed.

This part I real don't want talk about but I do this. I try roskip it, but I can't. I ask my brother again, "When my mother goin' get up?"

He say,"Let her sleep.Let her peaceful." l say."Okay." And then I ask my brother,

" I want sleep with you.'· "Goahead."

And then I bring my linle blanket and I hold my brother.

I went to bed.

"Abraham Luke

Twelve o'clock night I get off the bed and I drag my liule blanket. I go bedroom. Look around, feel around for my mother and dad. My daddy not there. He'sgone Healy Lakesomeplace.

This is I talk about is Goodpaster. That's where I goin' beadopt.

All my lifeall the way through, don't tum outgood for me. The woman goin' adopt me die. Her name's Anne Luke. She die 'stead o'.

After I sneak out,outo' my brother and I go in bedroom. Feel around. I'm *so* small.

1goua touch my mother's face. It'scold. And I take my Little blanket and I crawl in with my mother. Try to warm her up.

Thisis saddest one if somebody listen(to) this. Give you good life. Straight you life up.

This, this one I talk about it's painful.

I sleep with my mother and covered with my little blanket. Try to warm her up. I can't warm her up.

My brotherget up. He look around outside for me. He thought I went out.

Mybrother can't find me and finally my brother look in the back, here I sleep with my mother. And my brother take me and my brother cried all day.

My brother take me out. He pack me. He set snare for rabbits. One rabbit die. One rabbit's alive.

My brother tell me this rabbit die, that's mymarnma die.

**This one, live one, that's you and me.**

And I can·, understand. I can't understand what my brother talk about it.

After long time and Frank Luke and his father come back. I told my brother, " Make me little stick." He asked me why.

''Nothing, I want play with. I want real pretty one." (I)play with my little hand. I do. And my brother make me a little stick.

"Why you want that stick?"

"I just want play with. I want long one."

And then hedon't know what I plan on. I'm three yearsold. Abraham Luke told me by time I'm three yearsold.

Old man and Frank Luke come back. Old man go bedroom and old man cry.

I'm just three years old. I club that old man down. I told, "You throw away my mother.

My mother die without eat." I thought my mother die nobody feed, but it don·1tum out like that she just goin' begone anyway.

I club that old man down, his leg and everything. He just run out, never bother me. Old man understand why little one think.

So he run out and he go out hunt.

He bury herover there cemetery. He don·1even dress her. I 'member just likesome reason just like I make picture.

I win the land for this story. " Later on he have potlatch.

Even back days my uncle go round from village 10 village. Walk

Right now Fish and Wildlife gonna have car and everything fly, butdon't. Myuncle walk.

Boat to village to village, my unclego.

Myuncle, one day my unclecame. He bring me some Little good in his pocket and little mukluk and little mitts and I show my uncle to meat cache.

'N (inaudible) old man and old man half-brother in trouble. One of them still teasin' me before he die.

And when he gave me cane, his cane, hegoin' bedie tomorrow. He told me, "You and me, we got two different mother.

- {;; And you good friend of mine.

,} , '\_'

•·

.*l\* 'i\ **:**; **1i toldme.**

**., t-1**We not related to each other.

·**1J 1** •! My name. myclan's namedifferent. Yourclan's namedifferent," he

:,,,. ***-!c*** And I say, "I understand. but I like for you be my brother, 'cause I

1

Ii l \' don't have brother."

· " . *i* And that from there he have potlatch;

Oh and all potlatch all over and then Frank Luke moved over there and married LucyLuke.

That's hiswife and Chief Luke married to Mary Healy16•

But me, from Goodpaster go right straight to where my new mother and new daddy.

*OldCJ,;,J11,a1y* Covered me with brand new blanket he hand to me to my mother, Selene.

The boy thought 10 be the day,and bytime all my relatives come along meet me and he had

dinner with me and all that, adopt me. Back daysyoujust don·t grab a person. You gotta havebig dinner.

You gotta get together and chief. They goin• talk all to chief.

And then this chief say,"No". it'sgoin' beno, no. Chief say, "yes". He asked chief.

"Here Ellen is refening to testimony that she gave in a Bureau of Land Management documentary hearing held in Tanacross in 199I. Hertestimony was pan of the evidence to win an allotment in the Goodpaster area for one of her relatives.

"Mary Healy was 1hedaughter of Old Chief Healy and sister to John Healy who succeeded his fatheras chief of Healy l...lke.

Chief Healy say, "It's okay. You guysdon't have kids. Bring her up good."

So that's howI brought up over there. I grown upover there. Thar's myvillage. 11·s real where I'm belongoverthere.

Every timeI come home, this village jus1peaceful life for me. I did so manythings woman can't do.

Onelime weout of food. Our chief "go our and crap all time. Summer time he work on boat. He have bunch of food. Heshare all whole village: rice, sugar. wha1ever people need.Thar's our chief.

We real help with chief in this village.

People never hateeach othereither. We go1little food. Idon't care what time of night we ge1 together. We eat.

Ourfavorite food are the moose s1omach.

Everything what's wefavori1e food we eat

We lucky we ear sometime fresh food when plane land.

On the lake,sometime he bring us fresh food. But we don'I care about bacon and eggs.

We liveon the land. I still do. I don't care abou1anything I jusl want to eat my meat and soup. Weget old we wanl ear our own food.

And I always think in my mind I don't know whyFish and Wildlife look al the people, 'specially 1hisvillage.

To me some1ime I really don't care that much Fish and Wildlife, but that's their job too.

Bur this village, people live on the land. All fish. ducks, everything.

From there10I moved to Liule Gerstle.

My niece." we got liule ten1out there and me and my kidsstay there and with me and my niece and her mo1her.

Her husband die too. Webo1h havea hard time.

J remember we, her and I, we always go out there in the brush after l go LiuleGerstle.

We make company to each 01her. Some1ime we don't even eat decent

Whal we goin' eat,what 1goin' ear I give ii to my children, 'slead of. Better my kidseat 's1ead of me.

Why should I goin' eat? I don't want my kids hungry. I never shame of my story and my history.

Sometime I make my flour mix. Make little bit sug...

"John Healy "Jeanie Healy

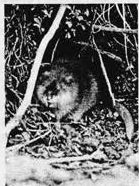
I goout, I dig it out roots. You guysdon't know about roots. Idig it out roots. *1* wash it. I chop up and I boil.

Tastes just like potatoes and I mix with lillle bito' rice. There·s lillle dinner for my kids.

Maybe liule bitof biscuit.

Sometime my kids never Wedon't eat good sometimes.

I'm a woman I goua work. I gona stand on my feet. I think all pan of my lifeI real work hard. Fony-five years I work in a job. Anyplace job I have to walk. Sometimes I walk two mile to gel my job. Right now all peoplegot job so easy life. They jump in the car and takin' off. Still say woman," Ah, I'm tired." I don't believe that. Some think,"Oh,I'm so old, Ican't donothing."

Me, I don't believe. Gotta go out do something. Don't think about you own body, you so tired. We have to do a lot of things in this village.

We move10 Dot Lake some reason. I can't sayhow he treat me.

I not talk about it.

And I move back to Healy Lake and Volkmar19, our trapline. I put my kidson sleigh and r take 'em out.

From Little Gerstle and my three kids, we all walk back with our feet to Big Gerstle"'.

All the way down we follow river.

Where my husband used to have campfire for us, we make campfire. AndJ put little bit up no mauer winter time.

Make sure my kids warm.

Make sure my kidseat good 'stead o' me.

***Dt,anh/Muskrat***

We walk all the way back from Little Gerstle 10 down there where our tradin' post. The boats been left quite a while ago in there.

I go out, I pick all those pitch;

and I melt it all the pitch and I fix all the boat.

And I let the boat dry liule bit and I put that boat in the water and 1 test the boat. No water in there.

Either way, no choice or else I have to go without eat for my kids.

Nochoice for me. I put dog and my three children I let the boat go..

I'm in the boat with pie pole. I made it to otherside.

My boat gonna sink down. 1 throw my kids in the bank.

They're in water up 10 my waist and I pack my baby. We got linle house there.

19The Volk.mar Riveris about four miles into the bush from Healy Lake.

»r"his is a distanceof about five miles.

Native people say. *"ts'edoghanih".*

*"Ts'edogha11ih*", it'smean "You gona prepare". Goua prepare. No maller where you go, you gona prepare.

If you don't,every way you gonna be hungry.

Where I always go. I put rice or flour,anything. Just put it in a can. Have it for something.

I did.

When I get back to house, we eat good.

Next day I go 10 other side to Healy,10 Volkmar where my mother left the house for me. Myaunt. My aunt gave me that log house before she gonna died.

She told me I could have that house.

I stay with my kids all winter.

My oldest daughter take care of brother and sister. I was up there, trap.

Fall time.Even Fall timeI go out, trap for rats.

I do that for meat. I use skin. I tan.

I make my kids 'n little moccasin and mills. Mydaughter. I make liule rats11 coat for her. Don't know what happened 10.

Lot of things.

I go ou, up there in my winter time I use my snowshoes.

I told my children, oldest one, I say,"When you guys have eat. careful. You brother and you sister goin' choke with food."

She's very good with her sister and brother. She always there when I was oul there,

One time almost I never make it home 10 my kids.

That day if I never make it home. I don't know what happen 10 my kids. My two kids. I got lost out there. Dark. I don't know where I'm at.

I don't even protect myself with flashlight. I have matches in my pocket everything.

I know I'm goin' build fire but yet where I'm at and I worry about my kids. I don't know what to do.

I goin' round and round and round that one island. But somehow I stop. Srnnd up in the road.

That time, I don't know. People pray. My mother pray 101when she die.

Mymother's verygood Christian woman. She broughl me up.

That's why I had good life. I don't want...

I don·1 wan, feel bad towards to people either.

"muskrat fur

I don't talk about people's life either.

I stand in my snowshoes. I gettin' freeze. I know my whole body gettin' shake

and in the end, I don't even have strength to move my hand. My feet just like ice. Too cold. Sweat. Walk all night.

It close to three o'clock in the morning. I stop.

Iask.

rask people pray and I say, "God help me. God help me. Take me to myfamily, my children."

That's my biggest pray. He did open up for me. I find my trail. T take it home.

My kids,'n had candle. I never say nothing. I just walk in. She always had tea for me, hot tea. Twice l almost loose my lifeout there. Had to feed my children.

But I beat it. Today they all tum around, baby me' round. They always spoil me. Whatever I want, I get it too.

Mydaughter never tells me, "No".

Myson used to treat me like that. From Northway, come down. Bring meat, fish, anything what I wish it, brings it. And my son's gone All my grandkids treat me good.

Today l make it up. I real havegood life. I not wish for nothing.

It's hard. lf we don't tryin our feet, we goin' be hungry. We can't do nothing. We have to real try to be understand what we do.

After close to Christmas, I got new worries100. Genin' snow.

I got little bit of flour. linle bitof sugar. I sell my stuff. sewing stuff. Buy 'nough groceries, go back.

I told my oldest daughter, I goin' make a trail.

I told her what she goindo if I never come back.

"Even you see plane up there, you gona goout,showing something". Middle nowhere out there, just meand mykids.

l start to walk three 'clock in the morning for l make snowshoes trail. Next morning I hitch up dog.

Hestand behind sleigh and was set off with snowshoes, pack my li1tle baby.

We made it to other side and our house.

Next day I make trail to Big Gerstle and I come back three o'clock in the morning for my kids. Sleepcouple hour and takin' off again and we made it to highway.

All my fear.

I just stand in road and I catch rideand I bring back my kids clothes and food. Then, aftereverything's senled, Christmas come up.

Ican't even afford a buy something. *1* make linle moccasins for my three children, my two

daughters and my son. I just put it, hang behind Christmas tree.

My kidsused to stand in front of Christmas tree same way, so happy. After we stay at Dot Lake for long time...

Some reason !just can't getalong any place where I go.

I don't know why. Just nothing the same like before. After [ move to my own village. Tanacross they have Christmas and that time I was got job, got Jillie job.

Five dollars an hour I got paid.



Eighty-one dollars I save. I don't spend my one dollars foolish way. I put that five dollars...

The house I stay, no door, no window. Winter time so cold. I cut wood 'round the clock to keep it warm.

I go someplace, somebody's dog come in my house. Eat my linle bit of food. I end up nothing.

I tell them,"You guys' dog, tie."

Nobodysay nothing. Sometime just for that we go hungry.

I geta job. I save money. J save money. I don't mess around with my money. I real careful. These guys stop. I order all supplies for my house. Everything.

Once again Fred gave me hand. I work right along with them. I helphim work and we had nice little work. Wann house.

It's Dot Lake. And then I move up to Tanacross.

Westayed Tanacross for while; not too long.

And I went up to Northway. Stayed there for while.

And moved back to Forty Mile. I was workin' seven daysa week Forty Mile.

My first job is at Dot Lake.

I noteducated. I just came from a liule village and I went there.to DotLake. When kidsgo school. my first job's there. I got hotel room out there 'n takecare.

That's '52. That's my first job. Ever since I work 'till two years ago. ['m retirement. That fivedollars an hour I worked for it.

Even though I just take care my money. We livea good. After all we livea good. I (inaudible) ever I do.

And my first grandchild 's Mary Lou.

And my first grandson's Lee Henry, n' Mary Lou Paul. The first grandkids I got.

Meand my daughter, we think of in the world my otherdaughter, Daisy,she think the world of her nephew.

I started off with two, onegirl and onedaughter.

I don't stay very long where I move, but I work Dot Lake.

He put me work in Children Home. I work Children Home, hotel room, kitchen, bake.

I don't goschool. If someone listen this morning, you not educated, don't you think you not educated.

You know what youdoin' and what you do, what you had 10 do, you gona think about it. You don't have 10 think you can't do. I don't. I never think like that.

In the morning you get up. you prepare for what yougoin...· My boss taught me just onlyone day and I catch on.

I work from there, I work all summer.

Don't know how long I work there. It's linle bit toocheap for me so I asked this missionary, Bob Green. I asked if he could find me job.Then he went up to Forty Mile.

He asked Mabel Scoby and Ray Scoby and,"Yeah, we need one."

Theytell Bob Green if rm a good worker. Bob Green say,"Yes."

I went to Forty Mile{Forty Mile Road House)". J went 10 work. I had room and board. I had everything what I need there, and he set me up real good.

The wages not very much, but it's good. I had room and board, everything.

I use freeelectricity and oil and my boss pay for it.

I work there almost eight years. Seven days week job.

I work long time and I send my son 10 Edgecomb school and he finish Edgecomb school. He gradua1e that, my young son.

And my otherdaughtergo to Anchorage to college for three mon1hs and she, some reason, she can't make it so she come home.

And from there I was work for Scoby and from there I gota job Northway. I work for man and wife holel room and kitchen.

Both way I work.

I work there two summer for Millerand his wife.

From there and I don't care1ha1 much 10 work there 'cause hehave bar there.

I don't like people drinkin' So I .move back 10 Forty Mileand I work little bit again and then I move back to Tok

'Sixty-four, I move back to Tok.and I work there, there, there, there, and my last heavy job"s a pipeline camp.

Once again cookin' kitchen. That's my last hard work.

From there1 work, go back to Tok. I go 10 work to Rec. Center. With old people I was busaide twelve years.

All together, twenty years I work for with old people.

And I in kitchen. Every job I got. I goua bein kitchen. That's why l say you don't need educated to work.

You goua know what you doing. 1 know what I goin' cook. I know what I goin' prepare. I take care of myself for so many, many, many years.

I used to operated everything whatever.

l don't need, I don't ask somebody 10do for me.

Now I need a lot of help. Can't do1ha1 much anymore. I real careful for whatever I do.

I jus1gona careful.

From there I scnle Tok. Ever since 'sixty-four! live in Tok. Still today, but in the future I want move back to Healy Lake. I have mind where I go through.

That's what I want for myself.

Lot of thing we could do.

''This isanoldlandmark roadhouse al Tetlin Junction where the Taylor Highway begins.

It is twelve miles east of Tok Junction.

And my young son, married to Nonhway2'

He had three lovely children, one adopt daughter.

Got two girl and two boys Nonhway to where my son.

My history story far as Nonhway, Tok,Tanacross, Lillie Gerstle. We stancd off with Big Gerstle, Goodpaster, Old Chena village. I had tocancel some. Some very sad.

Maybe some other time, makes up my mind, I might talk about it. But not

**now.**

But right now I goin' teU little bit story from the village. I gain' talk around our chief.

Ourchief, he work in the boat.

He's verygood hunlin'. He's very good trap line. That's Pat and Jo Ann's grandfather."

Their grandma live with.

Not too long ago my cousin Jimmy pass away. We all related 10 each other in this village.

We not different from each other.

Ourchief, he go store. He bring back load of groceries with sleigh.

He pass around flour and sugar 10 village.

Sometime he go Fairbanks he bring back truck load 10 Lillie Gerstle. Bring with dog team.

He's very good chief.

Just sometime I just want a he live with us today. But he left a lot of good grandkids to us.



***Rosthlps***

Down fish camp that's where at this time we goua move to fish camp. We gonna have fish trap. We gonna have fish for our survival all winter.

Wegonna smoke fish, butour fresh fish goin' be, wesmoke it little bit, whole fish, we smoke it Jiule bit and we put it away in the cache.

Grease, moose head we goin'chopped up. We goin' make greaseout o' moose fat

Sometime we put berries

and fish oil. We goua fix it. We boil fish oil. We put water in there. We boil it It just tastes like, come out like bacon grease.

And we mix with dry berries, blue berries. It's forold people.

"ralben Felix, Ellen's son married Lorraine Alben from Nonhway. "John Healy

Rose hip, yougot your porcupine. You cut up porcupine fat. Youget greaseout o' porcupine. You mix with rose hip. That's jus1 vitamin C. And we make dry meat.

But then we take moose s1omach, whole moose stomach, we take it ou1. We dry. and we have lot dry meat.

We pound1ha1 meat soft.

Weputthat moose stomach inside the ground. We put stick around. We put grease in there. Af1ergrease cool off. weputourdrymeat.

Tha1's real special food.

We never eat big either,just linle piece. That's enough for last up.

Old people real careful for their food. Nevereat all time just gotta eat good. Used to tell us, "Eat good breakfast."

Maybe we eat good dry meat, maybe some kind of fried potato with 111oose grease.

You gona prepare everything: blueberries, cranberries. high bush berries, all kind, wild rhubarb. You just know what you doing. You gotta put it away.

I think lots this Healy Lake.

Every time I come down and here the kids 'n come with meat 'n just every time l come Healy Lake I gain weight.

That's why I got smart.

While ago Ray'-' bring me good moose meat, whatever I'm hungry for.

Us Na1ive, we gotta haveour fish,ducks. meat, moose.caribou, porcupine, anyihing on the land we hungry for.

That's where we loose many, many. many people without the food.

I live in Tok. I don't eat all those.

Pat and Jo Ann, they always bring me dry meat and whatever, ducks, everything.

Right now I not hungry any more. I don't wish for meat anymore 'cause all my niece family 'n grown up.

They all keep tryin' to help me.

I real proud of my village and way I want kids run.

Compare to other village, people live on those easy money. Make you lazy. You just sit on you butt in chair.

You bring, money come to you. You depend on so much.

Mostly that right now I waitin' for mysocial security.

My liltle retirement check not very big. I don't have a lot of income like other people. l had 1wo-fifty in my little retirement money. It's notenough.

Righi now oil cost too much. Idon't know if I gonna survive or...

Mydaughter ' n always help me. But we have to be strong for that. We don't go hungry. The reason I say this, I want this one. young children here in this village...

Fall time

*Nan tet 1a11h.*That's mean, Fall time. leave tum to yellow. Leave gettin' old. Fell down here.

11Ray Fifer, Healy Lake resident, Ellen's nephew

You young , yougonna sleep.

That's nogood. They don't let us do that, Fall time. It'snogood. She don't let us do that Fall time. Fall time he just treat us bad.

We train just likearmy. We never talk back. We never nag to nobody for that. We gotta do.

Believe it or not, we go out camp. Shecamp mile from creek. Little bitof snow out there. We gotta run.

Native people don't believeon drink overnight water'°.

Other day, mydaughter talk about. Gee, I just bust up with laugh. How she 'member that?

My mamma, me and my brother we pack water and me and my sister we pack water.

My mamma spill it in morning timeearly.

My mamma tell us pack waterand we look at each other. We don't say nothing.

We get water and she tell her granddaughter just , "Gee, here all forget it". We godown without socks. We go down by the creek. "You goin' have wrinkle on you face." We wash our face **with cold water, ice water.**

We had10 do our hand like that and show them our wrinkle.

And we bring back fresh waterand boys go out and get fresh wood. Native people are tough. Don't have easy life.

That's where Pat learn from, hisgrandma." I guess hisgrandma talk to.

Pat don't have easy life. He go out pack in his wood, paddle canoe, get fish. I not brag about it, but I real proud of Pat way he keep his life up.

He make lot o' little good stuff for his relatives too. He put little bitof food on the side for us.

Even taste. Very proud of.

ln the village over there, we go out hunt. We got moose.

That Friday night we get up and we all eat together, fresh food. You go out campfire, yougotta have stick tocook you meat. You got no pot and pan, but you still gonnacook.

You still gonna eat,maybe you gonna drink water.

You got lost and you real got lost, you know which one to eat outo' moose. Little bito' (indiscernible)give you strength.

All thoseI know. That'sa real about all I know, I 'member all the story. My grandpa and my mother and daddy pass meon all I know.

And I got lot of things to talk about it.

'"Tanacross elders alsoshare this view. The water becomes stale having sat overnight. ln the villages of the Upper Tanana the children weresent to the creek to wash, 10 bring fresh water and to pack firewood for the household early each morning. This was pan of their training for becoming adults.

"Ellen's nephew, Patrick Saylor. Chief of Healy Lake. His grandmother was Jeanie Healy. She helped raise him after the deathof his mother.

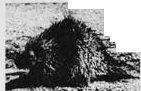
Lotssacred way we take careourself. *Lot* o' good way we can do.

And sometime, *don't* tum outgood. We goin' get together, we goin' talk about it. 1always put my grandkids together. l live with them, I pass on 10 my life to them. Some my grandkids don't listen.

I ask one my grandson I'm strong. That's Roben Paul. Lei's go down river. Go with me.

·-=,....,.,..,.

I goi·n show you how 10 work for food.



·- , "No, Grandma, it's 100 cold. J don'! have patient for those."

*'\_,·.:.* I thought, "Gee.what kind o' kid's1ha1?" Rum, J don't taught grandkids

- .-: any more.

But right now I really work hard with one.

Al least one I want to learn outo' me10 pass on 10otherone.

**Tsii'r *Porcupin***

Old people talk to young people, just don't ignore. You betler stop listen that.

Old grandpa.old grandma say something, you dropeverything for them".Respect. Listen. You goin' learn something our o' them. Maybe this person, maybe this woman, maybe she *don't* know.

Maybe she goin' learn something from this rape. Maybe someone goi·n be strong from this tape. Whoever goin' listen to this tape goin' be strong. "If Grandma can do, we could do."

Thepain sometime we run into bad pain.

My mother and daddy told me," Don't run into that sharp pain.

Thal trail you walk, sharpstick goin'...stick like that, you goin' run into." You know what ii mean? That's notstick.

You go run in10 you real hate on you hean 1ha1sister and brother. You run into the trouble. You can't back up. You already there. All these that we have to understand, we have 10 listen.

This village, quite a few children out there.

I want this rape, 1 want them kids listen, learn something from all out o' the campfire, all I talk, campfire cook.

You could cook your dry fish in campfire.

Moose *fat,* you gonna cook moose *fat.* And you gonna eat moose fat and dry fish together. Maybe dry meat.

You heavy food you gonna boil. You drink soup.

No junk in there.

I want my soup, no salt. no pepper, no nothing. I don't want no ketchup in my food either.

I want eat my porcupine. I want it been clean, burned.just like old day. You don't skin

porcupine. Take flavor out.

"All of the villages of the Upper Tanana region share the traditional valueof respect for elders. This was and is manifest in special food delicacies set aside for them, consideration for their warmth, comfon and safety and in gift distribution at po1la1ches.

You don't wash you stomach moose stomach just pure white, you got flavor out. I'm Indian woman I want my food just perfect way I grown up.

Thisone, I want young people listen. He always wash food too much and flavor out. Ruin that food when you wash 100 much.

You got you fresh meat up there. Leave on meat cache. You smoke it ljttJe bit and go ahead work on. Put it away.

You don't wash you food too much. Us native people, we don't lik.e that. Make sure you cut you meat good. Clean.

Make sure yougotta havesomething under you moose before you skin. Make sure you prepare. Make sure whatever you goin' do

Fish, what's out there on the land, rabbits, I think I still 'member all how to take care of food.

I could. I takecare o' your rabbits. You goin' eat you rabbits all winter without 'n freeze, without 'n spoil. Guess I gettin' so tired so....(laugh) 'till tomorrow...

Interview with Ellen Demit Healy Lake

August 16, 2000

interviewers: Don Callaway & Connie Friend

This is Don Callaway. It'sAugust16th and we're continuing to talk with Ellen Demit. Ellen, go ahead.

El.len:Okay.

Over there in old village.

That's my teenage days to where I growin' up, and l gonna talk about this morning

over there old village.

The name that's Indian word, *Mendees Cheeg* That's Healy River. He had biggest potlatch"'.

People come from all over:

Copper Center, Tazlina, Northway, Tanacross, Tanana, Nenana, Fairbanks. People all

over.

The back daysyou never jwnp in a car and a boat. Big boat, people travel around to villageover there.

Up there where Paul & stay that's where bigboatland. 1was young.

I thought that's war goin' be. Whatever people

,.

This was the "Famous Potlatch of Healy Lake" in 1927. Old Chief Healy and his small band decided to hold a memorable potlatch and invited all of the bandsof the Upper Tanana and the Copper River area. The Copper *River* Natives were wealthier due to their rich salmon resources and far more numerous. However, Chief Healy was not known for being shy or particularly humble and so the invitations weresent out. come and "Have tea with me". The "tea" cost Chief Healy and his small band of approximately eight families between$15,000 and $20,000 in blankets, rifles, ammunition, tobacco, coffee, tea ,sugar, flour, rice, raisins, canned fruit and a host of other gifts and provisions for the invited guests, by far one of the most elaborate potlatches held in the Upper Tanana region. This amounted to the total depletion of all their worldly goods.( Endicott, H.W.1928:104-105 and Simeone,W.E.1995:39).

I thought they goin'shoot us out"'but it didn't tum out like that. That's potlatch. Potlatch, people goin call *so/ cltee.*

That's the peoplegoin'come visit us.

Share the love with us. Biggest potlatch I ever see when I was small.

Okay I gonna start it allover again. I makes up my mind to talk.

Wehad beautiful fivedays maybe two week potlatch,

and we had all those nativefood. Who makin' potlatch?

My mother and Daddy, Chief Healy,John Healy, Paddy Healy, Mary Healy.

And he all get together the potlatch.

Back days they don't bring stuff inside.

( I had to use some my native word between and I gonna explain my English word.) . They have(inaudible) that (inaudible) all the way to hillside.

(Inaudible) he haveblanket, gun, beaverskin,fur,moose skin, moccasin, skin coat, jacket, everything, moccasin.everything.

He put it there.

During the night he covered. Very *injii31*

30

Thecustomary greeting when two bands met was for the approaching band to

firea volleyof rifleshots and the hosts to firea volley in response or viceversa. Ellen, beinga small child at that time mistook the greeting for a signal of war.

" For traditional peopleof the Upper Tanana supernatural forces or spirits(both animal and human) were powerful influences not to be ignored. To holda large

That'ssuperstitious.

He havea stick.

Clean special stick go for all the way up to the hill, the one each place potlatch.

Each house

end of that stick, lot of stuff,

almost half an on top the hill.

Thestuff, every one of them makin' potlatch and he all work together. Each househe cook dry meat, fish.

Woman makin' biscuit.

Back daysyou even use moose grease to makin' your donut. Even back daysl remember he makin' donuts with moose grease, even though he have lard fromstoreand everything.

But that's way potlatch.

And if we are Native, we have to useour own food to cook. I 'member almost two week and he take it down.

Back time our chief, Chief Healy cut all his hairoff'2. He shave his hairoff.

know why he do that?

He'sso happy his relative from all over visit.

Oneof Walter Northway"ask,

potlatch was an enormous responsibility both materially and spiritully. There were many ritualsand taboos involved and these required strict adherence or catastrophe could strike.

Hair was sometimes cut or singed by the Upper Tanana Athabaskans as a physical sign of grievingor to driveoff evilspirits as in the case of bad dreams or sleepwalking.

"

" Walter Northway who lived to be well overone hundred yearsold was chief of Northway village. He maintained a close relationship with Healy Lake throughout h.is

"Gee,*shee'eh,* why you do that?"

That's mean, "Uncle, why you cut your hair?" That's what it means,*"Diiglra t'inde'p,shee'elr".* Chief Healy say,

"Ts'i'naa• "."Ts'inaa• shaanahdeedl"

In my English say,

Chief Healy say, "Thank you to come to havea tea with me." He don't say potlatch,

no.

He just gonna say,"Havea tea with me."

He havea tea for two weeks and no more boats.

Close to Fall time.

After potlatch, two week potlatch,

he gavedry meat,dry fish,everything.

And some boat go through to even to very cold.

Some go back with boat with a giftof gun, blanket, mooseskin,all native work. He had a very long potlatch.

People danced every night. One night some people say, "Alaski fire fires,"

and you know what'sit mean? He wants "chew."

So what my daddy did, hegot case of snuff. My daddy open little bit.

This is funniest part.

It'snotreal funny but to me. Back daysI'm teenage days.

Heopened each can snuff,opened little bit and hesay,"Alaski firefires" and my daddy just throw out there on the floor.

Someopen.

People sneeze,sneeze,sneeze. And us we peekin' from out there. We peek little thing mouth,

and we look through long life.

and we just laugh, laugh. Nobody see us.

Out there bunchof kid.

And the back days youreal strict. Pretty strict.

We never go out there where people cook. We never ask for food.

Nothing.

All this village, they all get together.

Makin' party for the uncle, brother, the one loose loved one been gone long timeago. All take it out.

Right now you're goin' have more than potlatch. Onceagain I have to use my own language.

*"Naniid;/q tahetts'aay 'iin ey'iin xxaadaxuxda'aalxrmadet'ey ell'eey clr'axoxtalrdiil ts'axoxdey'".*

That's mean I say,

"You dig it out that person die long timeago. The hurt inside so bad".

That's mean lot o' tear run down to your cheek.

Right now young people growin' up can't understand what potlatch. People makin' potlatd1, but yet no one perfect.

No, myself, I still learn.

I learn from my mother and daddy and my grandfather. And our chief.

Cf Lee Saylor's statement, p. 144 *"I've got a little notebook with someplace that Arthur Healy had written in and it was May1943 and* Ire *was saying one place, you know Belle Samdied that dayand t/1e11 Selene died and you know just little notes in that. And you know Ire was sick at that time with TB. So this 11h, that tlrat thing kind of* /ras,*1 think it's marked all the people in Healy Lake and what's been passed down011 it ..."* High mortality from epidemics, forced relocations and the grief that accompany these traumas are all contributing factors to the high incidence of substance abuseamong Alaska Natives today.

That's where all I learned these ever since my young days I growin' up.

I grown up with love.

I reach down toold grandpa and old grandma.

I goin' put thislittle story for what's love mean But*1* want finish this potlatch.

There's quitea bit, little bit story, long timestory.

After two weeks the biggest cook, Whole village.

Maybe fifty pound flour been cook..

Biscuit, oven biscuit, donuts,dry meat, lot of native food,special food.

Right now we never think fix *special* food. I would.

I still remember how my mother and daddy passed me on to me. I could do anything with native food.

Special way,special food I could fix it.

Thispotlatch,

after two week each one who goin' make potlatch talk with our chief. "We're goin'do this,we're goin'do this,

okay with you?"

Chief not goin'say nothing. He don't answer.

That mean, "Oh oh.".

Then later on he think, he say,

"You gottado this,you gotta do this." "You have to do this".

Soeverybody all get together. Everything okay.

Back daysone gottaget up speech. From our village,

other place,

other chief from other village.

Back days you just don't just come in to village potlatch. No.

I still respect.

If Tanacross people invited, Tetlin,

all, every each village the chief gotta go ahead of them. And little ways from village they goin'shoot.

From villageour chief goin'shoot two time. Other chief goin' shoot two.

That's four shot.

And then he goin' meet.

Thisis really bad too part I talk about. Hegoin' meet each other chief.

He goin'speech out there where he meeteach other. Other one from other village and other one from this side. They goin speech.

They goin' talk over.

If everything's okay, then they goin'come to village. They goin' bring all that thing into village.

Back days, like yesterday I talk about little bit but not whole. Today I goin' finish it talk about this potlatch deal.

They have a all those things.

Everything prepared and they all goin' get together. People dance.

They have hatson.

You lose loved one in the morning time you get up early. Sadness, you go for walk.

Maybe you see moose. Maybe fox.

Anything ahead of you go through. You just stopstand. That's where music come out.

Very hard to make music. Not that easy.

You have to make song for big person. You gotta put lot of word in there.

You just don't make it any way Don't make song, no.

You gotta take a your time to make song.

This is J talk to Healy Lake potlatch way I don't know how many years ago. I 'member what year, but I can't,I don't want to make a state(ment).

That's biggest potlatch we ever have for me in my youngdays.

Also l want keep this village exactly I growin' up. 1gotta talk about.

Put all the kids together before we're goin' have thislittle potlatch for my nephew. We're goin'feed children outside.

Just old people are goin'stay inside the community hall. Wegotta do it and we gotta keepit upour a culture".

Wedon't have to give up our a culture.

Wedon't have to act like we different person, no. High school, we gotta keep our a culture.

Our a cullureis more than everything and good for the children and the future. Our kidsgoin' learn.

Kids listen.

Me, I couldn't do.

That's why I guess we have tape recorder.

I had lot a pressure for this thing when done I run into. Lot a sad.

But today I'm very strong for that now. Yesterday was real hard for me.

And when potlatch ready each house hebring that stick. He take it down.

He bring blanket.

Everything.

Inside community hall,

inside community hall he put... He don't put blanket in there. He don't put blanket in there. He put caribou skin,

tanned one,

sewing together make like hugecanvas.

Right now he gonna use tub and everything, visqueen, but back dayschief makin' potlatch.

Chief's son makin' potlatch.

Sew caribou skin, tanned one he sew all together. He put it on the floor.

Each one that placehe gotta put skin in there

"

Thisis Ellen's word for "culture". See Gary Holton's "Healy Lake Language" p. xvii

and put blanket and gun and arrow36

and moose skin, beaver skin, lynx, all kind animal skin out there on the land. That's what we try to do in thisour village.

I doin' the talk lots with this my grandkids, my niece and his kids. I got talk with them all time.

They don'tdo right I say, "Stop".

The word not right for me I say,"Don't say that." We have to help each other.

Other one don'tdo good you have to softly say, "Don't do that. I don't think it's right."

Gotta respect for the one you not related and *Naltsiin.*

This village is *Naltsiin37* village. Is very special village.

Very strong.

Strong village.

And I don't brag for my village but only I know very strong people used to liveover there.

Big people.

Chief makin' potlatch.

No one bring that stuff before chief.

Chief gotta tell all her son and bring her stuff.

That special gift he wanted she go out and bring herself. She bring it all that potlatch stuff.

And then he goin' tellone of son,oneofdaughter. My mom and daddy they all bring that stuff.

But you never come before chief. You gotta respect.

And she bring allstuff and that community hall, biggest community hall we ever had.

,.

Chief Healy was known for being an outstanding hunter, trapper and provider.

" *Naltsiin* is one of the major clansof the Upper Tanana. Ellen takesgreat pride in her clan and in her village.

That's first community hall I growin' up. Thechief he decoration with fur.

Inside community hall I 'member lynx skin, beaver skin hangon the wall, fox. Rosa just tan one.

That's what *we* doin' right now.

Whatever we do right nowgoin' go down to all my family and my grandkids everyone of (uninteUigible).

I want even though I have to usesomebody community hall I still goin' do and my own a culture from this village.

Theonecome visit you, you real gotta treat them good and show the person that place to sleepand eat good.

That community hall all full people, got no room tosleep. Some and people invited the house,

but no matter old man, old granny you have to treat them right. Old grandpa, old grandma, thisone goin'give you good life.

Right now you think you young.

It'sokay, but that word will comeout, hityou sun'sgoin' down.

*Nasaaree'ffljde' sheg de',naasheg taa11mxara1/iil*

That time it's too late. The one try to touch you.

You ignore. It'stoolate.

Maybe that person goin' begone. This one all I growin' up.

Today I prepare for thisone.

That's why I have to tell wholestory. Idon't want make a (mi)stake.

After two weeks peoplego up Healy River. We pack the gift: dry meat.

No more boat.

People walk up all way up to Healy River.

It connect with Ketchumstuk, Northway and all go back walk. Even young girland go with her husband.

They all walk. Some pack baby.

Connect with they call k'aayk '38• That mean native word,

but that one Idon't know what's it stand for*k'aay k y'* butlater on I goin' think it out and I goin' speak it out. But it called *K'aay k y'.*

At Tanacross, Ketchumstuk and at Healy River

people pack the stuff, the gift all theway back to Tanacross. From there all, everybody go home.

Some and go home.

Show direction.

Some go home boat.

Take good maybesix days tocome back to that village. And it'slong walk.

On the way sometimes they kill moose and have a good time. Sit together and talk about potlatch deal

And its lotta thing.

They all,it close to fall time everybody all come home from this village. All over.

In theend,chief ,when all peoplego home,

chief he put neck.lace on everyone of's neck and tell good-bye, shake hand each other,

hug each other with neck.lace.

Back days all kind necklace real pretty expensive.

Thechief did.

Everyone of them he told, "Thank you very much." And they end this potlatch,

Healy Lake potlatch.

And the other hand from there Igoin' talk about other things. And this village, it just seems to me a lot of respect.

I stilldo.

I hope these young children in the futurelisten to this tapelearn something about it.

" *Kaay k{?{f* literally means"marmot den". It was also a place name for Old Chief Healy's camp about twelve miles up the Healy River from its mouth at the Tanana. (Mishler, Craig W., *1986:123)*

Nice to have things like that to remember.

We tapea thing, new sound, make new music.

In thesummer time you could do a lot of things for youout there for yourown food. Prepare.

And right now I goin' talk about little baby, newborn baby. Mother and father of the baby think two questions.

Back daysI really listen my mother and my dad and my grandfather. Whatever my mother tell me to do, I gotta do.

I had to train mybaby.

I don't feel sorry for my baby. Even my baby...

Many people think their youngest daughter is one of precious to them. It's not for me anymore.

Even my youngest daughter. Always talk very strong with her. We have to taught them.

Right now young kidssit on TV. Haveshort on. No socks.

I see lots my grandkidsdo that.

I don't let Darrel" do that in my house.

Darrel, he had to get dressed early in the morning whatever I say. I throw them out of there in the snow.

I tell them run for one block. I don't make this story.

That's what I clid Darrel, 'member? I throw them out.

Go out and run.

When you come back, don't stand next to *stove.*

Wedon't baby our baby, no. Wegot taught them.

" Darrel Felix, Ellen's adult grandson,son of her daughter Daisy Northway and Harold Northway. He *lives* with her occasionally.

The one we spoil them,ifwegone how do that baby goin'besurvive? How do that girl goin' bemother?

How do that girlgoin' takecareof her kids? But she don't listen his mother.

He don't listen his daddy.

Hedon't listen his grandfather. Nothing to pass on.

Sometimes*1* don't even want see my grandkids and just too much TV. Sit there all day just like nothing to do.

'Tm bored", kidsgonna say.

I wonder what's it mean, "I'm bored". I can't understand.

Lot of things to do.

Us women too got lot of things to do. Wego out pick berries.

Allout there on the land we gotta ready.

The husband gottago out hunt for wife and the family. Hunt moose,anything.

Bring back that food. Wegotta work for.

Makesureour food don't bespoiled.

This word goin' be really tough word. l goin' talk about whoever listen.

Sometimes kidsgets mad; mad at the mother. Some maybe little bitof change.

To me that guy, whoever, should go out work. My grandson come home.

He's thirty-two yearsold.

Heask me, it'sokay he spend time with me. Nobody visit me so I accept him.

But I make him work for room and board. He cook for me.

Sometime he clean house for me, best he can. And meantime I preach to his ear all time.

When he go out, hegoin' gosome place, J told, "Grandson, I love you.

Don't run into thesharpstick. Stay away from the sharpstick.

Don't run into."

That's mean you don't run into trouble. Keep you lifeclean.

Don't make story, the one you don'tknow.

If I don't know something, I don't have to talk about. Thisis my a culture I talk about, the whole village.

The baby, even newborn baby,

if snow out there, we have to grab a baby.

Run.

Run one mile.

Huge branch out there, just wet,freeze, we just put out babies when run. We don't walk slow either.

We don't worry about baby goin'get sick. Maybe two mile when we get with the babies. Train.

That's way when cold weather,our babyalready been train.

You don't have to worry about your baby's goin' be cold. That's what it mean, "You gotta train your baby."

Gotta makesure your baby eat good. Make sure it'sclean.

But you have to train.

I do got train,

that's why right now I still take care of myself. I never let ignore my mother and daddy.

When he talk to me, I just sit down and listen 'tillI fall asleep on them.

The best time that welearn from grandfather and mother and father and the baby, we bring them back, we goin' bathe them,dress them, feed them good.

Three time we goin' do that.

And then, the diaper, we cut little piece.

Wegoin' put it on caribou trail and caribou trail we put little pieceof diaper. Caribou walk 'round.

Caribou's light.

Caribou's not heavy.

And mile, mile why we do that.

Our little baby when he grown up he started doin' her own life . That baby we train already, she not goin' be tired.

Maybe how many mile, mile that whoever we taught goin' work, get the moose and the food. That's why we do that.

And then at home we cook ling cod.

Out there on camp fire, we have a dishpan under.

Weget the lingcod juice

and if little boy we goin' wash the legs,all both of them.

Wedon't worry about babe. Little boygoin' bestink.

We bathe them with whole that lingcod juice-10.

And then we let them stay

maybe couple hour then we goin' bathe them, dress them.

The moose goin' besad, realsad.

Thisone we wash with lingcod juice, he go out goin' be real sad. The moose goin' besad.

I really believe that 'cause I talk lotsfamily like that.

And you go out, you hunt, youknow which one moose fat. Just look.

You know which one's fat.

You know which one'sskin(ny). And we taught baby like that.

And beaver, beaver we don't train our family for 'cause they liveon dirt. If we use beaver too much, our little babygoin' be poor.

He not goin' make money. He goin' be lazy.

So we take little partout the beaver bone, shoulder bone, and the babygoin' bereal, realstrong.

No one goin' beat that baby if you train with beaver bone to your bab/1•

4()

Thepractice of enhancing an infant's abilities as he growsinto childhood and

manhood is a partof the traditional magico-religiousbeliefs and practices of traditional Athabascan cultures. In this case the juice of the lingcod would help to make the child swift and fluid in his hunting which would make the moose "sad" because his chances for survival would be lessened (a form of anthropomorphism).

" Cf. Fred Kirsteatter interview: p.137

That boygoin' protect himself. Goin'be very strong.

No one goin' beat that little baby with train with beaver bone.

But thisis story for little baby up to grown up and beaver bone we use is strong.

And moose, too heavy; too heavy.

Wedon't taught our kids with moose.

*We* just train our kids how to get moose real easy,

but we don't taught our children with baby

moose or ....

Baby moose, you make a steak. You real hungry.

Nothing to eat. Make a steak.

You got a cow, you gotta get that Iittle baby moose go right along with mother.

You don't let suffer that little baby *moose.* Moos,*OIi/*

And old people, old grandma and grandpa eat that little moose".

Young people never eat perfect *moose,*

too heavy.

He never run fast likecaribou. Caribou's light.

Hegoesa mile, mile, but not baby moose.

Soold people it's all eat.

And superstitious, and you don't... Young teenage begin woman, you don't eat moose whole work,

whatever,

This isan example of the Upper Tanana Athabascans' respect for elders. The baby mooseor moose embryos were reserved for elders. It was considered *injii* for anyone else to eat these delicacies and of course the meat was soft and easy to chew.

moose heart.

Good part you never eat. That'ssuperstitious".

You gotta believe that.

And that moose quarter, inside soft one it one you gonna eat. Maybe it good three weeks, maybe one month sometime.

You're not goin' walk around.

You're not goin' walk around;you're notgoin' even touch man. That's verysuperstitious.

You gotta respect for man if you begin woman. You really gotta treat yourself.

You go out special branch, use by you bed even though blanket gotta be. Under blanket you use that special branch to sleep on.

You train yourself.

He put a special tent.

I want thisso some younggirl gonna hear:

He put...

When we begin woman we never stay inside. Wego out.

He let us move out,outof the house. Our mother and daddy he get us tent.

Cultural taboos applied most specifically to young women and hunters. For a younggirl her first menstrual period marked the beginning of her womanhood and her availability for marriage the following year(Vanstone, James W.,1974: 80.) Alone in the menstrual tent or hut she was required to observe a plethora of taboos and she was also expected to sew and perform other small tasks with little light. She was required to sip her water through a special swan wing bonestraw and she may havecounted the days of her confinement by knotting a strip of moose skin daily. Upper Tanana women **were** kept apart from the band for a lengthy period of time: anywhere from two to three months(Vanstone, James W.,1974:80). Even today traditional hunters are very particular about having young women near their hunting equipment. Young girlsand women must watch where they walk, not stepping over any of a hunter's personal belongings or hunting equipment.

Sometime mileout from the home.

Inside the tent he put mosquito net,kind of like mosquito net. Pitch dark wegotta sew.

No light we just put little bit few littlestick and little light come in that's where we

sewing.

Wemake lot of sinew.

Back daysyou gotta sew with sinew.

Even though yougot thread and yougotta make lot of sinew to sew. Right now maybe they goin'callantique thatsinew.

I still usesinew.

I still makeit my own.

And the young girl, maybe three month, never look around the country. Gotta have head scarf.

If man hunt, youdon't watch man goin'shoot. That's*injii.*

That'ssuperstitious, English. And I'm glad today I use that. I still take careof myself.

That's what this*injii* mean...

When you young, you don't listen to that *injii,*when youget old you gonna be cramp. You whole bodygonna be cramp and suffer and pain, but time it's toolate.

You just tltink you should listen to you mother and daddy.

You don't wash man'sclothes with woman.

*Injii,*something that is forbidden or taboo permeated the livesof Upper Tanana Athabascan in order that *they* notoffend the spiritsof animals on whom their lives *were* dependent or on supernatural beingsor the deceased who were capableof bringingblessingsor causing harm such as illness or other bad luck. Every aspectof one'slifewas affected by traditional values which included rulesof conduct regarding birth,death, puberty, menstruation, marriage, potlatch,all of the passages and daily activities of a lifetime. ( Cf. McKennan, Robe.rt A.,1959:166-169) *lnjii* is still frequently heard as a warning or a comment on somebody's behavior in the Upper Tanana region.

You keepyour husband clean.

You keepyour husband's clothes separate. You cook for your husband very clean.

You children before your husband. You husband's the headof the house.

You have to cook for your husband first. Then you goin' fix you children.

This is real hard ,hard for young people right now. But it is good.

If someone use it and you husband have to gettin' old. You gotta respect for him,

what he done for you,

what heshare her love with you. You had children together.

And your husband had to be all before you. You have to love him.

You have to takecareof him good 'till theend. ldid my husband.

My husband paralyzed. I never get mad at him.

Even though I takecareof my children, cut wood. My husband's s'pposed to do for me.

I end up cut wood.

I end up trapline.

I end up do anything 'cause my husband's paralyzed. I never mad at him.

I never tell him he's just sittin'around fornothing, no. I'm glad I did.

I never hurt his feel 'till theend. My husband died.

My son two yearsold, myoldest one twelve my other one three yearsold when my husband died. You mad at your husband,

you don't treat,

when he'sgone you gonna be empty house. No one goin' do heavy job for you.

If you ready for that one. Nothing is hard for me.

Me,l work just like man.

And I raise three children with on the land.

Idon't ask forthing.

I never go nextdoor ask for "I want thisone", no.

Idon't raise up myself like that.

My mother used to tell me, "Don't ask for food."

The one you ask for food, he might gonna get mad at you. You hungry, do something.

Summertime you could goout get your fish.

That's whatI did I growin' up.

Ido so many thing, nothing hard for me. It'sstill right now.

I always laugh for young people.

Young people, younggirls they say, "Oh, I'm so tired."

"Oh, I want sleep little bit more."

For me I just, I always laugh for them right in the face. The person that havea little bit of pain wants lay down, maybe little bit of headache wantslay down,

Idon't believe that.

I don't believea run to doctorin'.

You go out. You use you native medicine. You know which one to take.

You know which one to make it. You know which one to make tea.

You have todo thing out there on the land. Hehave native medicine for TB.

He havenative medicine for arthritis.

He have native medicine you headache so bad. But you have (tape malfunction).

Idrink right now my native tea at home. Ipick it from all over.

I know which one to get it.

Even right out there, I see lot of medicine right out there. People don't know.

You walk around on good medicine. Some taste likesugar.

Rose hip, you vitamin C.

Rose hip you could mix with cranberries and maybe little bit of sugar. That's you vitamin.

And the young men and the young young lady come up. Man, we gotta train them different.

We train woman different.

And we gotta work real hard with man.

lf father die,yougonna be mother and father, both.

!did.

I raise up my son.

I use hisdaddy culture for my son,my culture for my son. "Don't do this. Don't do this."

Myson's married when he's thirty, th-, thirty *years* old. He's married.

He havebeautiful children.

Still havea time to take a you time to be married. Too young you get married, you goin' divorce. You goin' suffer your children.

All those don't believe, there lots thing you can do.

Like two week ago we get together in this buildin',community hall. Weget together and we eat together and we have real wonderful time.

You have potlatch, you never talk about again. Superstitious, you don't talk about.

You don't brag about howbig potlatch you got either. No.

My mother used to tell me, "Don't go potlatch all time." Her native word she say,*"N1s'e'elk'ee1i1diil gha che?"* Goin'go potlatch.

Thats mean if I run to potlatch, maybe I goin' have gift, gun,

but I when I, my turn to makin' potlatch someday, seem like I gotta return. Not same person, but I gotta return to other relative.

1goin'givea gun.

Thisis potlatch.

I talk about there and there.

I can't talk 'bout same word long time. I put each word bttlebit.

Maybe some day, maybe I goin' make it whole, whole.

(Here Ellenshares the Athabascan place namesof her land.) And he call thislake"*Mendees Oieeg".*

That's *Mendees Cheeg* go for Healy Lake.

And he call way over there dose toriver one lake he call *"Taagos Menh"*

and my English that'sSwan Lake.

*Taagos,*that'sswan,Swan**Lake.**

And he call that oneplace Healy Lake he call *"Ch'endaag". Ch'endaag Menh,,* thats mean where moose come, eatsall of, allofspecial plant.

Moose eat her food.

That always moose havea trail and all the way down to lake you cansee. It look like ball field.

Healy Lake boyscall "ball field".

What he call "ball field" that means*01'11,!eel.*

That's uh back, back days they call basketball. *Clt'11i!\_eel.*

That's basketball.

Right now they call basketball English so he call English that hill and ball field. And just like he play basketball.

The way in the back the person never didn't top that *c/1'e11daag* where moose always

come down thehill.

Theman's name, back days they call this man real funny name, back days. They call*01'11,!eel* this person.

*1*guess back days he's big man,I don't know.

That's way before this, my grandpa tell me this story. I used to laugh forall time.

Then my grandpa gets mad at me,I don't laugh anymore. But that's what it mean *cl1'11xeel.*

That's basketball.

*Ch'11i!\_eel Ddhel.*

And he callright now Healy Lake moo-. *Dendiig Ndiig.*

And otherone's *Ch'endaag.*

That's whe.re moose eat.

Whatever moose eat, special food, dirt, the moose comedown. Maybe salt in there.

We don't know.

Moose just eat all the time there.

And thisother place you call moose *Ndiig.*

That's where our huntin' place. And this hillhe call *Teylz ts'eeg.* That's mean long hill.

Connect with Swan Lake .

Connect withSwan Lake he call *Teyh Ts'eeg.*

That's long hill.

And that's what mean *Teyh Ts'eeg.*

It's notsmall, but big hill.

And then five mile hilland the lake he call *Xelt'aaddh Xelt'aaddh Menh*

That'sanother place have moose. Good place for moose.

But I can't,don'tknow how he call thatbig branch leaf on the lake. Hassome little yellow leaf, yellow flower in there.

I real...!don't know how he call English, but us, we call *Xelt'aaddh Me,1/1* for that thing growing in the lake.

And that's Indian name, *Xelt'aaddh Menh.*

That'sfive mile hill.

Now, I got talk about Healy Lake, Healy River,

*Ts'aadley Ndiig.*

That'sstand for thefish.

Big fish comeout in the creek. They call big fish *Ts'aadley.*

And he call That's why he call*Ts'aadley Ndiig.*.

It connect with *K'aay kee'*

Onceagain,l don't know what stand that *K'aay kee'* for English. Maybe some kindof animal,

I really don't know.

And all I know, he call *K'aay kee'.* And, but it's hard to explain English, but that'sour chief's home.

Our chief trapline, our chief's house.

From there come down and dose to us tolakeone big hill.

The creek,onceagain that*Ts'aadley Ndiig.*

Right down there to bighillhe call to*Trw Eeyaat'u. Tm, Eeyaat'ee* stand for the open place.

You climb that big hill.

Yougo down in the valley.

Yousee whole, all over you gonna see. That's what mean *Tuu Eeyaat'ee.*

And from there come**a** close to Healy River, the one flat one valley. He got cache there.

That *Dahrsaa Di'ee'qq*

That's Native word, you say,*"Da/11saa Di'ee'qq.*

That's means in English you say,"high cache"cache there.

It mean that that'sour chief's cache. Our chief's camp.

We call that one "high cache". From there I comeclose to lake,

one special lake you call *Ts'elbeet Menh.*

Thats means fish ducks in there all time. Make funny noise in that lakein that fish lake. Got fish ducksall in thereall time.

They havelittle one in thereso we call *Ts'elbeet Men*Ii.

And that other creek connect with *Ts'elbeet Menh,*

we call beaver,*Tsn' Tu' Cheeg.*

That's mean Beaver Creek, English.

That Beaver Creek connect with *Ts'elbeet Menh* and Fish Duck Lake. And from there to lakeand *Mendees tlreeg Menh.*

And from there rightover there where we comeout with boat*Taacheeg Ndiig* that'sgo

down to connect with Tanana.

And down little ways under that hill we used to havefish camp, all native fish camp.

Infall time we move down. We dry our fish for wintertime. And of *Xts'iit/1 Kenin'aay.*

That's mean fish trap go through to creek.

And that's fish trap.

We made it by hand and that'sour camp there. We work forour fish.

And from there,from there and once again go back to lake. And out therein the valley he call *Taak'etth Ndiig.*

That's clear water.

We used to go in a boat to get that clear water. From village we used to get drink that clear water. And he call that one *Taak'etth Ndiig.*

And then for we go up little **far** on a hill.

Hill go across to and we call that hill,hecall that hill,all way down to Trading Post, he call um, CookHill.

Cook Hill, that all that one hill.

And that's where we used to go and that name down there, that littlecreek, he call

*"Seejel Ndiig".*

That's graylin'.

Wegot lot o graylin' down there. The reason he call where Cook Hill,

Fall time we all campout there for that creek.

Get our moose and we get our caribou, and we all camp out,all way down to that hill. And we all get together with cook and campfire.

Caribou, all Caribou Lake we cook longsideo' camp. From there, and my grandpa used to cook caribou liver. He just, he clean it and he put campfire.

You just push those dirt.

Me, I stand watch, not goin' eat.

And my grandpa, he throw that liver in the fire. Nothing in there.

He covered with dirt, hedon't care. Guess what, when after we come back ,

we pack meat all day,wecome back,

my grandpa break those marrow and he take the caribou liver and he clean it with out there on a branch,

clean special branch and he clean it and he slice it and he eat.

Me, I say,"I not goin' eat here." I getsin there.

Boy, delicious, good eat.

That's what I say, "you gotta learn how tocook campfire."

And he call CookHiU,*Ch'ech'el Ndiig.*

And from there, little far down, 'nother creek, *Tnak'ettl! Ndiig.*

That's another clear water.

That's where my mother, my aunt left house for me. My aunt gave me that house,

she gave it to me and I never went back ever since my kidsgrown up. Andshe havebigcreek down therecalled , *Tank'etth.*

*Tank'etth,* it go for niceand icecold water. And we used to drink nice water.

And from there all way down to fish, we call Fish Lake, now we call*Tehts'a'a.*

*Tehts'a'a* Lake and that lakea towards to springtime, only time you gotta work for,hunt rats. You havebig bug in there.

Enough they scare you.

That springtime, that bug flyall over. Very huge.

And I don'tknow why that lake all full up of rats, very big rats, just like little beaver. That's where me and mysister, we used to trapforrats.

Camp out in the tent.

They call*Tehts'li'a.*

That's name for that bug and I don't know how he call that thing in English, maybe "beetle". Um,I don't know.

Lady's bug?

No, I don't think so.

Not lady's bug.

It's... I think it's this bigand black and uh I can't. I really don't know how he call English.

Idon't (pay) 'tention to.

I know but um someday to go down.

Go other side this hill

*}iiz Ndiig.*

That's Good Pasters, English.

*Jiiz Ndiig* that's "Carnprobber".

From there to yougo back to village again and you go back to Cook Hill again.

And from there you come backa close to lake to little ways from village and you have to climb that bighill for caribou.

And go in top,you,in top that hill nothing to build lire with.

You, you gotta pack you wood. You gotta pack you water.

TheycaU *Dnditthogh Ddhe\_.*

*Dnditthog/1 Ddhe\_* stand for the one you tan moose skin with. Rock, Indian stuck rock.

And that Healy he have lots those, you can find, walk around out there you can find. Indian *Dadittliogh.*

That's the one you gotta fix it and you gonna tum you moose skin with and beaver skin. Anything you gonna tum with it.

That's Indian.

That's long ways you call that *Dnditthogh Ddhe\_.*

That'slong waysand that climb, the one mother gotta pack baby. And knock you out a breathe before you get in top.

But that's where people travel 'round for food.

And one Uttle thing, I forgot it. And my grandchild he asks me.

He wants how to fix moose marrow,dry meat. Wecamp.

Wecamp and we dry lot of back sinew. Wecall *tth'eex tthfin'.*

And we make dry meat special way.

We takesinew out and English we goin'say,"back sinew".

And we take it out, that one, whole you got takeour sinew out for you for sewing and then we cut that dry meat real thin.

Just hugedry meat.

We havecaribou meat and moose dry meat together. And moose stomach, if you takecare.

You take it out without 'n whole. This one I said,"Pat want it there." I hopesomeday he goin' listen.

Pat wants whole story.

That moose stomach, one moose stomach, just think four different kind in there, and I can't not talk.

On one we call sausage,

and one we call a *ch'etthii' 11iik61111', ch'e11ndh11ht'ee11,clz'ete/.*

With we call moose stomach and *"ch'emel".*

Connect with moose stomach.

You take it out real good, without 'n tore.

It looks like little liver. You know how to cook it. You goin' cut open,

yougoin' stuff with moose fat.

With all full moose fat and you goin' build fireand you goin' cook it with campfire 'till real burn, and you goin' take it down and you slice it.

You eat. "Umm" so delicious and a good. Also *ch'e11adl111/1t'een.*

I don't know how he call English.

But I on I goin' use my native word for that,*ch'e.1J.a1111 w.u'.*

You got moose, moose stomach youopen the outside that hat 'n look like net you goin' take it out real clean and you wash that *ch'e11ndh11ht'ee11.*

You goin' turn around and you put you stuff in with that whole *ch'ew.na11 fill.ti',*

and you leave out for while and goin' beclean.

And thissausage you gotta take it out all those inside and you goin' wash it without 'n whole. You goin' make it dry, little bit.

And I goin' talk about this *ch'emet nt-tthnyh.*

And then the last one connect with moose stomach,

*ch'etthii' niik6nn'.*

That's Indian bucket.

This is realserious one I talk about.

Someone gotta 'ember that. *ch'etthii' niik61m',* you goin' take it out,yougoin' wash it. Dry little bit.

And then you empty moose stomach inside.

lf you have that 'longsidea river, yougotta rinse it out. For thisdry meat, you gotta rinse it out real good.

You goin' wash it.

No *ch'emaagh'* in there.

You gots wash real good and you let water drain out, on a stick real clean. And then you dig the ground out there whereswamp place, big.

You put in tub moose steak.

You put stick in there where you gonna put grease in there and then whoever make a dry meat goin' build fireout there.

He goin'cook that moose marrow all day.

Wecall *ch'eg\_lllagh'* and he pack around bigbucket.

He goin'cook big bucket and he goin' fill that bigbucket with moose grease. He goin' put out there on canvas.

He goin' put big rock middle.

And you goin' pound this moose dry meat. You pound.

Soft one you gotta pound it real good and you goin'do like that with your hand, make sure tender.

Then you put it to moosestomach.

It'salready got moose stomach inside theground.

You put that moose stomach in there and you cool off you grease. You fill that moose stomach with dry meat.

You don't have to put salt and pepper, no. The very veryspecial word I talk about. And he put that moose stomach .

My daddydo that one time. I watch.

When he's ready for that moose stomach, he told me, "You better go inside.

Don't watch me," *injii."*

He say,"superstitious".

And he all put that grease in there.

He have a stick, he stir, makesureallgrease gets in that dry meat. And he all fix it real good and hesing.

He havespecial song.

Hestir inside the ground that moose stomach. He stir'till real that greasegots in.

That Indian name *cll'etsis w11tany.*

And, and again I can't talk English.

I don't know how, what peopledon't know, that this is real special food. Idon't think he havea word for dry meat,

but not... Maybe he call dry meat "jerky", and I goin' say,*"s/ii" gqy/i'".*

And he make with *"s/i*•*i gqyh"* .

He make with *shi' gt{y/i* and then I cut tent open 'n I watch my dad even though he don't want I listen.

I cut little place.

Brand new tent I open and watch my daddy an' I never get catch. I run 'way.

And my daddy, he'sblind and old so he don't see me. And he finish it and then he tie

together and he take it out.

He leave out thereon topsome kind canvas, he put it there. Huge, this big.

Whole goin' pack to village and when the time,

he cut it real thin.

You lucky you eat this big. That's little bite.

Oh, we want eat some more, but hedon't letus eat that special food.

And thenhe take moose heartout. Outside lat.

We goin' washit inside,

dry little bit too.

Alid fat and all you goin' *fry* and yougoin' fill with dry berries, low bush cranberries, mix with,again, moose grease.

You goin'fill it up.

And thatsausage, when you're ready, if you have to be along side thecreek, the end you open this much with stick

and you just put it in the creek and all soakin' wet

and then you go down creekand you already you grease. Right there you just pour grease,

and one person goin' putberries in there.

Long sausage just hang there and the reason you do, if you do,

if you do out there,

goin' fill it up and you goin' waste yougrease.

So when you put filled up the sausage,

all full with grease when you take it out and makespecial food.

If you want to,

you can put little bitof sugar.

Dry berries and cranberries mixed. He mixed and,*cli'etdziid.*

AU special food.

That one moose stomach connect with lotgood stuff.

If right now he cut meat any old way. It'snotlikeold days.

My dayshe skin moose just real perfect.

And we know which one hard meat. We know which one tough meat.

We know which one boil meat. We know which one fry meat.

Back days, me,right now, I still know which one fry meat. I know which one tough meat.

I know which one I goin' boil.

And one more that we call *ch'etthii' 11iiko'n11'.*

I can't say in English, but it connect with moose stomach. And you gotta big cold,

if you was up there someplace.

I tell thisone I think yesterday I record it, so that'sother half right there.

And thisone, lot of people wants learn. Lot of people ask me for thisone,

but I don'tshare my life with other people. Thisis first time I ever in a put it on recorder.

Gets mad when people tell me wants record a me.

And my ideal, I think it's good to do that for this village and my family. Maybe thissometime my family goin'listen.

Wants to be learn something howsurvive out there.

And he kill ducks with arrow.

Make sure you shoot the head with arrow. Anything you shoot, you gotta shoot the neck. You don't shoot moose or guts.

You gotta shoot in certain placeor you gonna ruined you meat.

And out there *we* don't sitin tent.

Yes, if Fall time it'sreal cold, we gonna sit in tent, but before too cold we pack to our meat in village. I don't know how many trip.

One meat, we don't know. It'sdry meat.

Also you skin the caribou, he goin' give you *canvas* right there.

You don't have to havea plastic bagor nothing.

And if walk on you caribou skin inside, real good you take all inside little thing and you dry and you put special food for it.

All special food you goin' tie with one whole caribou.

You goin' pack it up hill.

Sometime you put someextra a.nd you don't feel like you pack one moose 'cause it's already dry.

And he don't throw it away even little pieceof bone.

Istill real believe it:

Caribou feet,caribou, moose, my mother evenclimb the tree with it. Tieto tree good.

My mother say,*"ts'edog/umih". Ts'edoglumii,* mean you prepare.

You goin'gosomeplace, you got stuck, you goin''member that. You hungry, yougoin' 'member where you put that caribou feet. My mother havea can,old fashioned lard can.

He putsa little bito' sugar, little bit o' tea and little bit o' dry meat,little bito' fat. He put it inside that moose.

Lotsof caribou head inside between and he goin' tiewith wire. Mydaddy do that, but menalways that strong.

My mother's can't do that much.

And last couple years ago, I come back. I don't know. I think five,six years ago.

Maybe eight years ago I come back this village. Istart a walk my mother n's trail.

Where my mother and J used to pick berries. Where I havestick in my daddy's hand.

Greenwood.

An' where I used to take, go around with my grandpa. But to be learn.

Ever since I growin' up, I real haveserious mind. I want to learn. I never think,"No, I'm young, I don't need to learn."

No,l never think like that. I useit today.

Nice to be learn something.

And I run in to this something hang in that tree, broke. Igo over there.

Buncho' caribou feet and my mother's Jard can.

Iopen that lard can: littlesugar, little tea and that dry meat just white, just like paper. That many, many, many, many yearsago hang.

I just sit there and cry.

Very sad for me and I just cry out and I feel good.

And I keep walk my mother n's trail. All over I walk.

That make me feel good.

l don't pack gun. I don't scare. I don'tknow how to be scare.

Out there bear,don't talk about bear too much. It's all!hear people talk about, bear.

Wecalls*sis.·y ti.·g.*

Wegoin'say in the morning,

*"Shch'aa' kek'eeneghul'aa de'ndeg tihaalde' Sl/'1/shdaacheegh Sl/'l/na11mdaag shk'a' kix*

*ha' ..*

That's mean, "Please,Grandpa", don'tgoin my way. I don't have a weapon in a my hand.

Don't try to scare me.

I not goin' bother you."

That thing,animal understand you.

Last summer and bear come right in to my porch. You think I'm shook up?

No. Why should Ishook up?

He looked through at me window, and I sew beads. Something move, but I don't'tention. I sew.

Pretty soon I look at window. There's old Grandpa watch me. Hum. I keepsewing.

"You better not touch my window." I sewing. He look at me.

Finally I go out. I open door. I talk with my native words, I say, stsey ch'iide ntl'adhekchuut ha

*..X,mlla11 taghinhaalshk"a' kiJI ha'."*

"I don't bother you, you don't bother me.

You walk down that way, look for food. I got nothing to giveyou." And he stand up and tum around look at me.

"Hum,I understand you." He walk realeasy.

"Grandpa" is the Upper Tanana Athabaskan way of referring to the male bear. To talk about him and to say his name is considered to be disrespectful. Tius is also true when someone dies. Lt is *injii* to speak their name until the mourning period has ended.

He go in brush and tum around look at me. *xm,Oan tnghin!raa\_..*

And you know, that thing never come back.

You have to... That's why I rea.I likes to havea culture. We've gotta keep it up, a culture.

You got stuck out there, something, animal attack you, you know. How you goin'stop it?

Talk to.

And wolf, you gotta cut long branch. Yougoin'do.

(Ellen whistles a long whistle.) That'sa bad.

Wolf suredon't like that thing. When he hear that one, he gotta run. That's you protect right there if you don't havegun.

And lots wayyougotta protect without 'n gun, without 'n axe. You gotta carry 'round little rock in you pocket.

You know what doing.

You gotta use expert for that rock. I used to do that.

Igot gun.

My mother bought me a 25/20 and automatic. I growin' up with.

And but I don't pack gun.

Always I think it'stoomuch trouble to pack gun.

My mother alwys tell me, "Gee, *ts'edoglumilt".*

It mean: From Tok we left bad weather. Maybe I don't smart enough. I just have thisa one. Maybe I just have little thin pants. Maybe I don't havesocks. Maybe I don't have food.

That's what it means, *ts'edoglmnih.*

When you go, before night, you gotta prepare.

Just don'tgetup, run out and jump in the ca.r without nothing. That's *ts'edogltanih.*

I always tell my grandkids,"Don'tgo out empty stomach." You gotta feed the man food.

Man can always work ha.rd. Also woman work hard. I did. Work hard. Man job,

both way I work on all these many many years ago. I never think, "I want sleepsome more."

Idon't like go people's house.

People sleep too much. I want be alone and do.

Sometimes, four o'clock in the morning rget up. (sew.

You want make potlatch, don'tsleepon. You hardly don't come.

I say this. Someone goin' listen. G/111/ii', you slow,*gha/ii'.*

That's your money, the one you goin' make potlatch.

If yousleep too much, you never think about it, that money. Very slowly you can't get ready.

Right now I can't get ready for my party,'cause maybe I'm lazy.

I don't know. 1 not try hard.

But to me, I can't see good anymore. One sideI have paralyze. I can't do that much. I try best rcan.

Sometime I get up four-thirty. I sewing. Try to make little thing for my party.

Potlatch give you lot of pressure, but *injii.* You gotta be strong for that potlatch. *lnjii:* superstitious.

You don't think you don't gotnothing. You don't think you got not enough. 1 don't copy other people, no, I don't believe a that.

I learn.

This is from my a culture, my own a culture from my own village. I feel free to talk about it.

And other village,sometime a culture little bit different from ours. Every village, they havedifferent their own a culture.

I feel for my a culture in this village. And I want keep it up like that.

Maybe someday I not around.

Even though one of them live, he goin' use that a culture. Keep it up.

We just can'tgive up on our a culture.

And this is, that's whyI talk about a littleof food deal.

And the fish,he takecarespecial way. They havesour fish.

You dig the ground.

Our chief used to like that sour fish.

Back days we never say,"Um, smells too strong.". No, we never say that.

And you cook something.

You eat moosebone.

You eat with knife and you fill.

After you finish and this bone nothing in there, you graba and you goout. You don't throw out moose bone.

That'ssuperstitious.

You take this moose bone, go out. You goin' hold and if you see tree, you put it under tree real good so somearoma! goin'chewing and you don't throw it away.

Whatever you eat, throw...

They havespecial history word for that. One day starvation!

Right now we go back to backwardsnow.

It'sthere,out there,but yetour children don't know. People say,"Oh,early Fall."

Other people know.

One day that starvation come. What our children?

Our children eat right now chip, icecream, pop,candy and rotten teeth and...

Igrowin' up they told me,"Don't eat blueberries," when I began woman. Cranberries, anything...

That's why I have my teeth thislong, not short time. 1got gum disease. He pull all my teeth out.

That lotta *injii.* You gotta really believea that.

Pass on to young people. Pass on to young boys and younggirls.And the clan, the clan's name: *Naltsiirt.* You gonna say,"American people." *Dik'aagy11h* that's other clan. *Ch'aadz,* that'sother clan. *Tsesy11h,* that's other clan.

Interview with Ellen Demit Healy Lake, Alaska

August 16, 2000

Interviewers: Don Callaway and Connie Friend Igoin' talk about mydaddy.

He's blind man.

He's theone,he make trail all over with shovel". Our trail just like road.

Many people make pictureon the road where he make it look like road. Cuttin' tree, make good trail...

Summer trail, winter trail Good trail.

And my daddy, he's complete blind. Hewasbom,

blind.

He got cane.

He gothis own sleigh.

He go out wood yard. Sometimer go with him.

1 go ahead of him with stick in his hand.

Sometime I don't.

And, you know, he go in wood yard. He hit his stick

He hit the wood.

He hit stick,

he go there.

He cut little piece, he gonna smell. Greenwood,

he knowsgreen wood. Drywood,

he goin'mix green wood and dry wood. He don't believeon hitch 'em up dogs. With his neck,

he goin' bring back a load of wood

"Pansoftheextensive trail still exist along the edge of Healy Lake. People who come to the villageoften take pictures of this trail because it was such a remarkable feat for a blind man to accomplish.

to village."

When he started cut,saw wood, hesplit wood.

l used to close my eye.

l don·t wantsee.

Seems to me he'sgoin'cut hiswhole hand off.

I used to watch to makesure he'sblind, way he walk.

And I watchall time, but

later on Ibegin find out he's really blind.

And restof the part:

He tan moose skin.

Hisclothes tore,

hegotta sewn hisown clothes.

He don't tell his wife "Do this,do this." He make dry meat. He cut fish.

Today !'mold

I just wonder how he did.

Istart to realize he'sblind.

Back days

to me l just thought maybe he even look. And one time I asked him a question, "Why you blind?

Why you don't see?" He tell me

*Neet'/Jodp,t'ey"*send me this world the way I am.

That's mean,"Good Lord send me in this world to beblind."

Right now, today,l getold.

Iunderstand what he mean.

In Springtime, May

"Rather than hitching up a dog team to haul wood, Ellen's father would pull a sled using

a tumpline "with his neck."

"This is the Healy Lake Athabascan word for God.

*we* used to work for our "gardeney". And *we* don'tgetspaid to do that

He put twine' round in "gardney", all way around.

Hecrawl around

and he just pull that twine around the "gardeny".

Wedig the ground.

Hewalk right along with us He dig the ground.

He tell us,

"That 'gardney' gotta be real clean." Weclean"gardney" real good before we dig.

But he tell us back days

no fertilize like he have right now.

Our fertilize we boil fish head and fish guts and wespill ona "gardney".

That'sour fertilize.

All "gardney"

and he told, "Do over again. Makesurereal neatand soft." So we do that.

And sometimes he go in the cache

he give us beautiful blanket all of us.

Old time blanket

all of us, he giveit to us. We work hard.

He tell us

"You sleepon thisone." Boy, we like it.

Wedon't think about we gets pay.

T try the best I can

after I'm realize he's blind. The seed,

he tell us,"Cabbage, one seed each."

Little bit hard from that cabbage to the little bit hard for each other.

Hetell us that cabbage leaf goin live, touch toeachother

and your cabbage not goin'growing.

If carrots, you gotta plant twocarrotseed.

Hedon't let us touch littleseeds.

He wantsdo himself 'cause

us, we crazy 'round. Maybe not evenhalf a line.

We use it

so he don't let us. And he leave peas dry peasovernight.

He plant peas,string beans. He plant.

whatever he plant,all growing. Potatoes.

When "gardney" started growing he gave us

up there.

**"You take caret**

he told me.

He taught me how to do.

I gotta do it exactly he tell me.

Without make a (mi)stake. And he...

And right now

I don't know how he plant seed, but

he plant cabbage, rutabaga, carrots, turnip, potatoes. We don't useour potatoesout.

Potatoes, we saveit for our seed.

And what's left over

we replant ii **again**

and we got our vegetable right there. We eat vegetable all winter.

Inside his house he dig the ground".

And uh haveall vegetable and cabbage and everything inside our house,

inside the ground. Each village he havea deep freeze.

Indian deep freeze.

Our chief he dig

make big holeon the bank. Big hole.

You go inside,

you don't havea light,either. You go inside to that ground if you want your meat fresh. You gotta hanga whole moose inside the ground.

Just hang there.

Not goin' bespoil,

not goin' beeven smell.

By the time winter time's up we got our fresh meat

right there.

And my daddy havea same too.

Everyone of them have where he have whole place. Wild rhubarb,

and he's theonehe make trail all over

with by hand, with shovel.

Oose totradin' post he make just like road.

He's blind man.

He doneso many things.

''This seems10 have been a" roo1cellar".

And he'sspecial man today tome

when I talk about it.

Maybehe try to passon tohislife to me.

At time I 'm very

don't 'tention that much. I'm respect.

I'm young, I'm respect, but sometime l want playout there just like rest of the kids,.

But hedon't let meplayout there.

He don't letmego tovillage.

He don't letmego somebody's house. He used to tell me,

"If you go next door,

maybeperson goin' cook her last food,

and you come in he goin' pass th.is last food to you and the person not goin'eat."

I rea1believe a that.

Whatever my mother and daddy told me I just real believe it.

I still use it right now And Igot my own house. I real believeit.

I used to go out to cut meat. I stand next to.

I watch.

Tobe learn.

One whole moose arm'° hegoin'cutit.

Onepull

heput that meat, he cut it.

One whole moose arm

'°Front quaner of the moose

he goin' cook one piece dry meat. Just real

I don't know how he do, but...

And a fish,

He cook dry fish.

And take himout pickin' berries. He pickin' berries just like rest of it.

I stay out of his life when he cut wood. Scare me to death.

Anything what he do I stay out.

If he do something I like it,

I gonna watch all way through and I learn from him.

He do lotta anything

good stuff, lotta way he do.

So today he'sspecial man.

And he pass on to his grandkids and passon all the way down still today.

He did lotta good way to make us understand to be learned something from him.

He taught us

how to make vegetable.

He taught us

not to make spoil.

He's blind man.

We used to like his biscuit.

He make biscuit

in top stove.

Blind man cook for you.

Blind man make biscuit in oven for you. Not to behungry.

He goin'cook cranberries with moose grease.

And we eat biscuit and cranberries. Boy, back dayseverything taste good.

Take me quitea while to be understand tobeleam.

Right now I gettin'old,

gave me lot of strength.

Some (days) in the morning I don'tgetup, "Oh, my motherdo this,

I have to do."

And I help myself, "Oh yeah, Ican do." Why it'shard for me? Getup do.

Look forward for to bedo.

I really wants try best f can 'till theend.

I want passon my culture

to mygrandkids, to my relative to my friend.

This is I talk about myself. Passon what I got.

I have many white people friend.

I have many Christian people friend. I have many peopledon't believe.

They haveown, their own life.

But I take after my mother and daddy. I'mnot 'shamed of the pray.

Mymother used to pray all time. The Nativepray(ers).

Lord's pray(er).

I useit at home all time.

Gosomeplace, Someone goin' protect us. We leftTok bad weather.

Before night I pray for our trip.

I asked God he goin' take us to Healy Lake? Bring us home, safely.

We have to havegood life to protect we don't **get** in, run intosomething.

Gonna hurt us.

Boat, car.

We have to havea good life for our friend safe trip.

You go behind wheel,

you know what you're doing. Sometime we run intosomething. I pray for my friend, Don.

Go back to Anchorage, havea safe trip.

I notshameof pray.

I alwaysbless my food.

l go to bed I always pray.

I go out,go do something for my life, I always pray.

"God protect us".

No matter what we are, we are God'schildren.

We're not different from each other.

We're not different than white people and white woman. We're all the sameGod's people.

Got believe it like that. That's what keep us going every day, 'nother day. 'Nother day, sunny day *Nee'et saadin'EJEJ.*

Thats mean, "We havegood shiny day today." We have to respect for each other.

I have to respect for other people.

I have to respect for young children. Respect for father and mother.

Wecan't let ignore each other, no. We have to care foreach other.

And this village,

I sure love to talk about this viilage. Jo Ann is chief's granddaughter.

Lot of respect for her. Pat is chief's grandchild.

Ray, Michael, Ben,Cory, Jenny, Rest of a loved one,

that's all chief's grandkids in this village. And we respect for them.

They all try real hard for their lives. Littlebit o' job,

prepare the food, fish,ducks.

Right now I came to

*Xtsiik Saa"*

Can't understand what's mea.n *Xtsiik Saa.*

*Xtsiik Saa,* right now we're on the *Xtsiik Saa.*

That's meanwe're on the August..

*Xtsiik Saa*stand for "Leaf fall down,everything tum to yellow". That's what it mean, *Xtsiik saa.*

And close to Springtime, *Luu 51saa.*

That's mean ,"Everything freeze a.

Springtime, dose toSpringtime, that's *l.m1 saa.*

That's April.

*Saa chox,* that'sChristmas month.

My Native word I gonna say,*Saa chox.*

That'sChristmas month.

*Ch'eshna11 saa,* that's February, February month. You have all kind name, Indian way.

All I know,every bit I know, but all kind duckshavea Native name, different way.

'Nus Native, we all understand, but some young people don't (Indiscernible) understand.

Butsome Native wants be

*Nondlede".*

Some go college. "Oh, you think so? Great. Yes.

'°Literally "')'Cllow month" ''Literally "'ice month"'

**51Whiteman**

College, it'sgreat." White man educated, it's good.

For me, we have to holdon my Native educated., white man educated,

both way.

Both way,I real strong feel I always tell my grandkids

And right now, everybody goin work for meat.

Ten daysseason open. How fast do you go out, you get your meat?

Ten days.

How 'bout these ten days

like today the boys workin' out there, weekend.

How fast the boy and girlgets a moose? You know why? A Fish and Wildlife.

Fish and Wildlife watch every each village"'. I guess they have to do their job too but,

our food, that's what we grown up with it.

We gotta haveour fish, our ducks,our meat and caribou rabbits, grouse.

Whatever on the land,we real(ly) goin'eat.

I don't know. Sometimes 1confused 'bout Fish and Wildlife. Sometime I can't understand.

Pick people,sometimes people loose their boat and their gun.

Some people don't have an income. Like this village, people hard to get by. It'snotlikeother villages.

People don't haveeasy money in this village. They all work hard for the live.

That's way we believe it in this village. And myself, I don't have much income.

"Ellen is refening to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Healy Lake is surrounded by state land and there have been connicts over state "management" policies.

Whatever I work for, I got littlebit o' check. I'm just like rest of it. I had to pay my bill, I had to pay bank.

I had to pay my 'lectricity

and I so thankful I don't pay my rent. Igot my own house.

I have to pay for my wood,oil,propane.

By timeevery little bit I got, it'sgone.

Everything costs too much.

So, to me, we have to put it away *OUI* food. Anything whatever we grown up with wegotta put it away for wintertime.

Long winter

we have to face.

We gotta be ready for that. Lots way we goin' do.

All cemeter(y) needs to be deaned up someday in the future.

**The renew,**

all those things,

lotta things to talk about it.

Every each day something to talk about. We gotta learn.

Seem like westill growm' up to be learn. But mostly I want young children learn. Us, we know already.

I know already, but yet I still learn. Istill learn.

Lot way I still learn. But the word,

my mother's word come out on me before

*Na sna tee'qq.*

Sun's goin' down. The word come out.

I'mpretty SUie

I got lot o' white people, friend.

(indiscernible)teenagegirls,

Some mother die,say

"Oh, my mother used to tell me like that. Oh, I learned from my mother.

Oh, I learned from my daddy." That's what I try to passon.

Our children gotta belearn.

The fatherstill be

needs to begrown up to be learn.

And the land,

Fall time we wait forour our ducks.

On October, real cold

and we go out get our ducks. Weclean it.

We leave guts in there.

We have wash tub aU full water. We put aUour ducks there.

Freeze it.

We leaveit there al.I winter. And the fish,you gotta cut it. You dry really good.

Don't let fly getsin. You put it in the cache.

You dry meat gotta go in cache. Don't eat it one time,

even though it taste good. You gotta take care your food, your berries.

One time you goin' eat real good, and will take careo' you half a day.

And young people I want start real(ly) learn. Real background.

Whoever feelsorry for, giveyou littlestory.

Juststop,listen,

you learn something.

That's what I learn from my mother and daddy, my relatives, my aunt, my relatives.

I learn from them.

They pass me on to the life tome.

It's in a my mind all time.

Get up early.

Do your thing.

Me, I can't get up early any more. Idone my part already.

I walkall over.

Fifty mile, twenty mile I pack my meat.

For woman like me from village to Cook Hill,

and a bighuge valley. Somebody got moose.

Back daysyoudon't throw it away mooseskin.

You gotta use for mukluk

and moose jacket and mitts, moccasin. The person kill moose,

he'ssick person.

He can't pack moose skin.

Hegive up on that moose skin.

And my mother talk about that mooseskin

au time.

"Gee, it goin' be waste." "Gee, it goin be "

I gettin' tired to listen.

I never tell nobody where Igoin'go. I just grab mypack and little biscuit 'n I takin' off.

I go close with that big, huge Oats. Swamp.

You don't havehip bootsor nothing. Use moccasin.

You don't worry 'bout you goin' getsick. You don't worry 'bout your feet wet.

But you gotta carry 'round extra sock

**extra moccasin, in case.**

Extra dry clothes you goin' pack.

That Fall timeskin,

hugebull moose, moose skin.

I pack.I put it in my pack.

Boy, l just made it to that end of flat, big valley.

l just go middle swamp.

One place I fell down, l just laugh for myself.

Nobody 'round out there,

I just laugh. I thought it'sfun.

And I fell down and (indiscernible), my feet stick.in' out and my pack. And I can't get up.

I had to takin'out n' my pack.

I pack that moose skin all the way to village. Drag over there in village to my mother.

My mother don't know where I'm at. I never tell nobody where I'm going, l just takin' off.

And my mother go out. "Hey! What you doing?" I never say nothing.

"Oh, you talk about that skin toomuch, I thought Ibetter bring it for you,"!say. And grab meand hug me.

She say,"Shouldn't do that." I say,"lt's okay, I'm young." l bring that moose skin.

My mother work on right away.

Take her four days to clean that moose skin. Big hugebull moose skin.

Another place, winter time. Way other side big, huge hill somebody got moose.

In the village we hungry.

And with some reason too cold we can't goour tradin' post.

So cold *we* can't do nothing

and even though somebody go out hunt. Got moose.

Real fat.

He all bring back 'nough meat, good part, but he left some.

Too hard.

Too hard to go back for it.

Say,"That moose gotta be waste."

But somebody say,"Maybe wolf goin' eat it,

**not go.in be waste5M.5."**

What I did, five o'clock in the morn,

I get up.

I hitch 'em up my dog. I takin' off.

I climb that hill.

I run into bad trouble.

I never tell my mother I goin' go. Nobody know where I went".

I went to other side the bighill.

I loaded that meat left over. And that bighilloverflow. And you 'sposed to tie spruce, lotta spruce,

tie to yoursleigh. I neverdid.

Igodown middle to

'n all over my sleigh slide. My sleigh broke and my dogs all there and there,

***ss"The animals sharing the land with the Upper Tanana Indians were considered almost*** *like parrners of Indian daily life. As tire source a/food a11d as livi11g beings they /rad 10 be treated with respect.* " (Guedon, Marie-Francoise,1974:29)

"The Athabascan culture bas a great appreciation for personal sovereignty. With Ellen's eatly training she would feel at ease in being by herself.

Almost loose my life right there.

I goin'begone right there if I (don't) know what I'm doing. This isspecial word.

You know what you'redoing. You been hurtin' out there.

I always have extra in my pocket. My back real hurt.

I can't do nothing,

but I tie my sled together. There and there Ipick my dogs and I fix harness

and I start to hitch 'em up. Boy, I'm very pain.

I can't even make another step.

I tie myself , my back and makesure I'm okay. And I make it to village.

I lay on three month, lay on bed for my back.

That's what it means,

*ts'edogheni*i.

Don't run intosomething you can't do. But I'm verystrong.

I work just like man. Nothing to it.

And I bring that whole moose in the village. Everybody can't believe I did it.

I go through real hard. I always think though, "I cando.I cando.

Why not?"

1alwaysdo

run intosomething hard. But I always win.

I always bring back. That's what it mean, the life.

Good life.

Every each day, different life.

Every, each day

you gotta work different.

Other time, maybe you prepare your wood. Other time you goin'goout pickin' berries.

Other time you goin'goout look for native medicine. 'Cause goin' be covered with snow,

you not goin' have medicine. Gotta' pick all those medicines for winter time.

And you gotta get tea out there.

You have to do a lot way (out)on the land.

Summertimeour fresh foodsare: rhubarb, mushroom, raspberries, salmon berries, blueberries, cranberries, high bush berries.

We so glad to see summertime, (indiscernible) But hard to keep blueberries wintertime.

No 'frigerator.

We have antique, bigbarrels we put all full with blueberries

and we put between sugar one bucket. And we put sugar between.

It take, have lot o' juice.

Back days,

1don't know that much.

Right now I catch blueberries juice. I make,add up, I boil it,

I add up with water,

I gots mycranberries juice. I make it certain way.

Not really English way Ido different way.

I make ii my own juice.

But back days I don't know why I never did. We waste lot of blueberries juice.

'N lot o' way,

sometime your food spoil on you. But you gotta keep try,

keep learn.

'Nother day to be learn.

Ellen Demit Healy Lake January 19, 20()1

Speech to relatives

This thing over there19461left and this village hard days. We moved down to Fish Camp.

1think I *have* Agnes and Ina and Daisy,

just baby, just a newborn baby. We left down there.

We set up tent and mydaddy's blind.

He'sdown there. My kids... This part it's hard for me to talk about it.

The tears run down to your face when you open upsomething.

Down there, Fish Camp

and nobody to corne back from this village. Nobody.

Our chief tried to save JoAnn's and em's mother.57 Move a to Big Gerstle, LittleGerstle.

Try to save thatone little lousy girl,

That baby.

It'shadtobe my niece.

Westay Big Gerstle.

I goin' talk about today. But this thing...

Afterso many years I don't want to face Healy Lake.

I just don't want to face.

You have tobestrong like me.

I'm very,very strong foranything. Right now I had two daughters.

All my familynot well right now,

Marylou", Agnes and my youngestdaughter". Butsome time I think about it:

I wonder Igonna face it again. I don't thinkso,

unless I break in.

I come back over there and the first thing Isee over there village, just likeall,everything come out.

Nosmoke, lotsgrass.

I look big cemeter(y) Idon't seecemeter(y)

I lookat my family's cemeter(y) I can't see.

That's what it mean,

*"Memlees Oreeg,Teej11h".*

Stella Healy

"

"

Marylou is Ellen's grandaughter, daughter of Agnes and Paul Henry.

"

Daisy Northway

I meet that son.

PaddyHealy havea one son too, but that one...

It's hard £or me.

So...

You kids ready?

You don't have to do anything. Just getsin your heart

Even though you *Nondled(white* man), it touch from Healy Lake.

It gets in you heart.

I never think you *Nondled.*

You partof the family.

*Mendees Cheeg, teejuh, Youlioo, you hoo*

*Alz elz ahhey eh eh, Heyha heyheyhey, Heyhey ahah heyhey, Alz eh yahah ya,*

*Mendees Cheeg, teejul,, You l,oa hoo you hoo, Aheh al,hey eh eh eheh, Hey heyahahheyhey,*

*Ah eh yah heyheyheyheyhey Heyhey yah ah heyhey yaheh yaah*

*Mendees O,eeg, teejuh You /100, you hoo,*

*Alz eh yahhey heyheyheyheoJ hey,*

*AJz eh ya!,!,a,ehhey heyeheh Hey hey yahal,e/1 el, yahhey yah,*

*Mendees Cheeg, /eejuh,*

You *oa you hoo*

*Aheh yahhey hey eheh eh*

*Hey heyahal,eh hey yal1 eh yah,*

*Heyhey yah ehehhey hey Ah yeh hey eh yn/1eh yah*

*Mendees Cheeg, teej11h You hoooo you hoo,*

*Aheh yah hey eheh eh heyhey ya/1el, ynh*

*Ho.*

Okay. That's my ceremony. Okay, what you want I stop?

You want to talk about your deal?

(From the audience) Maybe say what that songsay. Ellen:English?*Mendees Cheeg Teejuh?*

Sorry. Feelsorry forvillage. No people. Nobody'°.

That's what it mean,*"Mendees Cheeg,Teejuh".*

Oo hoo oo hoo.

That's motor. Motor kind of like:

*Oohoooohoo.*

What it mean:

*Oohoo*, *oo* /zoo.

And that's what it mean, *"Mendees Cheeg,Teej11/1".* That's like,gee,over there 1 feelsorry for that village. That's what it mean.

You catch on now?

(Inaudible response by village member) Yeah, yeah it'sgoin' be there. Uh huh.

Um,okay I just talk with him while ago.

~~..~~

Ellen composed thissong when she returned to Healy Lake (probably sometime in the1950's) many years after the terrible epidemic of the 1940's. Her mother, father, children and other relatives were all gone. Her song is now requested at potlatches throughout the Upper Tanana and other regions.

I don't want doubleup, I don't want repeat. Connie's goin' go like that and I goin' stop talk so...

Okay, we left...

Thisone I never talk about it. So I had to talk about this.

And all thisand don't know yet. I never talk about it.

Westay at Big Gerstle and there.

And me and Alice and Margaret61,

AlecJoe, and my husband and Agnes and Daisy. And I don't have my son by that time.

Westay way in the back

*ts'ogh talz taats'etl chox nits'in'aay ii dzeltth'il,*

I'm sorry,I talk English after while.

He likes listen Healy Lake word. *xand,,g taats'liglz tah dzeltth'ih ts'ogh tah*

*taats'etl chox* mfi *dzeltth'ih*

And uh, we stay there then Thisone the kidsdon't know. Alec Joe passaway Big Gerstle.

and then from there wedon't know what to do. AlecJoe don't belong to Tanacross,

but we send him back to Tanacross being buried there.

And then we stayed there. From therelater on we move to Little Gerstle.

And me and my cousin Jeanie and my niece, Dahla,

61

Alice Joe and Margaret Kirsteatter, daughtersof Gus Jacob and AgnesSam (See

LeeSaylor interview: p. 150).

and our chief,Johnny Healy, and Alice and Margaret

we stay there.

we stay at the Little Gerstle. That'sour village too.

Westay there

and for long time we stay there.

And we don't havekids to worry about. Kidssmall to go school.

And we stay there

and then my husband begin started sick. And then even though westay there, and thenour chief go out trap to

*Ch'ich'ih Ndiig*

*ndegee\_eedlah debeeglu,*e\_

so the family eat.

*x,mdeg ee\_ eedlah*

*ee\_ x,mdeg eedlal, ts'/'*

*debee* e\_ *ey x11h tah ts'enh da'e/w\_eek.*

I, just finally he feed his family. That's mean,*Ch'ich'ih Ndiig,* that's thename, Indian name. Way in the back.

I been in there.

From this village I was... with my ninedog I went

to that way in the backsheepcountry"

and I bringback wholesheep over there in the village.

" Thiscould havebeen the Macomb plateau which had been the traditional sheep hunting territory of Healy Lake until it was restricted by the military. Traditionally sheep hunting was men's work. This is just one of many instances in Ellen's life when she was required to do what needed to be done, regardless of traditonal gender roles. Her husband became ill not long after they left Healy Lake during the1943epidemic and he never recovered.

So, man job, woman job, I did both.

So right now today I don't miss nothing.

I guess somebody hold my hand, walk around like uh, it'scute.

Way in the back

and then he went back last trip. That's how you kids' grandpa's" gone Last trip he went back.

Get sheep, bring back sheep to Little Gerstle so, we goin' eat all.

And that bigopen place, ice.

all of sudden, dogsleigh just like that 'n, dog sleigh swing like that 'n

our chief hit ice.

Roll down, roll down, roll down. And he fell down in ice.

Four rib broke thisside. That'sour chief.

It's theoneourchief die while he'sstill young. And uh, start of hemorrhage.

He take to doctor, but he can'tdo nothin' so he start a hemorrhage.

And I gotta talk about this

is correct story.

You kids, you don't know this partof story so then later on he was gone right there.

That's howour chief been buried down there. Part of *Mendees Clieeg* people.

Little Gerstle.

My niece,our chief,Steven Healy, and her littlesister,littlegirl,

and one more little baby's been buried,

partofyou, partof this village 's been buried.

Thisis Patrick Saylor, Jo Ann Polston and Benjamin Saylor's grandfather, chief John Healy.

From there we stay...

Idon't know I want talk about this, but l just try to make it

good,'cause thisis other part,

but,somehow, some people came to Little Gerstle. Have a trouble with us.

And by (that) time my husband build house for me up there along side the road and my cousin and my niece

down there, Little Gerstle..

Finally we move up to highway and that little log hut, lumber house,

with my kids".

And then she had bad trouble.

Little Gerstle come out and with, we don't know.

Just right now if you did something you goin'get reward.

My kidsdon't know thisone.

And bad trouble.

What I did,

I left my three kids.

I walked half way.

Where nobody goin'see l put them.

And uh, really bad trouble over there in our house. Three people come in.

They all get rid of to each other And uh, I was scared.

Womanlike me

l take my lifeany way for my niece and my cousin. That Little Gerstle, water just like that.

Water this much for me.. l told my husband,

"Watch kids. l goin' walk down".

~~..~~

Cf. LeeSaylor's interview p. 212. The people moved to the road in hopesof gettinga school.

I walk down to Little Gerstle. That waters look pretty rough.

!just jump.

I'm small. I almost float down. Water this much for me.

I went to other side to tell my niece, "Come on let's go.

Bad trouble out there". And, you understand,

*Nodliid iin e\_ xeet'ann* up there

"Come on let'sgo".

All of them

they all don't want go in that waters. "If I did it, you girlsgoin' make it". And we all hand each other.

*We* go to that water and make it to other side. Soakin' wet Idon't have time to think anything. So we walk back to the road..

I put all my family in in special (indiscernible) I put my kidsand my husband together.

and nobody have axe.

Me and Margaret we have to walk back to my house. That automatic, my mother...

Before my mother goin' die she bought me automatic. I worry about my gun.

Sure hate, but I don't have that gun today. I wentback to our house.

That gun was missin' already.

And Carl Innistrom, he'sold time next to us. He's real old time..

*Nondliid.*

He's real old time. He's real nice person.

He's next door to us. It'stheonehe tell us he want to live nextdoor to us. He likes Daisy. *This* Daisy's a little baby so cute.

He never see kidslike that

so he just make us move to nextdoor.

Every in the morning the old man bring maybe some little food in; just enough for my little daughter.

.He do that. That's why he wants we move a to.

And then, he all...Somebody all get rid of them,

all of them.

The person's name's Leon Jones.

And sureenough, he went to Little Gerstle. He break up cache, house, those dog.

And uh, Iso thankful I saveall mya relatives.

From therewe went to half way.

Llveon the top. Can't justopen place we live.

And from there I started go court.

It'sreal hardone. Especial come out from little village. Can't just open place we live.

And from there, I started go court. That real hard one went through,

especially you come out from little village. But you know what you doing.

You don't have to freed what you goin' do. Youcan't say,"No, I can't do.".

If you Indian 'nough, yougotta look forward for. You gottago, no matter what.

Don't you think,"Oh,I can't make it".No.

Indian never think...lndian have realstrong feel, very strong feel. And Indian don't listen to people there, there, there. No.

*Naltsiin* walk right straight. Keep walkin',

Keep walkin'. You push everything. Bad shlff, put it behind.

Somebody come along and tell youoff,

Woo you goin'get somad you don't know what to do. But it don't work. That's why I talk to you last Fall.

Exactly I open up to you.

Time we get mad it don't work.

We c:aMOt say anything in front of our little children out of respect.

We goin'saysomething to our little children LEARN.

Goin' remember.

And we cannot talk about other person in front of our kids. That's whatJ raise up my kids.

I never talk.

When I havecompany, I tell my kids, "Go upstairs visit. I havecompany". Free to tellstories.

*Naltsii11* 'n very strong. Strong feel.

Us Indian, we don't want nobody push us around. Wedon't want nobody tell us what to do.

Don't want nobody to say,"Dothis.Do this". No. Don't tell me what to do. I'm really mean for that. I want do something, I gottado.

Like after all I go through, some my brother comeout,say, "I don't want my sister dance anymore".

I think to, I laugh, tell his wife, " What kind of Indian he is"? I not goin' die.

That's my Indian life, my native dance, my nativefood. That'sour native life through to background.

From there, we call that Five Mile Hillover there. We climb that hill.

Little Gerstle after our chief's gone, nofood. We don't know what to do.

That's inside Fish & Wildlife.65 We don't know what to do.

And my husband worry about hiscousin.

Chief's wife, he say,"I don't want my cousin hungry". Little Gerstle after we comefrom,

after all funeral and all done,

we don't haveno potlatch, no nothing. Wecouldn't helpit.

After we put him away real good, our chief dress good.

His wife dress him up good, fancy stuff.

I'll never forget,

65s1a1e land

his grandma told me,

Isewing just like Popeye

and perfect too, not any old way.

*Nac/1'er1iht/'11'11.*

That's mean I not have to sewing any old way. Hegave me(indiscernible).

Gee, you think I goin' finish that (indiscernible) in two or three hours? "Yeah",(indiscernible).

Shesave her little pocket knifeout,puton.and "Oh,gee". I grab. I never say nothing. I just grab'n. GeeI waseatin'all full with beadsI finish.

Here.

*K'od daan k'exdalrt'ee*

You goin' bea woman someday.

You word from you grandma and you grandma, you grandma. We come back. No food.

No job.

Weclimb that Five Mile hill like that with our three kids. We down to that lake with our fish camp.

Not fish camp,camp.We make *ts'ligh fil.!!lx".*

We don't make tent.

*Ts'lig shax rah.*

Just for you I talk my Native tongue. And we make *ts'ogh w.ax.*

Lots*tsoglr67* we cut.

Inside we had tough canvas and campfire.

Wesit there and whatever we got we never eat.

We giveit to our kids instead of. Meand my husband *we* go without eat. Whatever we got and that night big bull moose at the end of lake.

We got hugebull moose. Lots*ch'ek'ax.* And we rook campfire.

We eat good.

66loghouse

*61*

spruce wood

Fast eh, we cut that meat.

We work fast. People hungry, so we make dry meat fast.

Try best we can and wesmoke it little bit.

Then we left that meat there and we came to village and we started hunt for rats(muskrats).

And ratsand you just work around the clock and you just do thing and you dry everything

and we load the dog pack and we go back to Little Gerstle

That time real nothing and we come back with dry meat and dry rats. Lotslittle goody and eve.rybody has smile face and we happy.

And some day we run intobad trouble. And uh, from there, we go there to village. We started off with Dot Lake.

We don't getalong.

I just goin' say good part.

Other part Idon't want to talk about.

Wedon't getalong but I gotstuck with my kidsgo school. And after my kidsgraduate, oh boy.

I move a to Tok look around for job.

I find joband I work.

Thisone, I skip it out. But from Little Gerstle,

She don't accept my dog in the bus. And my kidsand my husband sick. Put it in bus.

This time I started walk road.

My gun,my pack and my dog.

From Little Gerstle I walk all way up to Sam Lake you know where I talk about Sam Lake trail?

I made it from Little Gerstle. This,I don't know, I can't make it. I set up tent.

Go sleep. I spent the night nextday

I walk to Dot Lake with my dog.

This one,I almost forgot it. So I did quitea bit.

And we walked this hill

you guyssee, we been all over. this whole, this one right there. Always we walk. We don't ride.

No easy life. You jump in four wheel and boat and il yougo in boat yougotta have paddle.

You hungry? You go in that boat.You go 'round. You get moose. No makes difference.

We got our moosewith paddle.

If you don't..*k'ii ts'eyh w.ii tatint'ox.*

You shoot you ducks there. That'syou food..

That'sIndian life.

This part I never talk about it.

I'mglad this morning it'scome out.

I'd better talk about it so these three kidsknow. What's the back life? How painful we go through. Today real like all my grandkids 'n treat me like... Spoil me. I'm spoiled rotten. I put my finger there. Something down, "Yah"!

Something I don't want to work on, "Nah". Don't need to work.

I got one alter me right there. This Fall I goin' make you work.

!joke.

And uh, we went back. From there we happy.

All my cousin 'n have food.

*We* go to George Lake with paddle to river. And we stay with Frank Luke.

For fish, we dry fish. And we do little thing.

On theend *we* tan moose skin, beaver skin,

Theend hergrandma make moccasin

and we haveno time to do anything now. I start a make moccasin.

I start a do anything.

And we go Fairbanks, we bring back truck load. Just us woman like us for thisone, give usmoney. Thisone.

Today I don't wantsewing anymore.

I go through so much.

When that time I sewing for potlatch. My mother used to tell me:

*Tedhihts'eyh de',ch'axo11 ke' ts'£'* s11'11*tighu/Jts'eyh.*

So you know what it mean? If you want "make tea", gotta be sewingstuff.

Yeah. That's what it mean.

She make fun with women and they laugh foreach other. All women gotta work together all time.

And then

last time we all go 'round.

All round to corner to corner to corner with my husband and last trip.

every each corner we make, that's my husband last trip.

Then we movea to Dot Lake for school. That's where my husband die.

Woman like me Igo through a lotta hard life.

If I talk abut it, lotta tear on my eye. You, you young. That thing gotta get in Getsin.

One day the one talk with you, that person is gone. ***nasaa'aa'an\_ ts't.***

Tear gonna run down to youcheek.

*ey ch'e* right now *mexnek\_ee.*

All of you.

Sun's goin' down, that word's goin' hityou. That's what I'm doing, my mother.

I never nag to my mother. Never. I do anything for my mother.

Hand, knees, I not 'shame.

**BrO\VOsoap, who ever use,**

havea Tide anything. Handsoap, brown soap,I used to wash,scrub my mother's.

And the blanket, I take it out during theday.

Makesure it'sclean.Fresh air.

Ibring it back, make the bed..

I never say,"I work too much." Sometime I haul wood.

Sleigh rope close to me. Sometime Ibring.

I'm very very strongwoman when I'm a young like you.

I put mysleigh way over there.

I bringone cord o· wood with my neck justso my mother 'n my daddy's warm in Auntie'shouse down there.

Linda,"she done so many things for me when I was up there.

Shebring food,cook.

And all this time bother me whyshe's notup there.

I'm glad you gave megood moose. Hope she's well. I hopeshe come back. You start it all over again.

Change his life...

I look forward to be change his life.

Thatdrink,

that drink, what you life goin' do?

Igoin' tellstory that you remember. Not only me,even Connie's goin' use for her grandkids.

68Linda Erickson, Margaret and Paul Kirsteaucr's daughter had been in an accident and

**was in a full bodycast at this time.**

Even her,she'sgoin' use. Say,"I in Healy Lake, Old Grandma tell story. It'snice."

They goin' tell his kids,"Don't do this. Don't do this. Don't do this." It'shard.

But I did listen every word. Every wordI listen. That's why I use that right now.

Yes, I'm complete educated my Indian word, but it's notthat.

Lot of peoplesay,"Oh,I know anything. I goin' speech," but not me. I not goin' say that, no.

You gotta really, really, really patient for word.

Whatever you have to say,

*Teej11II* in your heart for other people.

Maybe you share food, little bit o' bite with you other friend, that's what it mean,*"Teeju/1".*

Like last Fall, "What he got he just givin' me? Fat?" Pat. I still have it in my 'fridgerator.

I still have little bit from potlatch.

He know I gotta havesomething to eat. That's what we did.

That's how it begin,started. Up to1946.

And '50,'51. '51 from this village non-educated woman.

I don't goschool. No kidsover there.

I don't goschool, nothing. Complete nothing. '51 Dot Lake I got job.

One day, it's all myboss taught me.

Just like that I get. Use you brain. And uh, gee I want, I goin' make. No, I could do. What kind I am?

And I gotta job. I work. I stick with it, my job.

All those job, I never get fireone day and

not either one job.

Never.

I walk two mile to my job.

Sometimes three mile. Sometimes sevendays week job. Sometimes ten hour job.

Sometimes fourteen hour job.

All day and night shift if thisother person don't shown up, Igot do their job. I never nag at them.

I neversay,"Oh,I'm too tired, I don't want do it."

No, I neversay that. You want job?

Stand on you feet, work.

That's me.

That's my life.

This is, I want share with you kids,

and I got lotta thing that planon already, that talk about it.

And some reason thisone,I feel so good to come back my little village. Even one nightdo me any good.

And I'm glad you kidscome. Talk with you to listen.

My back days, my mother and my daddy tell mestory.

**We just sit there. We never move a.round, no.**

He had little willow. It was thisbig. Westarted attention,

we don't 'tention, he goin' hityou

How you goin' make it live when you grown up?

**You woman.**

You just sit there all way through. Sometime one, two hour story we listen.

It's hard. Right now if we hit our kid,"Heh, Heh." He'sgoin'crya lot.

But that'sour days.

Our days, we don't sleepall day. "Oh,I want sleepsome more. Ah."

You know what my dad used to tell me?

Notonly one person I talk.

All of you guys. Pass on to your kids. No makes difference.

*Nond/M* goin' listen.

He goin' passon to their kids. We not different.

Like I say,I don't want nobody come to my village besides them and them.

I'm pretty fussy. I always tell Pat,

"Don't bring nobodyover here." I make a state(ment). But this time I accept.

If he wants somebody bring, go ahead, but...!don't know. Gotta be all Native.

This is native village.

*Dendeey muh keey* .. *neech'ah wutsey.*

Not goin'stepin.

I'mglad all peopleother side, it still belong to this village.

Other sideIseeall fancy house.. We used to be never have a...

I don't know who bring them? I wonder sometime. It don't belong to them.

This village is *Naltsiin* village.

Over there,old village history story I hear from way, way, way beforeanything.

He have villageover there.

All the way through to *Nnltsiin.*

We have few *Diik'aag,;u* in our village

and sometimes something bother me, but it's okay. Maybe it's good for you guys to make company. You hear motor, you see something,

but, I really don't care that much.

I got just as much right to say,"This is my village." And I'm old too. I'm just right to talk about it.

And from there,okay, I talk about all this what we done with you grandfather. I never talk about this.

From there after everybody die, we all...

My niece move a wrong direction, got married.

My nieceand I we used to be like that.

Weshareour onedollars with each other. We watch each other.

Makesure onedon't hungry, Makesureother one dressgood.

Weshare. Weshare. Weshare.

We walk together, 40-Mile together. It's right there wesplit.

Shesay,"My aunt,I fall in love. I goin'get married."

Whoo!

Okay.

Thar's where my niece left me. 40-Mile.

Got married. Thar'swhere... turnout.

I never talk about this

with you kids...

*Nax11/1dde/ ts'ey w11dzil, ,its' e' me' atdeyh?*

He knows.

*Dd/,e/ tsey miisi" nts' e' me' atdey/1?*

You know what's Indian name? Thatover there,

*Xaagos Menh,*Swan Lake.

That long hill,*Ts'eeg.*

*Xelt'anddlz Men/z.*

*Clz'uxeel Ddhe/.*

That where moosealways,

*Clz'endaag,* moose like eat dirt.,

That's mynative word I'm gonna say, *Ch'endaag.* Moose like that thing he eats. Heeats thedirt.

That's what *Clz'endnag,* that hill over there just like basketball field.

It'sonehecall*01'11xeel.*

Wayin the back. Way long time ago,"

in top that hill, person'sname, his kind like...

Maybe that's why *over* there he call very strong village. And man live over there in top.

He don't want nobody disturb.

So he set in top.

His name is *Ch'11xeel.*

He make Indian basketball with *chox,* porcupine quill. And basketball he play.

I hearotherside just used to be beautiful

and when young kids go *over* there he play with that Indian basketball,

*Ch'11xee/. Ch'ra:eel,* that's basketball, been made with porcupine decoration with... feather and he just say...

That's why he call *Ch'11xee/ Ddhel..* All the way to that Healy River, *Tsaadley Ndiig.*

*Tsli' T11' Oreeg.*

Way over there, big hill,

*Tuu'eyat'een*

and this,

*Dnhtsaa Di'ee'aa Nde'*

Uh, *Ch'e11daag,*

Little creek. Little creek

I wonder it'sstill there.

Little Creek, *Taak'etllt. Taak'ett/r Ndiig*

he call just likeVolkmar. *Tank'ett/r Ndiig* he call. *Dahtsaa Di'ee'aa.*

What *No11dl€d way call it?*

Cache. High Cache.

Indian way, *Dalrtsaa Di'ee'aa.*

And *k'aay k'ee.*

And *Tsaadleey Ndiig* connect with *K'aay K'ee. Tsaadleey* those big huge fish, Fall time.

There's lots in thatcreek.

That's why you take all you supply. And that's what it mean, *Tsaadleey Ndiig.* You connect with *K'1111y K'ee.*

*K'aay* out theresomeplace, this biganimal. Used to be lot over there in village.

During the night time just stand up.

He make hole so much with where's cemeter(y).

And I don't know what happen. I never *see K'aay* anymore. You see?

Whew!

Used to...Oh, used to be lot during the night. (From the audience: "Groundhog"?)

I guess. (Probably marmot) That'swhat ii mean, *K'Qily K'ee.*

He nameof that littleanimal, *K'QJly K'ee.*

That'sChief Healy.

After you pass*K't111y K'ee,* there'ssome huge*ddhe\_*

*those* pink stuff *tseyh.* That's Indian paint. That's real....

This one I want you guys remember. Maybe someday, even though different, but maybe Pat go row,d see that little hiU.

I don't know how...

No yow,g peoplego there. No.

Not woman. Chief, himself, he goin' climb that hill.

He havea littleskin bag

and he just pick. He pick aU full bag.. HecaU *tseyh*

Indian paint.

He paint you face if you if you, you're mad.

If you're really mad and you'restrong one,

heput that *tseyh* on you. Somebody comedose toyou andstand out there,

"Oo,he looks mean".

And that's one *tseyh.*

That's where that *tseyh* from. You gottaget it.

That's real real paint, real nice paint.

And uh, they call it *tseyh.*

That's where thatIndian paint come out. You touch something with it.

stay there. Never faded out. All you kidsdon't understand

that's why English and I mix...

It's hard for me to beEnglish and my Native tongue. nux,

and alsoI loose out my Native word Irom Healy Lake little bit.

Don't touch. And uh,

*xrmdeg eetee11.*

*aadaa'a ddhe\_ denh lair 11aghi11'aay*

connect ,vith *Sal,T,111 Clreeg.*

From there, way up theresomeplace, big lake,called Fish Lake.

*.l1111g Me11h.*

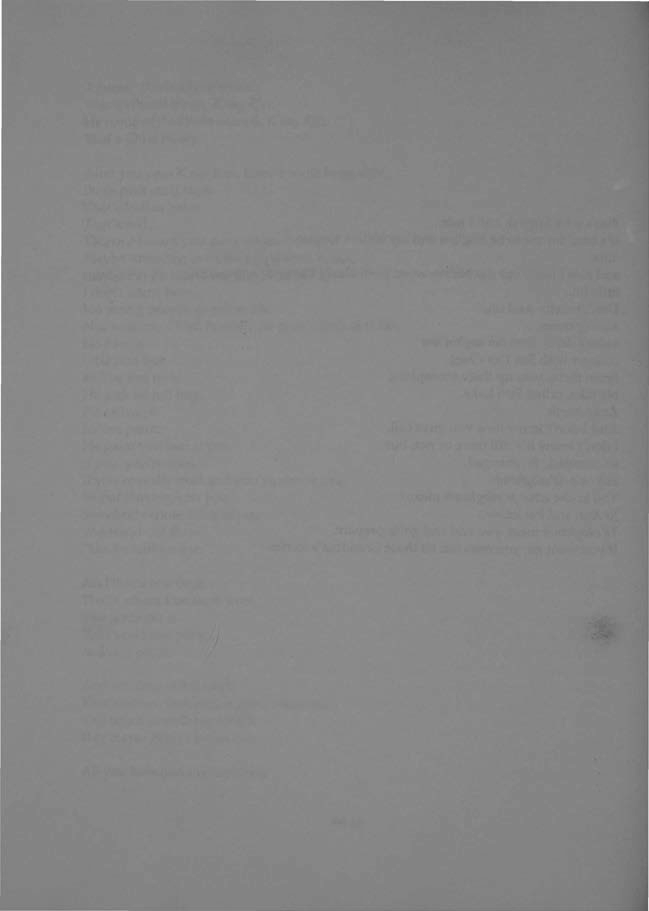
And I don't know how you guyscaU. I don't know it'sstill there or not, but so changed. So changed.

*xu/1 clr'e ts'edogl1a11i/J.*

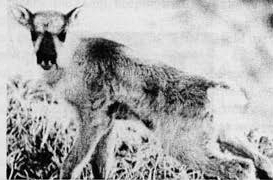
You know what *ts'edogl,anih* mean? Jo Ann and Pat know..

*Ts'edoglrmrilr* mean you real real gotta prepare.

If you want go, you missout all those Grandma's stories.



## Wudzih



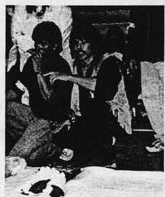
***Caribou***

100

###### Patrick Saylor Born in 1966

***in Fairbanks, Alaska***

*Pal Saylor is the olderof two sons bornto Stella Healy Saylorand* ***lee*** *Saylor. He has one daughternamed Swan. Although he gremly prefers to be engaged in subsistence activities fi,11* ***time, he has been politically active since he was seventeen years old. Pm's genealogical link.r*** *nm deep in boththe Healy Lake/Joseph and the Mansfield/Ketchumstuk bandsas well as the Upper A/Una. Reluctantly he has held the position of First Chief of Healy Lake more than once. He was oneof the fow,de,s of the ArcticAthabasca,, Council which serves indigenous people internationally. Pat has fought and won many ball/es for his people in his young life a,1d though he would prefer the quiet of the woods, he carries the mantle of his grandfather mid great­ gra11dfather, the chiefs of Healy Lake.*



***Palrick Saylor fronr andctnrt.r.***

***Bt11}omi11and Patrick.Saylor*ar *Hto.ly I.AhPorlarch 1()()1***

IOI

Interview with Pattick Saylor HealyLake

August 16

Interviewers: Don Callaway & Connie Friend

It's Wednesday and we're in Healy village, HealyLake and today we're gonna have Pat Saylor talk. Presentalso areConnie and Agnes. It's allyours, Pat.

Pat: Can I talk?

Don: Talk. Say anything you want.

Pat: Andthen you're gonna back track it? Don: Right.

Pat: Oh, okay. Well l"ll just talk about the bear thing. **We** used to haveto watch all the, watch all the food when there's, the hunters were out. Andlike cookin' the bear ribsof fire or messin' around n'cookin' ducks n'oil and duckeggsor doin' somethin' always. Have you busy there all the Lime and couldn't go noplace. Couldn't keep up when you'reonly seven or eight yearsold. Your srnck in one place watchin' the camp, keepin' things ready for when they came back. Hot tea 'n (rest of sentence inaudible).

Well, I'd like to just stan out with some things my grandma told me about where she was from, whereshe was born 'n grew up 'till shewastheageof twelve. At that timeshe said she *was* born in the MiddleFork of the Fony-Mile River tight, right below where Joseph, below Joseph

Creek down in that area there with the caribou, Fony-Milecaribou herd has their, has their, um, has their babies, 'n calving grounds. And she had two older sisters and anoth' one, youngerone, she, Lucy Luke, her next, next tight under her. When they were twelve they moved, they went up the Middle Fork River in a fork to the, to the tight and then crossed over the mountains and dropped down into the head of Sam Lake,Sam Creek country and then went down to Sam Lake where her father,Grandpa Sam and BelleSam and her mother. That's where they had herother two sisters, Evaand Lena in Sam Creek. That's where they lived for quitea, quitea few years and then from there they moved up here to Healy Lake where they joined in with John Healyand Paddy Healy and the rest of the band this way.

That's when she wound up. her two oldersisters,one of theolder ones, that's Margaret, Margaret Kirsteauer, her family stayed here, preuy much in one spot for all these years. **Herand** Alice was her, was the two kids from,from that1. And they. they stayed, from those twosisters. the olderones that passed away. Margaret. Margaret and Alice, their mother and theirolder sister there passed away here and that's when Grandma and them moved up this way and I guess from that point Margaret was moved, was moved up to Tanacross where she was martied 10 a Jimmy Walter for a time.

Was mistreated and John Healy went up the tiver,grabbed her and took her back and brought

her back home. From that point they had a quitea few good years where the caribou were high

'Margaret (IGrsteauer) and Alice (Joe) were the daughters of Gus Jacob and BelleSam.

102

cycle n· a lot came through. She said sometimes fourdays in a whole row there'd be nothin' but caribou.

She'd tell me a story about her and her son. Sheonlyhad nineshells and she walked through

the village, her first born and he was like nine yearsold,eight, nine, barely keepin' up. He had a

.22. She shot nine caribou with nine bullets. She was gonna' get the .22 to finish off a couple of them and he had been goofin' around, tryin' to shoot their antlers off this whole time. She wasn't payin' auention to what he was doin'. She said she got really mad at him. Went back and had 10 go get some more .22 shells. She said they used to havea real good time,especially **around that Lime when there were somany caribou comi•n in.**

Our grandma taught us a lot of things that we didn't understand when we were small. She ended up in Nonh Pole where my mom married to my dad,Lee Saylor.

A lot of times we slept with most of our clothes on. We didn't have p.j's n' stuff mostly like

most kidsn' we're always ready to move all the time. Shoes close together by the door. It was an old habit from back when she...She came from when it was even, last one skin tent.

My mom was educated to the third or founh grade so that would make me and my brotherand sister the first educated in our whole family.

She talks about when she first seen some miners there in the Forty-Mile country and theyhad

hair all over their face and long beards and they didn't...

The first time theyeverseen a donkey (laughs) and horses. They didn't know what those were.

And there was a lot of things. It must have been some kind of a horrible shock, I was thinking. Now that I think back on it. It's like, for an example, if you took a knight in shining armor five hundred years ago in England and slapped him in a Mazurati and told him, "Here, drive." That's probably how. how she felt a lot of the time. Then, it makes sense to me, but I **understand her training.**

**We** were ran around in thesnow early in the morning. I think Agnes remembers us gettin' tossed out the door when we were liule. Not wakin· up. (laughing).

Agnes: Yeah (also laughing).

Pat: (speaking 10 Agnes) I remember you used 10 warm our feet up when we came back. Yeah, we'd ge,I tossed out the door and we'd have to run around the house. They taught us 10 wake up early and for times of war they said when they were auacked or something, they said you'd have to run without yourshoes if you didn't have time to jump in yourshoes. We made our little pack sacks and stashed 'em out in the woods with crackers and dry meat and one pairof clothes. n' little knife and stuff. N' we thought it was a game when we were small. I understand what it wasnow. She was makin' us ready in case the house burned down or somethin' happened you had to get out of the house like right away. It was pan of her training, but she was taught in case sometltin· bad happened.

Andeverybody had their own caches so it was not like, if somebody got caught they could tell on you. The only person who knew where the cache was, was you. And that served as survival .

I understand it now. At the time l didn't.

And we were told...We didn't havea L v. until we were the age of twelve. And we didn't have regular friends, except for family. 'till the age of twelve, 'cause we were to be in train...We didn't need distractions. And she was,raining us. We didn't realize it. We thought all other kids werethe same, probably. But now the older I get, the more I see it'snotthat, not the same,

but I'm glad we were trained the way we were trained so that we could make sense of what's happening.

We spokeour language 'till thesecond grade. We were told that we could learn our language on the weekends, or, which is not true. You can't learn English language just on the weekends. How are you supposed to learn all the Native stuff, Native language in the weekends which was false.

I 'member first dayof school we went in and we couldn't understand what the principal was telling us. We'd understand some of it and then we wouldn't. And he was hollerin' at us. And we were... We ran away from him and he tried tochase us on topof the drift snow. We had moccasins and we could out run him and we learned how to run on topof the snow. Just like lynx or, you spread your feet 'n move. You'd move across stuff he couldn't ,'n he couldn't keep up with us. So we went back and grandma came down really pissed. She went imo the school and she came, told us to wait outside, 'n wait one place. She used to put us in one placeon our knees. This was part of our trainin' too and if we ran around, she even tied our, tied our legsso we'd be kneeling all the rimeso we'd listen to her stories and we'd sit in silenceall day sometimes. And it was to teach us patience... for hunting especially, or waiting for whatever it is, your opportunity. That was part of it. And it wasdisciplining us, disciplining our mind.

Also, the steam bath. When we first went into that, we wanted to get outof there in a god awful way. Strugglin'(laugh),but they wouldn't let you out. They told you to bestill. Bequiet. And then they would whip you with willows a lot of times. It loosens up your muscles and it, the more the heat gets, it takes, it learns to take pain,a lot of pain.

It disciplines your mind so that if you have rough times, that you can close off the pain. You can shut it off like a switch. You're notgonna need a shot, pain killer. You wouldn't scream, 'cause you were taught not to make noise in case, maybe if you were hurt or some'in' bad happened, our grandmas taught at war, you screamed out, you might give everybody away. So those partso' hurt, we were taught to suppress. And even crying was part of it. You never...lt wasn't good to cry in front of people. They told you."No." If you lost somebody, you went...The men, the warriors would find their time to go alone somewhere out in the woods where they would get...They would release that pain,' cause that... You had to watch because others would take advantage of your weakness. That was part of it.

Now back to the...Grandma went down to the school and we had to wait outside. Back to the, the first dayof school part. But we sat there waitin'. AH the lights in the school went out and she was in the back room with the principal. l don't know what she did back there, but the entire room inside that room with the principal turned blue light.and she was talkin' in our language, but I thinkit was the old, really reallyold language 'cause there's different... There's regular

conversation language that you have if you're talking regular like,*"Ndee/ 11de",* "'Give mesome tea."or*"A.a haal."* 'Tm gonna go walkin'." But this was, this wassome·n different. Somethin' almost between animal and human in our language and the whole place turned blue in there and when she wasdone, you just heard him muttering and whatever and (ha) not makin' much sense.

The lights came back on. Shecame back out of the office and he came out shakin' and pale white. He neverdid bother us again, but we got to school on time, 'cause we knew what to do then. But he never did bother us again. I don't know what she did. I never asked. There's just some partS better left unsaid, I guess but I'm sure whatever it waschanged his mind.

About parts of our trainin'...about not havin' a television: that television, it strays your mind. Our television wasstory tellin'. We could hear thesame storyover. We'd hearsome of the same stories twice a day and we'd sit there and listen. They'd tell us stories. I like that one about *Ch'inched/ Tcteyy·.* That's Gran Grandma's mom's, Belle Sam,great uncle. That's about a

hundred and fifty years ago. That's where he comes from. That's where myGrandma's sisters are born and that's Sam Lake. Remember that *Ch'inched/ Tcteyy',* they named a hill after him. He was a warchief of the whole Upper Tanana. I guess back Tetlin got wiped out. Theywere attacked by the Canadians from K.luane Lake, came over the pass and over the hills 'n attacked and raided and so they went to see *Ch'inched/ Tcteyy'* to gather all the best warriors.

He gathered all the warriors of the Upper Tanana. He climbed this tree, this leaning tree over the,overall of them. They were all underneath it. And he caught a squirrel. It wasrunning around. Anyway at the top of the hill hesaid whatever waniorcan grab thissquirrel, is comin' with me. And he dropped a squirrel and thosewho grabbed it when it was bouncin' around between all these, ha, all these warriors down there They had to be quick enough, quick enough

to grab arrows or dodge arrows. And this is his uh...to find the best ones. And that one 'n really wanted 10 go no matter what, he wouldn't take"No."for an answer. He was the onlyone that was killed in the baule. once they went to Canada.•

But from Sam Lake to KJuane Lake, they made it in five days'. That means they were crankin' seventy-five miles, hundred miles a day. Steady movin' and back too. 'cause theydidn't. ! I was

juSl a pace. I understand that pace. When me and Ben were young. we moved through the country. Way deep, deepmovin' just to explore new places. Way up the Healy, upper George Lake and upper Sam Lake. We put some way abovecountry. We went seventy-five miles in one day and fony-five the next day.

I don't see any young kidsdoin' that now days·cause what they have to understand and why I'm explaining this is if they want to get through life or want to get, have things done, they cannot do it by thinking that the easy way is the best way. You can't learn nothing so much from the easy way ·causeyou . "easy come, easy go". If you earned it hard. if you had to walk

seventy-five miles or a hundred miles, to get somethin' nine times out of ten you're gonna remember that, 'cause it was hard. And you have to go through so much to get it so it'swonh something. If you'regoin' fifty to a hundred miles an houron a highway, you're not gonna remember it. It'sgonna be wonhless because you think you can get it all the time. There'll bea hard time again. That'sjust the way life is. And if those who appreciate n· work really hard and earn it instead of trying to get it for nothing, or steal it. Sec, if you have to do that it gives **you** self wonh. It makes pride in yourself and pride in who you are. But that is imponant **because** that may get you th.rough when you think that,"Oh, it can't get no worse." or, "I can't make it." How do you know you can't make it? Have you tried? With everything you'vegot? Have you tried every avenue? Sometimes we can't seethemost simple things: the key to a door. I've run around with a pen in my hand, lookin' for a pen. You can't tell me that ain't happened to everyone of you in this world, 'cause it has. That's the same ltind of thing.

Ah, that's the kind of discipline. the ltind o' the kind o· people we come from and the reasons being it's like that story of *Ch'inched/ Tcteyy*·. He trained his men on that hill. They used to

'This was a distance of about 270 miles.

run up at him and he would be shooting at them. I mean shooting to hit them and they had either 10 bust the arrow in mid air or catch it, and that•s comin· straight up the mountain and bein' shot at straight down. And it teaches, this kind of teaching makes you appreciate your life because you appreciate living 'cause you earned the right 10 be there and that's, that's what I want the young people lo remember, even after I'm gone after, because when the hard time rerurns again, a depression, crash in the stock market or somethin' if you have that kind knowledge, at least to know that it's in you, that you can always go back 10it and discipline yourselves and beable to persevere, go through.

Another thing that peopledo not understand is cross-cousin marriages in the Upper Tanana. From what l gather from my grandmother the uplands were the training like *Ch 'inched/ Tcteyy'* of warriors. In the old days, mercenaries to the lower villages who had an easier life because of the salmon runs. Salmon were huge in abundance and the food was lots so their villages had a, a huge amount of population compared to ours. Ours was a harder lifeand harder in the mountains, in the highlands. And what could we give them that they didn't already have? Well, what we could give them wasour,our knowledge in hunting and war. "weapontry", our best weapon wasour mind. And the discipline...We were bred for almost a thousand years from what I gather. They bred them down like you would a good dog team or you would a good strain of running horses. With the medicine people who could foresee the future, to the best and strongest warriors with the strongest legs.strongest arms.good best eyes, were inter-bred with those who could see the future. They bred them to the founh cousin 'cause you couldn't get them any closer. 'Cause I'm sure they'd see what happened when you bred 100 close. They were unbalanced. Four was always a balance. Three would notdo it. It would be 100 close and the kids would be all messed up. The founh cousin was as. as close as they'd 1olera1e, and this wasa strict code. They bred them like thisso the offspring would notonly be of strongest blood and genes, of sight and strength, but he could also foresee the furure when he slept. So it made him even quicker. more advanced ,so 10 speak, almost genetic engineering. They come out with a perfect warrior: One that could endure anything that natureor human had 10offer. These were what they (indiscernible) where all rest of the tribes came to gather.

This is what the Upper Tanana had always brought 10 the table. When there was fights against

Eskimos or the lower villages, when there was somebody making trouble, disrupting the peaceor messing something up, this is where you came to find or, find either assassins or war, warchiefs, and the payment would be made big, with many blankets. many tanned skins. wives, whatever they wanted.

Copper: copper was very treasured and some of the blacksmiths, one of the last ones was, was my Grandpa , Grandpa Sam's brother, Nothol where,al the point whereI'm down at, he had a 1en1 frame and stuff down there where he would hammer up in the valley there between the old village and my house. He hada old rock, a rock just like a smith would have for hammering iron. And he would get, trade for the copper. Trade 'em paint. We had famous paint, red paint 1ha1 came from thisarea and other things we traded with the Copper (Copper River/Ahtna Indians)10get their metal which we'd pound and folded until we hada triangular like dagger that... It went from the very tip to the very base ii was a triangle and with cur•. They pounded the curlson 1heend. Curls on both sides of that spearand a tat-. They used to tanoo on both cheeks of the warriors a spiral. Everybody wants 10 know what them spirals are. They used to

put spirals on the knife handlesor thespear point. The spiral represents the caribou fences. The caribou fence had an opening with two corralson both sides, which once the caribou went10 the main opening, he"d spiral 10 both sides. They'd shut one gate when it'sfull, take what they needed then open up the other. And they'd have thiscontinuous cycle.

Also it represented the Upper Tanana, the mother's side because1ha1meant the mother's

womb. The fence, the opening of ii on both sides is thesame. That's what they meant by,"we take our mother as a clan side." The father and the warriors are meant 10 pro1ec1 the familyon the mother's side. Thisis whytheycannot gel the·'okay"10 go 10 war without all the mothers gelling together and consenting10 it. You canno1jus1 go out and do it. Just like in the Caucasian ways, they wouldn't think twice about it. They wouldn't begoin' home and askin' their mothers (laughs). Bui in thiscase, the tribe, the mothers and the children would suffer because of war.

That is the reason whythat they, ii must make sense before ii is done. II is not a senseless foolish act.But these are the things that I've been taught 'n I've went lo look for myself many many **times.**

Just likeour herd was a biggerpopulation' and I heard that ii split in half and half of ii went across between Circle and Eagle below the Charlie Riv...or above the Charlie River, toward Eagle and ii went up and joined the Porcupine Caribou herd. 'N our old people, the old ones that were around and talked about it, SilasSolomon from Tanacnoss, come from Ketchumstuk country. They wanted10 know what happened to the leaders 'n what, how come the caribou got all mixed up. Well, when they had the Taylor highwayand they staned shootin' off all the leaders'... You can't shoot off all the leaders because theygot theirown leaders. Theirscent is different from the rest in the whole herd. It's on the bo11om of theirfeet, located between both toes. It'sa scent gland. And maybe one out of a couple o' hundred will be born with that and all the rest of them follow him or her. Now if you shoot those off, the rest of the caribou get confused. And theystan milling around and they get confused: they don't know where 10 go or what 10 do. So once they shot off the herd, they shot off the herd leaders coming across the Taylor, you had all this milling about, confusion, because once the leader died, that's where they was. Stuck. Panicking. So, one of the leaders that were still around, must of, (They've got sense too. They ain't all stupid..) Theychanged their route and went across and went up and joined the re- othercaribou in the Porcupine region. Well. our people wanted to know 'n Healy Lake bein' small is alsoscouts for the rest of the Upper Tanana10 find out things for them 'bout other tribes.

SilasSolomon was one of those thatcould understand the Gwi'chin language, and the Upper Tanana language and the Copper language(Upper Ahlna) and the Canadian lang-.( Southern Tu1chone) We sent people like that, like me to find out things, 10 convey the other tribes' concern or 10 make alliances in times of trouble.

So I went North and there was people in Circle who remembered my grandfather, Chief Healy and SilasSolomon and them comin· all the way to Circle 10 get tea and sugar, from the

'Pat is referring 10 the Fortymile caribou herd which migrates through Eastern Interior Alaskaeach Spring and Fall.

'In the 1970s the Fortymile caribou herd crossed the Taylor Highwayen masse and were slaughtered primarily by young military men from the Lower '48 s1a1es.

steamboats and meet with Chief Robens , the chief of the Gwi'chins around Fon Yukon and Venetie and Arctic's chiefscornin' down and meetin' because the caribou crossed, crossed the river below Circle and and then between Circle and Eagle and made a rotating spiral through theircountry. And our people helped hunt our herd just as well as we hunted the other pan of it.

But the cycle was beingdisrupted and the anny and the management at that time Oaughs) didn't have too much of a clue or reallydidn't, have the, didn't have the people to police the area.. Pan of it's "naieveness". I can forgive some of that, but some of it should be common sense that I would think...

That should be taught in school right off the bat, more than anything: how to treat others like they*want* to be treated. That, that should be something I think that should be... I don't know how you could leach that, this kind of training and concept. Maybe it's more Eastern. I think it's more Eastern, kind of mental training. I don't know. Be sure. But I think it needs to be taught when you're young. It'll keep... It'll help to keep things from disrupting.

Just like how we were taught about fire arms. Our guns are weapons. Keep them out of the way. Keep them... We don't let women stepover our guns and things. They were, we respect their things. We don't bother women's stuff. We respect their things. They respect our hunting things. We respect the other person for... You don't point a gun toward another person. You keep the gun pointed up, even when we're walking, 'cause you could trip and the gun could go off. You could shoot somebody accidentally. You don't step in the way of guns. A gun is a tool likea hammer and nails. It's nota toy. It's not like what you see on 1.v. now where they got people pointing guns right off the bat. There isn't even a explanation. They shoot people for no reason and kids think that's right. This is not right. This is not... This is the kind of discipline needs to be taught off the bat. lf you don't teach it, you'll have chaos. They don't know what their doin'. It's notso much their fault. Ir's likea game they see on 1.v. Oh it's not real until it happens. Then what are you gonna do? You gonna put the bullet back in the gun? Once you squeeze the trigger, you've already made the decision. They, they, that realism, I don't think that they havea... They don't know what it is until it happens. And the.then the pure horror that they've taken another person's lifeset in, but then it's too late. Just like in the canoons when we finally did get t.v. me and my brother, Bugs Bunny. that was the kind of humor, and the baddest guy in the whole thing might be Wiley Coyote or Bugs Bunny sometimes and then Elmer Fudd. And he was a, he was a hunter, even him. He was out tryin' to get somethin' to eat or whatever, but he sure didn't get much to eat in them canoons. This was the kind of... Even then the kind of respect and discipline I think they need to slowly integrate back in, because the tail end of allthis is those kids you see runnin' around in the street doin' all those things and what they're showing on 1.v. and our village kids seeing that straight up, straight off the bat. They're getting trained in their mind, not for the woods, not for respecting others. They're getting trained for the city.

They go 10 the city and everybody else is on the same wave length. They're thinking that kind of wayeven, maybe even in their subconscious. This is what I see as a lot of the reason of breakdown of discipline. They don't respect, ·cause they don't know any better. Somebody's making money off of what's more exciting on television, you know. This is, thisshould, somebody should take this and use that, this knowledge that I've seen and maybe help change some of that. Because they're not beingoriented for the woods, they're beingoriented for the city and that's why there'sso many younger kidsgoing into the city instead of staying in the

bush.

**Because it takes time to train ahunter. to train a warrior. to train women toknow what berries**

toeat, to know when to take an animal, how you'll respect him when you kill him.. Your first kill you drink some of the blood or eat a pieceof the heart. Thisis pan of our training, pan of our respect to the land. You throw a **piece** of the fat in the fire for people that have went before us. Pan of our hunting practice: 10 respect the animal and our weapons and our life. We respect our life. And if these kidsdon't respect another's life, if they just seen it was taken and thrown away, theydon't value it and that's what I see. It makes me very sad What, it's what makes me keepgoing to keep trying to pound this through in my own way. Alsoso the young peoplecan havea chance, to have hope, because if you don't have a choice...

That's whyI'm such disagreement with the state of Alaska on many issues. When you don't **have a choice anymore, you're aslave. This is not right. This is not what I see America as** supposed to be in the first place. The natives are not gonna saw the branch we are standing on off if we havethe time to train our kids: how to take game, how much to take, when to take it. We cannot teach them all this discipline and this knowledge on the weekend. If it can be integrated in theschools and perhaps help the non-natives also understand what we're doing, they wouldn't look at it as a threat because it'sdifferent. It's basic. It'scommon sense. It's **survival, and that's what it is, plain and simple.**

All the other stuff is just window dressing or frosting. You need a rock to stand on, build on, and that's what the natives are, but it'sdeteriorating at a rapid pace. And this could **be** detrimental even to the non-native population today. Everything is a circle and it's gonna swing **around to the environment because they're nol respecting their environment. Andit would be** not because...lt'sbecause they don't know. It's thereason a lot of them are...and money. Money truly is the "root of all evil". It makes a person do something that they normally would not do. There's other ways to make money, cleaner ways. The right way, to work the hard way for it, so when theydo spend it, it won't be on some bologna.

This is pan of what I'm working towards as a whole. That discipline that I was taught, by my

grandmother and grandparents and Grandma Ellen and Chief Walter Northway, Stephen Northway, Andrew Isaac, his brother, Oscar Isaac: alsoSilasSolomon, Julius Paul, all kindsof different elders that would, would teach me things and, they, theychoose certain people to carry

certain knowledges because you have to be trusted with the knowledge. That has... You can't just use it likea stick. If you, that's... They have to have that discipline and respect for it. If you give it to the wrong person. they could be hurting a bunch of innocent people with it. Not understanding the sheer poweror it. I was called to the bedside of manyold people about **to pass** away. They'll call for you hundreds of miles and theygot something to tell you before theydie. I've been called to over ten people and the next day they would passon. This is the kind of

knowledge that I carryand when I give it to certain people, certain piecesof it, I see that certain

**situation in a person, a certain, the one that would take care of** it. **that wouldnot use h recklessly.**

***Dleg***



***Squirrel***

###### Agnes Henry born Healy Lake

*Agnes Henry was born* in *Healy Lake.the middle child of Ellen and Frank Felix. Growing up* ***al the Lake she enjoyed playing with otherchildren, sliding on thelake, playing house andall*** *tire thingsthat childrendo the world over. Shealso checked snares, hauled wood with a dog sled and helped care for her younger siblings. Agnes's favorite foods include: moose. ducks, duck eggs.fish, fish eggs.fish guts, and all of her traditional foods. She curremly lives in her* ***own home which she shares with her daughterand grandchildren ;n Tok, Alaska.. Her dream is*** *to oneday havea cabin of herown in Healy Lake where she grewup.*

*(No photoavailable)*

Interview with Agnes Henry Healy Lake

August 17, 2000

Interviewers: Don Callaway & Connie Friend

Don Callaway, it'sThursday, August 17" in Healy Lake and today Agnes Henry is going 10 talk about her life history.

I just like to tell a little story for myself. I don't know really that much, but little things l know from my life as I growing up.

I growing up real hard way and my mother work real hard for us to feed us and get some food for us. All, how many yearsdown here in Healy Lake and we didn't have lotsof things that we want. People have today. People haveeasy life today, but in those days it's real hard. And it's real hard to live in the woods. And we live off the land, We live on moose meat, fish, all different things. We make dry meat,dry fish. Raw fish yougotta cook it in bucket (pan). And cranberries, blueberries, that's ourdessen. And anything my mother put her hand on, that's our food.

My mother raise us up real hard way and we didn't havedecent clothes, just like today. And I always help mom, when she cut wood, I always bring wood for her with my dog because I was just a little girl and I didn't haveno painon my body. I did all that for her right behind my mom's back. As I grow up, I always think where I take a walk, I think to myself, "Maybe someday I goin' begrowing up and I goin' be a woman and I gonna do same thing what my mother do".

This is real hard. I always see my dad work on the boat. And t.ry to bring somethin' to eat for his people, his relation people. His aunt, his grandpa, my dad took care of all Jots of people with Indian food.. He never getstingy'. He never put it in his freezer. And he never say," Ididn't have anything". My dad teach me Jots of things. My dad told me I should shoot 30/30 when I was a little girl and Isaid, "No". Iscare gun. And he let me shoot .22 and that's my first shot. How many years, years, years ago,long time ago.

I can't walk out there in the woods all by myself because I wanted somebodyelse to walk with me. And while we walk, people tell me story.

And I went through lots. I went through lots. But those days I never think about what kindof

shin I goin' wearand what kind clothes, because we didn't haveclothes. My mom have to scratch around for us, to make us liule things what we can wear like at Christmas time. I don't know where material come from. but she make our dressand make... We wear moccasin for Christmas. Summenime she make us moccasin that you can tie. We went through so much that... We went 1hrough so much.

And when my dad go out on the trnp line. him and mom. We all have to sit inside sled. Sled, they cover us up with canvas so we can stay warm because they don't. Nobody goin watch

'sharing

112

over, watch us because they don't know babysitter' at that time.

All these years as I growing up, I always think that I should do like mygrandma and grandpa .

Igrowingup, twelve yearsold, thirteen yearsold when my mother took us out of here, Healy Lake, move us to Dot Lake because she didn't want us to die3• So that save ourlife and we's live in Dot Lake for l don't know how many years. Dot Lake and that first is Little Gerstle and from Liulc Gerstleto Dot Lake. Both place, both place we stay. My aunt Jeannie Healy there and her daughter. Her husband, chief,(John Healy) work. And my cousin •n them, theytook care of them there and us. Only us, them and us. Only us welive there, nobody else beside us. And from there after so many yearslater we went to Tanacross and stay in Tanacross for how many years.

And I think about it every day. Every day I think about it. And whatI gonna be, as growing

up. I want to be a good person. I want to do, I want to do what people do. Go out pick berries with mom. Go out look for mushroom. Go out.all what's ever on this land, we go om and pick

it so **wecan have something tocat.**

Lots of things. linle thingsI remember. That's what I goin' talk about. Today. It's better to live out here in the woods where youdon't have to wish do this and that. I always wish for have something right now. I always wish to somethin' when I didn't have money. But right here in the woods you don't go hungry. You might not goin' have clothes and you might not goin' have lots of things. but you never get hungry. sit in the woods.

My mom raiseus up real hard way. Not one time we never havea easy life. In the morning

time we cat boil fish for breakfast. And lunch time, Iguess. We don't have no clock. We don't know, we don't know about lunch timeand supper lime. Wego by sun. Which way sun hit, they said that's twelve o'clock. So that's the waythey know. Nobody never had anything what we got today. My mom feed us again. She f,y fish for us.' Idon't know where the frying pan came from, but she cook,she fry fish for us. Grandma and Grandpa, aJI of us, my sister, my sister Mary, my oldest sister andshe didn't have my youngest sister and brotherat that time.

My three, two sister andone brother buried overthere at Healy Lake, old cemetery. All these little things l really learned. What I went through and what my mom went through for us.

'Traditionally nuclear families frequently hunted alone.

'The I940's flu epidemic that swept through the entire Upper Tanana region was particularlydevastating 10 Healy **Lake** which had no medical assistance.. Ellen lost three **ofher** children and both her parents in a mauerof a few weeks. She ministered to the sick and dying and finally in adesperate effort to save the few living, those remaining walked away from the village carrying nothing but the clothes on their backs for fearof contamination.cf: LeeSaylor

:p.144.

'Whitefish was and continues to be a subsistence food among the tribes of the Upper Tanana. As in the past, Native people sometimes trade or visit relatives in the Copper River Ahtna region or along the Yukon River to obtain salmon. King salmon is especially prized for its oil.

Sometime, where my mom say somethin' it always hurt me because it's...This is very hard hope some day when I'm not here, I hope my grandkids listen to this tape.

I didn't have a niceshin and pants on. I didn't have this kind of shoes. I didn't have

anything. Idon't know about clothes. Also my mother, all.everybody who ever lived there, they do same thing what my mom did. My mom set trap so we could have food in our tummy'.

From Little Gerstle, how many years in Little Gerstle. from there we moved there from Dot Lake. I don't know why we moved to Dot Lake. We didn't havea house. My dad is ready to die. We moved to Dot Lake. I was twelve, thineen, twelve yearsold when my dad gone. My daddie right there in Dot Lake. They took his body to Tanacross. where all his relative are. That's way my dad was buried. And from there I went on with my life.

I always think to myself, may people, teenager want to have fun today, I don't know about fun. I don't know about nothin'

I don'1 even know about boylriend, nothin•. When J was Dot Lake, I got,I got my first daughter. I don't know how that happened, but I got my first daughter and that's Mary Lou. After yearS later, I get my son,Leeand that's my first kids. I went through so much with them. didn't have no money to takecareof them. but with Christian people help me I went, I raised them up myself. I raised them up myself and after when they gota little bigger, mom took them up and raised them until they're real big. know how to take care of themselves..

Ali these little things we can put ii together. We're out there in the woods. If we know how to cook and we're hungry, we can build fire with almost anything. If youdon't have no matches, you can find somethin' out there. Those things, yougoin' take it out from a treeand rock, that's your matches. We can cook out there. We don't have to go hungry. Spruce house, is. that's our house. We didn't have a fancy house. Half the time it's inside tent. Lotsof time I get cold and sleep behind my mom's back. I'll always want to beclose to her. From her, I want10 be wann. As I growing up, I never havea easy life, I never have a easy time.

I went10 school in Dot Lake. And I finish my first and second grade. That's all I finish. And, I don't know, I couldn't get along with my teacher so I told my teacher one day that J goin' quit because it don'1 do me any good. I got mad at my own teacher so he didn't sayanything 10 me and he told me,"That'salright if I want to, I don't have to". But he told me I can go, so I went. He didn't chase meout of school house in Dot Lake. He told mo.if I want10 I can go.

From there after years later. I went to Tok. My mother went toTok. She rent little place right across from the Assembly of God. Even so my mother hasa place.I didn't go in there and move in there with her because I was old enough to go on my own. So instead of go in with her,I asked for job.

In Parker House6, that's rny first job. So many different place I work. And I see people get

nice clothes sol didn't buy myself clothes. My kidscome first. l buy them clothes.

J get mistreated from Dot Lakeso I move. I move. I didn't want to bein there for another day.

'Traditionally women often had traplines for small gamesuch as rabbit and rnanen. The men hunted and trapped larger animals such as lynx, moose and caribou.

"The Parker House was an old landmark restaurant and hotel in Tok. 11was torn down in the late 1980"s or early 90's.

When we moved 10Tok, from Tok. moved down to Tanacross and stayed Tanacross for how Jong? Long. long time. Because my daughter was there, that's theonly reason why I did that. And from there, we go back lo Tok again and I get certain job there and there. *Lots* of things that I didn't have. I didn't cal cereal. I didn't eateggs. Whal wc eat oul there. what we get, that's what we eat. All my family, they didn't havecereal and eggs. not like right now. It's veryhard. It's very hard.

My grandpa was blind. I remember that earlyin the morning, I put stick in his hand. He said he was gonna pack us somesnow and help. I don't know wherethat five gallon can come from, but I put snow in there and I push it down *so*if it'smeltin' we'll have enough water. My grandpa, Blind Jimmy, I put stick in his handand he holdstick. One side, hecarrythat five

gallon can with snow. I bring him back to inside and I put him on his bed.lumber bed. l don't know we had, where that blankets came from, but theygot a blanket, one pairblankets each that's what they got. They didn't have two or threeof them and packed caribou skin for their mattress. That's their *mattress* is caribou skin.

Myoldest sister. my grandmaand grandpa make caribou parka for myolder sister, Mary and that's hercoal for winter. And she had moccasin. same thing as us. We all wear same,same thing, but I didn't have what she got. They raise her up half way for mom,so just like they make her *"zoog"(spoiled).* That's whyshe got those nice things they fl, up for her. I remember that. When my brother is gone, my linle brother is gone, I remember that. My littlesister gone, I remember that. My mom didn't have lotsof kidsbecause she's havin' problem havin' baby.

And all these years, I always think of my mom didn'l have another child again becauseeven so I was little girl, Idon't know, I don't know about pregnant then.

My mother, she go out. shegooul.out,out,out every day she go out. Not one day she stay inside. My mother told me I gotta stay home and watch the kids, little brotherand sister. And I babysit for them while she go check her muskrat. The ne,tdayshesaid she gotta go check her fo, snare. lynx.lynx. She set snare. Both way, my mother did all that. My mother get long story and I just went behind my mom.

Littlethings that I know, that's what I talk about this morning. And I hope someday, I hope my grandkids just listen to this. Listen to this.

And maybe move lO highway is not really important. Live down here, it's beuer7• Even if you didn't havea house, there's a log out there. There's a logout there. Spruce house, in between spruce houseand tent, that's wha1we used t.o liveon. Sometime, like I say. Igot so cold. **We** sleep in one blanket and canvas and big fire in front. I always think my moccasin goin' blllll, 'cause I stingy for my moose skin moccasin. But my moccasin didn't bum. We don't **lake our** clothesoul and sleep. We sleep in our clothes. Lots o' time I sleep in my moccasin. My mom always tell me, "At leasl take you moccasin out",so that's what we did.

And all these years I live in Tok, Tanacross. Dot Lake.Little Gerstle. I learn lotso' things. I learn lotso' things for what people do. They goout there. they're hungry, theygo out there and get it. If you goin' sit inside all day, you can't get anything. You hungry, you goin' stayhungry until you use you two arms and 1wo leg lO go get it. My mother did lotsof things for us. It's nol

'There is no road access to Healy Lake except in late winter when an ice bridge is built

**across theTanana River.**

easy. It's not easy.

Young kids right now. theygrow up and they got nice clothes, they play tape deck and they go dance. Dance and havea good time. We didn'1 do that It's real hard. We don't know about tape deck. We don't know about radio. We don't know about nothin'.

I always hear people say, "I eat cereal". Nobody ever eat cereal because nobody did. This is real hard. Real hard. I thought. I thought I notgonna live today if my mom didn't take us away. Maybe me and my sister in Tok gonna begone today 100 and my mom's notgoin' have no kids. She probably even nOlgoin' havegrandkids.

Little things I know, that's what I wanna, I talk about right now. I hopesomeday when I'm gone, I hope my grandkids l.isten lo this tape. !l'sreal good that we can liveoff of the land. Berries is our dessert. Lotsof things we can doout there in the woods. Go lake a walk.Go do somethin'. Pick berries. Moose skin coal, people had. They don't go lo store and buy jacket. Moose skin. If they got blankets. nice wool blankets, they cut it up and they make underwear. That's what they wear for long johns. My mom used 10 make me rabbits scarf, rabbit skin scarf for winter and some way she make us jacket and that's nOl real easy lo make jacket. She have to scmtch around 10 make a jacket for us. And I had my mbbit skin scarf and hat. I wear hat when I go check my rabbit snare. She told me to dress warm. Whatever I got,that's what I pul il on my body 10 keep warm until I make it back to house. Check my mbbil snareearly in the morning. I wasso happygrowing up. Lillie girl. I wanted to be my dad's baby. My dad,I always tell him 10 pack me. I keep my othersisterand brotheron the sideand I want lo be *"wog"* so1 give my dad bad time. After my dad die,[ don'tdo that Lots of things that it's not worth it. I notgoin' talk about il . I just talk about my kids.

I raise up my son, myyoungest son and youngest daughter myself. With my first kids my mom help me. She took over and raised them up half way. While she work, she buy them things. She buy theirclothes. Give them place to stay. That's the way my family raised up here in, between Tok and Tanacross and Dot Lake and Lillie Gerstle. It's real hard. It'snoteasy life. I hope all these young kids out here. 1 hope they learn how to goout there. We're hungry, we get frying pan. Maybe we gotone cup of rice. we can cook il out there. And biscuits, no butler. no jam, no nothin'. People don't know how to make jam those kind o' days. It's real hard. It's real hard.

I wanted 10 share this, this morning. People always treat me good, right today. Make a friends,

because I want 10 11Cat people right. I got lotsof friends there and there. And I wanted to treat them right. If rgot house. I'll share my house with the people. My dad talked 10 me lotsof time

before she.he die. He told me,''Don't laugh for people. You help people. You got last cup of tea, go giveil to them. Don't hold il back," my dad used to tell me. My dad is Frank Felix. I miss my dad. Many years I miss my dad. I finally forget. Lillie by liule I forget about my dad because that's long long time. Long time ago hedie in Dot Lake.

All our relative, we didn't ask for help. We didn't go to people's house and try toeat up what they got because even those days it's real hard. You don't have a tissue. you goua use what you put your hand on those days.

Allthese li11le things I remember. I learned all this from my mother and as Igrowing up to bea

teenager.

Seventeen yearsold when I had my first daughter. I didn't want to. I don't know how1 make

mistake. I wasjust a teenager. I real didn't have to have my daughter and I hope it never happen. But, I'm glad. My oldest daughter today is manied. . .

And I'm glad I can share all these linle things this morningso Don and Connie can hsten to

thesejust like I just share with them. And nicethat people treat usgood today\_ for what we arc. We mightgoin' havedifferent plans from the other people. All people havedifferent plans.

They got different nameand that name, maybe it'snot imponant to me.

But all these years, and in Tok I went this far with liquor. And I don't think it'sreally imponant. Almost loose my life with liquor. And I try to destroy myself with medication how many time? And it didn't work. That didn't work for meso I quit. How many years now I was sober. I was sober. I did it on myown. In Tok I did. If westay down here in the woods: never will be happen. I thought it'sgood to drink and havea good time and sit in the bar all night long. Which that I did. When I changed my life around, I staned go to church and I pray for people. I go to real church. I staned praying for people and prayfor myself. I didn't see "AA". I don't seenobody because "AA" people don't goaround to village and try to help people so I did it on myown. I pray and I ask that "Man upstairs" to help me. That's wayI got myself away from liquor. Today yet,I never drink yet. I don't smoke. I don't chew. (just want to be happy today for who I am and where I come from.

**1can sayon mymother's side, Ican say," Icome from where she come from". I can say on** my dad'sside," Icomefrom where my dad camefrom". So this is really, really true that what we learn from this land and what we learn and what kind of things we goin' wear.

Go down the lake. Wash you hair. There's noshampoo. There's nohand soap. I don't know where this brown soapcame from'. That's the one we take a wash ourself. Wash our arm.

Wash our leg and feet in the lake. Sometime there's an old pan. My mother heat up the water

for us and she told us ,o wash yourself. So that's what we did. And I learned all these little things so that's what I ialk about this morning and I'm so glad that I went through hard way and I didn't raise upeasy way. I didn't havelotsof things that I wish for today.

Now right here we move into road and I always look at things and when I don't have money, I wish I havethat one. I wish somebody buy me that one. I wonder how much money they got. I wonder what kindcheck book they got. I always wish for things. That's not right. I shouldn't be wishin' like that. I shouldn't tell people to buy me things. I should just be just the way I am. And I want to be this way until someday that "Man upstairs" take me back.

I love all my grandkids very much, all my kids and my grandkids. I went through so much with them. Lots of time I scratch around for ,o get diaperbecause I didn't have the money.So all these things, all these things is real hard.

When 1 went to school I meet lotsof school kids, Dot Lake. Not too many of us in school. Buteven that when I go back home, I help mom. She need water. I go down and pack water for her because she get job in children home and work in children home. Her paycheck wasn't real big, but she always tookcare of us and buy things for us after my dad die. After my dad die, people out there get somethin' they have to share their food with us because my mom did that much for us. And I don't know why today we go through so much. We should just live in the woodsdown here in Healy Lake. We goin' bealright. but my mother took us away because she

'This was probably the"Fels Naptha" soap introduced by missionaries or traders.

didn't wam loose us. That's why I guess I still alive today and J gm lots of friends. ! gm lotsof good friends, just like Connie.

I always think about Connie and Gary John because when l need help, they always there for me and give mesomething 10eat. f'm sorry if I cry in this tape, but that's what happened when my dad die. And I got a good friends today. lgotta good friends today1ha1I can call them up in telephone and talk10 them. Nobody never stingy10 me. Gary and Connie how many time in Tok, they bring some things10 me: fish, salmon, linle pieceof meat, linle grouse and ducks, little berries. I know all that. I got it in my hean for them. And some day when they need the help, I

goin' be there for them. I gonna tum around and I gonna helpthem. What I got in my freezer I gonna share with them.

Just about mystory is over.

And when I gel married, my marriage didn't work and Ididn't like it. I didn't like ii a bit. I don't know about gettin' married. People make me get married and I didn't like it. I didn't like ii, I really didn't like it. I was hun. Hun, hurt, hurt, hurt all the time. But I not goin' talk about ii in tape because I don't think it'sworth it. I just tell a story for my life how I want, I raised up. I'm glad I'm still alive today.

And I look around and see things what peopledo. I still learn lotsof things from people what they do. My mother teach me how 10sew beads. I sew. I sit up all night I sew beads. Make mukluk (inaudible) for her. Igot good eye. Idon't need no glass. I sil up all night while my mom sleep. Make mukluk (inaudible). One night I fill it up all with beads and I sew beads. I sew slipper top. Whatever she sew,I did. I helpher. In the morning time I show ii 10 her what she did, what I did. My mom always so happy. How you did it in one night? She always tell me. I always tell mom, "I want10 so I finish". That's why I sit up all night. I didn't want10 sleep I told her. 1 didn't want 10 sleep. I.got my little bed right front of mom and I didn't, I didn't feel 100 happy to sleep. If I go sleep I thought, "I gonna keep my mom up". So that's only reason why I sit up with my beadwork.

Lots of things that I didn't learn today that I want to learn. Ididn't learn how 10 tum beaver

skin and moose skin. I didn't learn that. I don't know how 10 do it. Still yet, right now I don't know how 10do those things. I can cul Jiule meat. Little things I can do it. Pick berries, put it away for winter. Cranberries, dry berries. high bush berries, all these little things, I can do it. I don't know...Someday, sometime I look what l goin' do tomorrow morning and there's lotsof things I can do.

For my sickness, sometimes my sickness gelon topof me where I can't do anything for myself.

But still yet, I'm still alive and I'm glad 1ha1I got kids and glad that I gotgrandkids, that I **love**

them. That'sour family.

My dad gel relation in Tanacross. His relation people used10 fry us meat in the morning when my dad took us 10 Tanacross. The people that he related ID they cook us meal and riceand biscuits. They feed us good breakfast. Last us all day. It's real hard right now kids all growing up real good way. I'm glad they did... I'm glad our kidsgot good clothes, lotsof blankets and they got house. They got wood stove. They got freezer going, refrigerator. There's coffee pol plug in. I didn't have nothin' 10 plug in that day because l don't know about coffee pot.

I don't even know about hand soap. I don't even know about underclothes. Whatever my mom make us, that's what she make under clothes for us. !l's not fancy. She sew by hand. ll's

not fancy. What she sew for us, we put it on. Sometimes she get her hand on some kindold clothes, like a old sweater and shin. She cut it outand makeour socks with that one. That's what our socks used to be for Christmas.

And lotsof things that I never learned, I hope lleam. I hope!learn more while I'm still livin"

today. I hopeI learn a Little bit more so I can tum around and teach my grandkids what to do. I

told my kids they have to learn the hard way.

They should get up. They should build fire out there and cook out there. Don't cook on cook stove. Go out. They should learn hard way.

I not goin' behereon this earth all rest of it my life. Everyone of us, we goin' gosomeday. I

don't know where else we gonna go. but we gonna go. When I changed my life around, go to church,I want to be a good person so I go to church for good way beside what I learn in woods.

I learned. I learned this much from linle things what I see: how peoplecut their meat, how they make dry fish. When we do our meat we gottasit out there and watch it so we can havea good meat for winterand good fish. So tly don't get intoour meat and get sourand rotten. When you food get rotten, you got lazy, youcan't take care your food, your food's goin' get rotten and sour. And fly goin' get into you stuff what you goin' eat. That's why you gotta sit out there and take care. Don't just make smoke one day and go someplace elseandforget about your food.' That's your food you goin' live on so you keep it clean and you make smoke and all you food right there what you goin' eat. Nocake. Nocake and pie for dessert. Berries is yourdessert. That's our dessert.

My mom used to go out there and pick berries for us in wintertime. Few high bush berries, there and there. She put liule flour in there and that's ourdessert. I enjoy what my mother did for us.

*Teejuh,* my mother,

*Nts·e* my mother,*T1eexah t'ind(l'(:.*

I hope,

I hopealI *rs'ii'ee.y.wursfnki!ey xundeyh de*

all *t·eey ms'e neexah t'in(l*'• *xiyeratdeyh*

*My poor mother.*

*all that she did for us,*

***Ihope her children will remember,***

*they will knowall that she did for us.10*

All my mother, all what she did for us with all,every one of us. I hope. I hopeother family live

"Traditionally meat was smoked and dried for preservation and ease in transportation.

Diligence in tending the meat during processing was of utmost importance.

'"Translated by Gary Holton, Alaska Native Language Center. University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Ak.

today so that they can look at their old mother today'1•

My mother, after my dad gone, my mother didn't get married. Didn't get married because we didn't want her to get married. Betteroff. Mymother work hard. That little small paycheck she work her bulloff for that paycheck to feed us and buy us little things.

That's wayI grow up. It's noteasy way to grow up. h's real hard. We don't know about shoes. We don't know about nothin'. We don't know about comb. We don"t know about bobby pin. No put up hair, no nothin'. Ribbon. Sometime once a year Grandpa, he bring us ribbon and we tie it up on our hair. That's what we did. And I'm glad I share this one this morning and I'm glad we come down to Healy Lake again and share our love for two days. And I'm glad we came down with Connie and Don. I'm glad. I appreciate Don he bring us down with his car and he came across with us.

Grandma and Grandpa say always,"It doesn't matter where people came from". They used to tell us. They used to tell us, me and my sister Mary,"You gotta care for those people".

And I wanna keepon goingon with my life.

When I meet my kids' dad in Tok, when I left from Dot Lake, for a while we didn't haveno money either. I gotta get job. Have to go in the bar and go clean up all people'sdiny mess. But I did that for, to get another dollar. That's what I did. And nobody...just like when you need help, youdon't want 10 ask people for help because you didn't want to. People always when we need help, I think it's not hard 10 ask for help. It's "no"or "yes". That'salright.

Still yet today I want to learn some more things. I don't want to go on with my life. I'm glad we had this 'nether good day today. Many years ago, westill havea sunshine.

So I think that's all mystory, little things I know th.is morning so I gonna stop this morning.

So I'm gonna pray this morning And if Connie and Don doesn't mind, I wanna put this little prayer in there this morning: No matter what we do, what we are, there's a Man that's our answer this morning. We can go our and sleep hard way our there.

*Ourlteave11ly Father, this moming I come before you in the nameof Jesus. WIien I /tad change my life, I want my lifeto be more stro11g and do tlti11gs right, whatever I'm supposed to do. And* I *pray for all the village, all differe111 village and all rite loved ones and all rite Christian people, all the minister, all our relative, all, every one of them. I pray that God if You are there, You the onlyone that·s gonna take care of us today now, whatever we we111 through. We wem through a hard way b111 You there for us. I'm so glad. I hope I just live in rite woods today yet, then I could be hundred per cents belier. And I want to thank You, Lbrd, this moming. I wall/ to thank You u,rd, rhis moming we get place10 sleep and share food with each orlter and havea good* ***coffee*** *and a good cup of tea.*

*This aftemoon when we ready to go home, You watch overusand prorecr us. You help us for anotherday 10 be strong with you. This momi11g. someday you goin*• *be ready for us to rake us*

*/tome. We got good place to go home 10. This world is 1w1 our !tome. We just live around here.* ***Up there i11 another place is our real home. I want people to undersrm,d what we welll through*** *and how we leamed. We didn'r havea easy life, but you always therefor us. This is goin' be the*

11Agnes is expressing her wish that her deceased siblings could be here today to see their mother and know that she survived intoold age.

*end ofmystory, thismorning so this is*my *prayer forrhis morning and I ask You in Jesus' name. Amen.*

***Shos***



***Bear***

***Paul Kirsteatter***

***Paul KirsteaJter was bonr i11 the lower forty-eight states and became acquainted witli Alaska*** *during his World War II service in the armed forces. After his discharge, Paul returned to AltlSka where he met his wife, Margaret. After their marriage, they settled in Healy Lake sl,only after*

*the epidemic. Four current households in Healy Lake are related to Paul Kirsteatter a11d his*

*deceased wife, Margaret (Jacob) Kirsteatter. Margaret Jacob was born in Ma11sfield, Alaska in*

*1916. Margaret's parems were Gus Jacob of tire Ma11sfield/Ketclwmstuk band and Ag11es Sam*

*/rem Healy Lake. Gus Jacob was first cousin tc Walter Isaac, chief cf Mansfield. Agnes Sam's mot/rer, (Margaret's grandmother) was Belle Hatchet Sam. When Chief Sam died, Agnes married Paddy Healy who wQS son of C/rief Healy. Chief Healy wasalsothegreat grandfatherof Patrick* ***and Benjamin Saylor and Jo Ann Polston.***



lnterview with Paul Kirsteatter Healy Lake

August 16, 2000

Interviewers: Don Callaway & Connie Friend

Hi, my name's Don Callaway. This is Wednesday, August 16... We're in Healy Lake. We're in the houseof Fred Kirstealter and his Dad, Paul, is going to talk about his life history.

Paul: I was born and raised Outside, born in1922, and, and I entered the Service up here in Alaska, well, l entered theService, I came here in World Warn. I came up here. I was stationed at Everest Headquaners, a headquaners in the Aleutian Islands. During the time I spent in the Service here in Alaska, I spent most of the time in the Interior flying around with a special crew and I became acquainted with a numberof native peopleduring that time. We hada Tenth rescue made up of Eskimo and Indians and prospectors. And uh, they did a lot of rescue work: downed air craft and people in trouble all the way up, the Aleutian chain all the way to the Interior. So that and during that time l became acquainted with a number of Native people and I hada lot of respect for them and they had the, you know, they were adapted to the country. They wore their own clothing. you know, their mukluks and their furclothing or whatever they wanted 10 wear, although they were in the Service and they did a lot of amazing feats in rescue work. Some of them parachuted out of airplanes, dog teams, and uh, and then when an airplane, a plane would go down, it would be located, and they would, usually if they couldn't snowshoe in or go in bydog team, they 'd just jump out of an airplane and they'd see if any survivors . They'd paint a red,a white cross on the airplane craft so it wouldn't be reponed again.

And l wasdischarged in 1945. I went Outsideand I wasdischarged in Fon Sam Houston, Texas

and I turned around and came right back to Alaska in twenty...the Spring of 'Fony-six and met my wife at that time and what later became my wife and we lived here in Healy Lake. At that time in 1946 there wasabout five families living down here in the old village and they had an epidemic here back in the, the mid fonies that almost wiped out all the families here. At one Lime

' ·-

school ageat one time. That uh when this, this was du.ring

\_ World WarIT. it was hard 10 get doctors in in here. The



\_ i.

***.fr***

John Hajdukovitch1, the trader out at Delta told me that there wasseventy-five children here,

*1* -J 1:3der, Stanley Young a-s the tr\_ader down there at that lime. He told me he tned and tned to getdoctors m here

:, J· ,':\; and there was entire families wasdyin' and layin' in their

. · cabins. This was uh, my wife was here at that time. **She**

. **- .V!'***- r* their cabins and there was no way to bury 'em and uh new

,.- · was one of thesurvivors. Entire families Iyin' dead in

**... illll\_.',..'.....\_. .,..\_..-;,·\_**1.;white traders and others was, was living down here by the

* **'1!,I...,•,-** \_. trading post,John Knight,Stanley Young and others was

helpin' bury the people and they finally gota doctor in by

***1/taly Ri,•u circo /940***

***Joh,i Knight* in*from.***

the next Spring. He came up, an army doctor came outof what is now Ft. Greeley. Hecame in . Bun Hansen brought him up.. He was a resident. Bun Hansen was a resident of Big Delta. He

'See*··watki11g Amo11g Tall Trees"* by A.F.Gavin: 186-188.

brought him up bya dog team, up here, the doctorand the doctor, by that time the epidemic was almost over. No tests were ever made, but by the, by the symptoms and all he thought it might bediptheria and measles together. The Native people had very littleresistance 10 white's diseases

. They had never been exposed to it likeour race and they, it, you know common measles would decimate an entire village sometimes. And then when they had these diseases, the elders were great for it, and they felt a sickness, they would always get in thesteam bath and uh they would have someone makea steam bath and then all the men would get in thesteam bath at one time. Well if a sick person in there like...They also had TB was around for, was around for, was **rampant too,also. But that wasn't mainly what the epidemic, whatever it was was water born** ... Back in the J930's they also had an epidemic here that uh, decimated a lot of people and they believe it was from the water here around Healy Lake. But most people were uh, I understand, were moving around. They're nomads. They... They uh, in winter time they spent, the Healy Lake peoplespent mostof their winter up at Joseph and the Middle Fork' areaover in that other drainage. They had the caribou drift fences up there. They had the caribou drift fences up Healy River. And also they spent most of their winters up there. The Spring theycome back. It was a cycle. They come back here for the moose and the beaver and the fish. They weren't dependent 100 much on fish, but,although theydid have fish that mostly, there's nosalmon coming up this, this part of the Tanana, very few,so theydepended mostly on whitefish. But theyhad traps down hereon the Healy River, traps up the Healy Riverfor whitefish. And then in the Fall they'd gather berries and all. They went up in the Alaska range' over here forsheepand the marmot.

And the women and all would all go along100 and they pick berries and the women would pack the, snare the marmot and the men would be hunting sheep. Then they would come back here and prepare to go back up in to theircaribou fences, up in the upper Eighty and the Middle Fork as far down the Middle Fork as Joseph Village. That was Healy Lake people's area up there.

The,theArmy, Billy Mitchell, he was stationed at Fon Egben his journal, hecame up, I believe in 1901, up from Eagle through Joseph village in the winter to find a way through for the telegraph line going to, to Fairbanks and he ran into the Healy Lake band at Joseph. Chief Healy and,and his band were up there at that time. He made an agreement with them 10 lead him through the following winter to Delta, to the Delta area to find a route to put the telegraph line which would extend it off the Eagle line. It ran from Valdez to, 10 Dawson and Eagle that way and the following winter he came up with his sergeant, and made contact with what we call Chief Joseph. But Chief Joseph was really from theSalchachet. He was from here, but he'd married down at Salchachet and came back up here. But he wasn't really the chief. Chief Healy was really the chief, but he was the onlyone who could speak English so Mitchell assumed that he was the chief. But uh, theycontracted with him, to lead him up...(This was when it was fifty below according 10 Mitchell's journal.) lead him up the Joseph Creek, from Joseph Village over the head of the Goodpaster and down to the village down at the mouth of the, toward the mouth

of the,close10 the mouth of the Tanana, the Goodpaster River and uh those people, they uh. those

'The Middle Fork of the Fonymile River.

'The Alaska Range and particularly the Macomb plateau was the traditional hunting area for Dall sheepand marmot for the Healy Lakepeople. In more recent times much of this land has been acquired by the military and used for a variety of weapons testing. Because of deformities found in the wildlife the Native people have abandoned this area for hunting thus eliminating Dall sheep(an imponant resource) from their diet entirely.

people, there was pictures taken of the band up there,Chief Healy and his band. And there was... It's been well recorded and documented by Billy Mitchell. He thought a lot of the people up there. They had theircaribou wickiups with their skin houses according to photographs they'd taken. And they told him they were Tanana Indians, they came from over here. That was the place where they wintered up there. Sometimes they, 1 understand they went over to, joined up

with the Ketchumstuk peopleover there. They were related to the Kerchumsruk people roo, I understand 100.

I'll get back to my wife and the Healy Lake people here at the lake. When I, I moved back here in uh, in here in 1947 and stayed. During thesummer time my wife and I, we moved in, and there wasseveral other families here. but they just spent a little while and then they'd go, move back out to the highway and when the Alaska Highway was constructed, Chief Healy was the chief of their, John Healy was chief of the band here and he had moved the people, the survivors of that epidemic, he'd moved them up to the Little Gerstle on the Alaska Highway. So people more or less, his people moved up there with him, the survivors of that epidemic theyhad but they would still return here all the time and mostly in the summer, you know for fish and the moose, the beaver and all. And anyway, my family, we lived in that old village. And Fred was born down there in that, that old village.

And, but we carried. we hauled all our water there. The water was bad there, you know, the lake water was bad and we hauled our water from the creeks, the fresh water from the creeks and different places, because we was always afraid of that water. Through the past, you know,

rec...records of the epidemics there.

Then in about '50, about 1950 we moved over here to this location. Built our cabin. Drug the logs up, cut 'em by hand, drug 'em up with the dog team. Built our cabin and we raised our family here. We had a garden. We hada... We gotour moose, we got our fish, we trapped for fursand I did a lot of predator trapping and hunting for the bounties and occasionally I'd go out and work in the summer with the Alaska Road Com.mission out of Tok. And uh, pretty much, our family grew up here. We didn't, we weren't dependent on no, no outside money, BIA'or anything. We lived mostly strictly on subsistence off the land.

The family, we had netsout here in the lake and my familydried fish year round, or you know, not year round, but all during the summer. We fished under the ice in the early Fall. Wehad two big dog reams that we used for Ltavel and for trapping and bringing supplies in. We usually brought supplies in oncea year by boat. But we lived right here off the country. We didn't get no, any outside income otherthan sometimes when I'd go out and work maybe for a month in the

**summenime.**

Anyway, finally most of the people moved out of here for good, you know. They weren't **even** coming back any more. So for a number of years, clear up until the '70's most people were livin' out on the highway. Some of the band moved toTanacross, Dot lake, other places. Some to Fairbanks and since then there was a lot of descendants, you know, of the people who were originally from here, there wasquite a few. But very few of them that are still alive today, the original people that was here in1946.

And Chief Healy died,1 believe in1946 up to the Linle Gerstle and hispeople became pretty

well scattered around. They went 10 what, thesurvivors they went on up 10, like I explained up 10

Dot Lake and Tanacross and Tok, other places, other villages.

'Bureau of Indian Affairs

But through the years here, we, we uh, we made a good livin' here, you know. It was pretty much subsistence. We didn't have much money to spend, but we lived right off the country mostly, you know. My, my family dried meat, moose meat and caribou. And when we could find caribou up the Healy River that was part of the 40-Mile herd. They still are with the Canadian caribou

coming through up there.

They had traps up Healy River. They always had traps up Healy River. I'd like to point out...l

had the highest respect for the elder natives, for their knowledge of game and theirand their respect for wildlife. I neversaw them waste game and when they butchered an animal they took everything that was edible and what we'd once considered not edible and even the moose when they was in velvet, they even ate,chewed the horn.They'dcook it over the fire and chew that. Nearlyall the organsof the animal they ate. The liver, the brains, mostly the brains we used, of the caribou and moose were used for skin tanning. But nearly all the organs they ate: the stomach and the kidneys, all,everything. They seemed to be healthy and they had good teeth all the elders did when I came here. And they were very, you know, they were rustlers. They were always out. even the elders. the old ladies, they went out settingthe rabbit snares, you know and draggin· in their own wood. And surprising some of the elders was way up there in age, they wouldcut, saw their own wood. And maybe the youngsters would helpout. They would bring wood for 'em, you know, the ones that was too old, but a lot of 'em would be sawing theirown wood, carrying it into theircabin.

They had a village here, down hereon the point, that one time they had one across the lake and they had one up Healy River at old Chief Healy's camp up the upper river. They had a village up there also. That was more for caribou and fish than the Upper Tanana. They had upper Healy River fish. Upper Healy River they had by the old chiefs cabin up there, they had, well there was a number of cabins there. and they had camps and there's also pits up there where they had, they had covered you know, with skins and bark and,and all along the riverthere's still cache pits in evidence where they had their fish there, their whitefish, they put in those pits.you know

and they put, lined them with bark, put a layer of grass there, fish, layer of grass, then later they wouldcover them with logs 'n soil 'n moss, 'n later dig them up. Then they dried 'em,quite a bit of fish.

They also put up caribou and dried.frozen and dried caribou also and moose.. Everybody had, seems like nobody went hungry. There wasn't...No one went hungry that I know of. They didn't need any hand outs or anything like that either. I had the highest respect and I still do for the elders and I learned a lot about wildlife from the elders and uh, and I still admire them how industrious they were and how they could get along without nothin', and their survival here in **a** real harsh climateand on the trail I've hunted with many of 'em and many of their huntin' **trips** and hunted wolf dens with them and wolves and uh, they, theycould call, you know most wildlife perfectly, and, you know, call moose. caribou. bear, muskrats. birds. This was the elders, you know. They were real good at it. And that's how, how they contributed to their.a lot to their you know, their knowledge of game and wildlife, contributed a lot to their survival up here, because they talked about... the elders talked a lot.they'd talk a lot about famines. And, they always put away. I understand they put away food for those kind of events. They had hidden caches out. A man and his partner would usually havea hidden cache way out somewhere. You find 'em all over the country uh. up on top of ridges where they would fork. They made pits and they put their...Theyput dry meat, clothing weapons, benies. A lot of times they would put benies up in trees. They'd make 'em...a lot of times they'd pick benies while they were on a look out

watching for game. They'd take a birch tree and knock the rotten, and knock the inside out and put sticks to the bottom and some moss and fill it up with berries while they were watching for wild game. And they'd climb way up in a spruce tree and stash it up there. And uh, they was always talked about these caches, very imponant. Way out, there'd be noone just the, the two pattners here. Sometimes they'd marry two sisters. Anyway theyhad theirown caches. In the event that they gotdriven out by people coming through. They always talked about people coming through up here from down, down below, the other sideof the Alaska range, comin' in here raidin' their villages and if they gotdriven out of their villages, their encampments in the winter, they always had clothing and weapons and food stashed someplace. This was the reason, I understand that they had made thosecaches, for survival. And and they talk about the Upper Tanana.where they...Those people came over from K.luane Lake that tribe and shot a hole in 'em down there and a lot of people that escaped, were, you know that got away and did survive by some of the caches way out and later they went back and retaliated, I understand.

'· But it was those caches that when you'redriven out in severe weather, driven outof your encampment, driven out, not fully dressed, you know and with no weapon, you're you're..,lt's almost a death sentence unlessyou have something to fall back on the way they explained, the old people, and which is understandable. But Idon't know it's what moreI can say about the people here.

Theyhad a trader, the early trader here, I believewas Newton. Hecame in here about

1917 roughly there and first he was up in the UpperTanan..., went up the what was it? Mansfield at that time and traded some up there for one season. Then he came back here to Healy River and madea trading post down here. And he was here 'till about 1930, I believe. And his trading post burned down and his. his family moved to Fairbanks for school. There was no school here. And uh, they slatted a school hereone time. I understand my wife told me, but it wasonlyone year, some uh, minister, man by the nameof "Mclntosh'-4. He came in here and slatted a school one Spring. But that's the only school they had here. Hajdukovitch was a trader that went up, with his boats all the way to Tetlin. Later .Herman Kessler. he ran his boats clear up to up and around Tetlin and like that area up there. Then there was uh, there wasothertraders too. They were uh, uh...Off hand l can't think of all of 'em, but, uh, anyway l 've heard so much about 'em through my wife, you know. They had those steam boats and went all the way up 10 Nonhway I guess.

Tetlin. And uh, sometimes in the Fall they didn't make it all the way up there, they would bring it in. Then the traders would haveto unload all the material. It'd befloated in on the Tanana someplace and they'd have 10 unload everything and cache ii. And later after freeze up, they'd hire the Natives of the Upper Tanana would comedown with theirdog teams and haul the trade goods up, up river to their trading posts. Hajdukovitch had trading posts at Tetiin and I think Nonhway, one at Tanacross. Re also had caches along the river here at George Creek,Sam Creek, there were little settlements thereof Healy Lake people. And uh, he had the trading post. He hada little trading post here. But uh, Newton was the main trader here for a numberof years.

'The Upper Tanana retaliated in what has been called" theepic nineteenth century massacre of the Southern Tutchone".(Cf.McClellan, Catherine, 1975 : 25-26). Also in: McKennan, Roben A. 1959:171-172.

6This was the Rev. E.A. McIntosh who was the priest-in-chargeof St. Timothy's

Episcopal mission at Tanacross (about 100 miles East of Healy Lake). Cf .Simeone, William E. 1995: 40.

And then he turned it over to a man named Emil Hammer. And Hammer ran the trading post for a numberof years, then he died on the trail,froze going down to Delta one winter. Then a man, Tedlow. Tedlow one time too ran boats up here, run, hauled freight up here for Hajdukovitch. I believe for himself too and traded. Tedlow took over the trading post here in Healy Lake and Ted had the trading post,owned it during World WarD and Stanley Young was running it at that time, during World War D.. Stanley Young was the trader here at that time when they had the epidemicduring World War D. And he was the one that told me about him trying to get doctors in here at that time to take care of people. But it seems, and I heard this not only from Stanley Young, but others and my wife. It seems that they, some of theelders...Before this epidemic some of the elders, someof the people would get sick and they'd send them down to the traders' boats and they'dend up in Fairl>anks or wherever and then when, if that person dieddown there, and then when theysent the body back, well then, 'course they did an autopsy, well then, the

elders would look at the body 'cause they dressed 'em. And here there's been an autopsy performed on the body and they didn't understand. They thought they'd, the doctors killed him because of you k.now, the way the condition was. But it wasn't explained to 'em. So it was real hard to get anyof the elders when theygot sick to send anybody to Fairbanks. And their tradition was that they always bring a body back to where they were born, where they were from. And they talk about if a man was born here, from Healy Lake and had married somebody down river or UpperTanana. he died up there, they always brought the body back even in the winter time if they couldn't pack it, a few would go up thereand bring it back with a sled or whatever. But they believe that's thespirit that will be coming back 10 the locality where it was raised. And I think they still, you know, especially the elders, you know, follow that real closely and I understand that there were a lot of hard feelings between the BIA and the elders when a lot of the people

would go to Tanana for medical help and dieddown there. Then they went 10 sanitariums for TB and the bodies would never come back and so there was **a** lot of hard feel.ings between the elders and the Bureau of Indian Affairs and doctors in general because they really thought they were kiJling their people too. But it was understandablebecause they had no education. you know.

The Upper Tanana people were the last ones to beexposed to any amount of education, I believe. John Hajdukovitch and Jack Singleton. I believe was the first teacher at a school up at Tetlin. It was arranged byJohn Hajdukovitch.

John Hajdukovitch was instrumental in getting the TeUin Reserve. He. John had about thiny horses. He was a U.S.commissioner for the Upper Tanana. He was a biggameguide. He was on the Alaska game board, the territorial game board. And he, during his time of guiding he, he became acquainted with a lot of influential people like the Mellonkoffs and others, Endicott **anda** number of those people. Along the Alaska range here he would take those hunting panies all !he way up to the Upper Tanana. Maybe spend two and three months at a time on the hunting panics. He,at that time would hire mostly Healy River people here, men to helpguide. You know, because they were good. good...They were also good river men too, you know and John had run gas boats up for his trading boats up the Healy River. he usually got John Healy or some of the Healy River Indians hereto run the boats for him. And he hired a lot of 'em for, most of 'em for hisguiding party. And through the people that John had become acquainted with through these hums like Endicott and Mellonkoffs, people had a good deal of political influence. John made a number of trips back to Washington, D.C. testifying about the Natives in the Upper Tanana that **I.hecaribou were...**

Back in the mid-thrities was the last time that any amount of caribou made the big migrations, I

understand through these Upper Tanana. And John made the...testified several times before Congress. It'd be a mailer of record back there I'm sure. That the Upper Tanana people needed, you know, more game up here.

So that's one reason the buffalo weresent up here from Montana. But as it turned out the Native people never, were never allowed to use the buffalo, but they didn't seem to be much concerned about buffalo meat any way. They were more concerned about their caribou and their moose. But never-the-lessthat was the reason the buffalo were sent up here. They were brought up,1 understand, by the Tanana Valley Sportsmen group.They put the money up for transpon 'em up here. I believe the ParkService in Montana released though that many for breeding purpose to send up here,so that's one reason why the buffalo weresent up here in thisarea.

And the Upper Tanana people's area was from the delta, down here, back to the Alaska range, all the way, all the way up and pan of the Goodpaster, the Volk.mar and on the dividegoin' up to the Mt. Harper and the drainageof the Upper Middle Fork was their territory and back down along the drainage between the Mosquito Fork and across to the head of Minnie Creek and across to the Robenson River. That was the area that the Healy River band here claimed as their subsistence places'.

But any.. genin' back to the testimony that John made in Washington, D.C., he told me that he, he got the reserve up there in the Tetlin Reserve that was made by, I believe he told me the Executive Order, was never passed by Congress although Congress approved it. It was supposed to be, that reserve was supposed to be for all the Natives from Delta on up to the border. Well, my wife tells me and other elders that at times they used to leave here. It would beduring the Spring. They used to hunt muskrats and there'd bea lot of people that would leave here and they'd go up to the Tetlin area and the Nonhway area to hunt muskrats. But when the.re was no

rats here. You know rats ran in cycles and thisarea this yearcould be hardly any muskrats, but up river a ways in different areas, they could be plentiful so they went up there, would go up there and hunt muskrats in the Spring of the year.

And they were, I understand, preny much intenrelated and marriages between here and Upper Tanana. And there's a numberof families in Tanacross right now at one time wasat Healy Lake. The Isaacs and the Joseph families. they were from, originally from here, but moved up there later. Usually during those epidemics, you know, people would move out. And anyway that...Is there anything else that you wanna know that I know about?

One of the reasons you know, that I was successful as a trapper... You know I came up from the Lower 48 and of course I'd been a hun1er down there and an out-doors-man in my younger days too. It wasa lot different here in Alaska. That's for sure.

One of the reasons for my success was through my wife, Margaret. She was born at Mansfield. Her mo1her was a Sam from here at Healy Lake and her father was an Isaac. Her fa1her died when she was two years old and her mother broughl her and her sister back to Healy Lake. Her mother married Paddy Healy and shonly after1ha1, a year or two. Paddy Healy died. And lhen her grandparents raised, took her up to Sam Lake, up up above George Lake and raised her. And her grandparents never spoke English. They were a generation behind and they retained theirold ways. They weren't influenced very li1tle by. by whites. And Margare1, my wife, she always talks about at night her grandparents, her grandfather in panicular would be telling her about the old ways. Her grandmother 'd tell her aboul the old ways. Everything from childbinh 10 things

'Paul is defining Healy Lake's traditional hunting grounds.

that were taboo in theirculture and about wildlife how the, the rituals they went through when they hunted wildlife and consumed it and potlatches and everything like that. And so her, being as her grandparenlS didn't speak English, Margaret never spoke English 'till shewas in her teens back hereat Healy Lake. But she never went 10 school, but she picked up the English language pretty quick. And 'course when I met her, well she spoke mostly Native, but through the radio and conversing with meshe learned English and got real good at it. And uh...but she was an unusual woman. She was real proud of her race , real proud of her people.

And when everyone left here Chief Isaac appointed her chief here. She was chief here for about twenty-five years up until about 1970 and in fact she was the one that fought for the land claims here. The land, Healy Lake was one of the unlisted villages and we fought for three years. We had10, you know, gather up all of the records and everything else and present to the Depanment of the Interior to convince them that this was a village and was entitled 10 the settlements. And Margaret's name is on the claims and my family was the onlyone that lived here year around at that time and had lived here for quitea few years. We were the onlyones here. But others would come in. They had their allotments here. They'd come in for their fish, meat and quiteoften they were, they stayed...Most of them spent their time out on the highway where there wasschools.

J self taught mychildren for three years and then they went out to BIA school when it was too

much for me. Beings that my wife couldn't read, well she couldn't teach correspondence, but I did for three years and then I had 10 make a living trapping so the children went out to Chemawa and Edgecomb' and placeslike that .

So Fred ended up with, he ended up going back East. He'sa graduate of the University of Vermont and, but that was one drawback here that we missed, wasschools. But1 think the schooling that they got by beingraised here and raised here in a subsistence life, you know.style was an education that others weren't fortunate enough to ever get. They understand how, what **there, we went, what wedid here to make a livin' here and what their mother taught 'em.**

And my success as a trapper and all, I learned mostly from my wife, Margaret, but from the elders. And that's . that's one reason I respect the elders so much because afterall they survived hereall this. this time with their knowledge of wildlife and how to survive here. And I've been **fonunate, you know, to learn so much about their ways and l have respect foralJ their ways: their pollalches. system, their whole culture.**

Now getting back10 the Healy Lake people and the Native people from the Upper Tanana. there was...l've heard over and over from the elders and alsofrom the early prospectors in the Chicken area, the Fony Mile. At one time there were a lot of prospectors in the Fony Mile and it was a year that thesteamboats got frozen in with supplies coming up the Yukon, and so they **were** shon of supplies, the miners and prospectors (in) the Chicken areaand so the Ketchurnstuk people had tended fences for caribou over there and they practically saved, you know, many of the minersover there by meat. You know the meat they were geuing from the caribou and they hunted for the.. moose and all. Oneof the prospectors told me that they would try to pay them with gold and they had no use for gold. They would throw it over theirshoulders, you know. they had no way for payment; but they did it out of compassion for the prospectors that was in that area. And most of the early prospectors had a high respect for the Native people.

And the injured and sick and those accounlS of different prospectors and miners in the Forry

'These were boardingschools which are still in existence. Mt. Edgecomb is located in Sitka, Alaska and Chemawa is in Oregon state.

Mile areathat would become sick in the wintenime, severe weather and the Ketchumstuk people would put them on their sleds and their dog teams and with their dog teams would take them 10 Mansfield, which is in the Tanana drainage. And then from Mansfield. the people there would put 'em on a sled and bring them down as far as Healy River and then Healy River people would take them to Fairbanks. And they saved a lot of prospectors that way. And a lot of the prospectors really appreciated the Native people, you know, and their ways.

They were poor. They didn't have much, but whenever people would enter their village, their intent was sharing what they had. Most of 'em were honorable, their word was good.. John Hajdukovitch told me that he used 10 leavecaches of food all along the river up here for trappers. He would outfit 'em and uh, and even though the Natives didn't speak English. Well, he had access to the caches, he would take tobacco, rice, anything that he had left in those caches and in the Spring John would come up with his boat and trade for the fur and he said he nevergot beat. He said they would always make a mark for whatever they took, you know. John spoke the language too which made it easier, and he said he never had anything stolen from those caches all through the years that he had up and down the Tanana.

But that's about all I can tell you about what I heard and understand about the Upper Tanana people and theFony Mileand Ketchumstuk people. They helped them save lives. we already crossed that didn't we? Not only hunting game for them, but when they weresick and wounded, they hauled 'em down to Fairbanks and you know, relay them from one village to the other.

CF: If you'd like to speak to the Athabascan traditions or cultural traditions...

PK: Oh, there's lotsof 'em. It'd take mea long time. There's things like the young girls when they're growing up, there's taboos for this, like when they're menstruating, they'd camp way out away from the village until that wasover. And a man uh, a woman never stepover a man's weapons. Cenainly not when she was menstruating. There was cenain foods that the young peopledidn't eat,of the moose. the caribou and the beaver and otheranimals. Cenain...Young

people was not supposed to eat them. Women weren't supposed toeat bear. That was just here, although they vary in other places. Some people up river haddifferent customs, but here women didn't eat bear. Many things like that. Then they had cenain customs about hunting.

The caribou they talk about, they always let the first of the bandsgo through, migrate through. They left the fences open and the corrals open. They had long drift fences. There's some up Healy River and some up in the Fony Mile. A number of the Healy River people had up there, the Upper Middle Fork, Joseph, (Inaudible) Creek. When they hear of caribou migrating through, regardless of how hungry they were for meat. they always let the leaders go through because they claimed they left a scent trail, you know for the ones that followed. Once they let the leaders go through, then they could go ahead and fell the caribou. They had a circular fence and a long drift fence, been described to me. I'veseen the drift fences. I know where a number of them are, especially up here. You can still see the outlines of 'em where game through the years followed those drift fences and cut in down long trails 10 where there were enclosures. Enclosures **were** described to me as being mostly circular and the women and children would be way behind, out in the route of the caribou approaching the drift fences. And then once they got past the women and children, they'd make racket and drive the caribou down the drift fences into these encirclements. It was described to me that the caribou went round and round. Well, the men in the early days before they had white men's rifles, the fences had openings in the corral and there

were set snares made out of sinew, braided sinew. And they set snares in those openings and theycould catch the caribou as they tried to escape and the men would run along andcut the tendons in the back leg and let the caribou disappear and put thesnare back. They have an enclosure, you know, and then later they had, and of course they had,at that time they teU me, they had bows and arrows and all that. And they'dselect the fattest caribou, and they knew which **ones.**

The elders were real sharp on game. They knew which animals at a cenain time of the year

were the fattest. That's the ones they tried to take. And like I explained. in the winter lime they froze a lot of the meat up on caches, away from the dogs. In summer they dried a lot of the meat. When they traveled, they carried dried meat. Benies, they stashed benies all over where they'd come back in the middle of winter. After the Fall they picked these benies and had 'em stashed. They would come back for these benies.

There wascenain taboos they had for the potlatches. Certain ways theystirred the meat, the soup.

The body might be taken out of a window, brought in and out of a window•. In a community hall,or what we call a community hall;in a home, they, they, uh, sometimes I understand, if it **was a wickiup, there was a cremation right there sometjmes.**

In the places where they had a panlysubmerged pit. Theyusually two families lived in those places. They had the willows bent over in a domeshape with an opening for smoke to go out. Theyhad the two ends open .Oneside theyhad a fire pit, a long fire pit. And they put the dried logs in 'em and burned 'em from the center. The smoke would go out from the top and the heat from the fire pit would warrn the ground on both sides of theshelf and they were panlysunken and then one family lived over here and then the other. Really, this is where your partnership came in and the families stayed together, you know. The one familyon thisside and the other family on the other. Those are still in evidence around here, those pits. The house pits, sometime I understand a death therethat they might uh...ln the old days they would hirea non-family member and he would criss-cross the body with logs and it would be cremated. Then they might put the ashes in the houseand bum the house down. They didn't stay in those houses after somebody had died.

is practice continued until quite recently although it has now been abandoned. The purposeof this action was 10 avoidcontamination through the doorway where young girls had walked which was considered to **be***i11jii*or taboo.

**Ch'ets'iidz**



**Bull Moose**

Fred Kirsteatter born April 10, 1953 Healy Lake, Alaska

*Fred was the last child bom in the old Healy !Ake village, tire son of Paul a11d Margaret* ***Kirsteatter. Hehas rn'O children: Paul, age twenty and Elanor, age sevemeen. Fred has*** *illustrious ties10 the historyof Healy !Ake. It was Fred who first collected lithic artifacts and* ***then brought 1hem ro the arrention ofarchaeologist,Robert McKennan andothers. These*** *artifactsand laterinvestigationsdocumented the long antiquityof the Healy !Ake community. Fred was alsoa past chief of Healy !Ake succeeding his mother, Margaret Kirstea11er.*



Interview with Fred Kiisteatter Healy Lake

August 16, 2000

Interviewers: Don Callaway & Connie Friend

It'sFriday at Healy Lake. It's August 16"' and we're talking with Fred Kirstcatter.

Hi, my name is Fred IGrsteatter. I was born and raised in Healy Lake. I was theonly (telephone interrupts). Yeah, my name is Fred IGrsteauer. I was born in Healy Lake.l was the last oneof that was born in theold village siteof Healy Lake. 1 was born in 1953. And pretty much I was raised out in the Healy Lakesetting with just a family and a subsistence lifestyle where there would be just my parents and my immediate family, my sisters and we lived under the umbrella of basically a subsistence lifestyle and the,and the more rewarding probably more economical way of life really.

l think it was of more valueof living and as faras enrichment from my mother, I think we were pretty much enriched with hertraditional ways and someof the customs that she passed down 10 us sure have bencfiued us in ourdiscipline and our in our daily lifeon up to our adulthood.

l would like to say that after spending three or four years with my education with my father, I quit correspondence. I was sent to Chemawa'. I spent two years there and we were approached byDr. Roben McKennan who was theanthropologist for the Upper Tanana area at the timeof 1966-'67, I believe and he introduced me to a program, NativeStudies program called" ABC"at Danmouth College.

Thecoordination became possible by my findings of anifacts and some of the heritage of my

people. I wascollecting arrowheads and other implements, spearheads and implements such as stone and obsidian arrowheads, but I think that the findings led itself to my educational ways that perhapsgifted me into getting a collegedegree from the University of Verrnont after attending summerschool at Danmouth. But 1 kind of left the East Coast and came home in '78 after graduation.

I followed my mother's tradition by being the"Assistant Chief', you might say because I became Chief through hercustom that led to a development of a village here at Healy Lake. Under the, under the Land Claims Act that passed in1971 we implemented the progression of that with benefits of getting our land,our people and restoration of just basic socio-economic groups, but for twenty years I served in that capacity.

And upuntil this point I was pretty much in the political realm because I graduated with a degree in political science. I felt that it wasadequate, that it would serve mein thesystem that we worked in and the Native people and issues that confronted everyone in the Interior and

statewide.

In that regard I was preuy instrumental in securing theschooling and the basic setting of Healy Lake;and the people that reside herehave pan of my benefits that I worked and strived for. And I believe that with our younger people geuing more and more educated to the awareness of the

'Chemawa is a boarding school for Native students in Chemawa, Oregon. Many Alaskan Natives have attended and continue to auend this school.

traditional sense of our people and values that our ancestors were carrying as heritage, I believe thatthose things that,

that are taught to them by the elders that are so limited now in their numbers I believe that it does

**carrysome value on them lO pursue their education whether it's social or educational in the** academic field.I feel that this is really necessary that, that Native children from Healy Lakeor otherplaces that go through the acculturation or assimilation fine line, maybe that, if you will. theywould learn that their basic home rule is that you pursuethe best youcan. It's justour way of making survival...lt'sa wayof life, the onlyway we can.

Getting back to my point of. of my home. My mother had taught me sometraditional ways of, of being aware not onlyof the respect of the animals, but of traditional usesof eating habits and the traditional use, ways of learning the hunting, hunting ways of our people'. I think one of the fm;t things that I wore were bone, were bones from beaver to make me work hard. Forexample, J had a necklace that had somehawk claws to make me swift and be more witful when I, when I make delivery on what I have to kind of grasp when I was later learning in life. And another thing I remember going th.rough initiation of having to eat porcupine hean so I won't get scared out in the woods . So that would teach me not, when I g.rewolder that it would come back to me that fear would not be my. my wayof my behavior when I got older. I think that a lot of these valuesand things that my mother put forth on me and I think proved rewarding.

I stepped out into the real world back East and it was hard for me becausecoming from a small setting like one familyin rural Alaska, a trapping home and making it into the real world, you have10 have more than just basic educational calibers to help you get th.rough life. I think that it takes a lot of self determination.

I believe that family values like again I said, mydad and my mother, Paul and Margaret, I've raised my family to the utmost of, of well being and wholesome. I think it has a lot 10 do with going out and striving and working for...for everyone. I think it'sa unityeffort when you stan10, start10 look back on how the Healy Lakeband and its people and Chief Healy had taught their people to be more communal. And to stan with the family values and the things that kept the webbing in tune to thestructure of life, I think families and the people should work that way.

That'spretty much what taught me to survive really.

I think we're looking at a changing world today, as you 've seen with the elders and they stress education as one of the things we all need. I think we're looking at a generation here where we're not turning backon necessarily. but we're looking at subsistence as something we take for granted, but it seems10...each day where we're looking at trying to graspontosome of **the** traditionsand some of the inherited things that are necessarily reallya great deal of strengthin our fiber in our culture and our survival rates. I think hunting and fishing is probably that and it's going tocontinue to be part of all our social gatherings and it'sgoing to continue 10 be pan of all our gatherings including the potlatch and beyond just setting food on the table for your family.

'Although there was less formality in pubeny rights for boys than for girls in the Upper Tanana. there were cenain expectations regarding observation of taboos and cultural norms.

Skills were learned byobserving the actions of adult males and older siblings. Mothers also

provided teaching and training in the form of stories as well as talismans 10 protect and enhance theirchildren's abilities. ( Cf :Vanstone. James W.: 78-79.)

I don't know what 10 say.

Getting back to myeducational experience. I find it very difficult. I would highly recommend it to other Native, Native students who want to pursue their education, but I must, I must remind you that myeducational purposes were more than just educational. I think the social aspects of life kind of intenwines with your academics. I believe that meeting people and making friends and relating to them, what their interests, cenainly hasits weight on youraccomplishments, on getting your work and your accomplishmentsin order. When I experienced going10 school at Dartmouth which was a Native Americans program, I felt a senseof pride wherethere were other Natives from Nonh America that were allending theschool. It was a program called "ABC, A Better Chance". I was there with other upward bound and Native prospects that were potential.ly going to college and I wasone of them that was fonunate enough. I was recommended byDr.

Roben McKennan because I had some qualities in pursuing my education. I believe that the challenge was sometime pretty tough. It was like bangin' my head against the wall, you might say, but I find that after a year or two of being away from home and being alone and trying10 pursue my academics in the world of being in a Ivy League, it was, it was the hardest pan, but I believe that if you havea healthy mind and meet other people to relate yourproblems and then to share their interests whether it's sponsor some of the things that we find interest in and10 share with others, I think that's the bo11om line to surviving in the academic world if one truly is 10 pursue the educational needsof being Alaska Native in the rural area whether it'sa village or a small place like Healy Lake.

I had, I had some fond memories and Idon't think I ever hada bad memory of learning and being able 10 achieve what was put fonh as far as my degree, what was required, my prerequisites

. It was just a matter of getting down and pulling some discipline into your hard work and

studying. but I've found that later in life it paid off by...

I was injured, however, being in a wheel chair, but I still maintain that my mind is healthy enough to purposely go on.

I raised two children. They're now going10 ... One's going10 boarding school and one's getting

trained in this Fall in Delta for mining school. I find that coming home and accomplishing my educational needs I related that 10 my twochildren. I raised my two children alone and with a tight family and the things thatI were taught were fair and stable and thereforeI raised two children that were healthy in mind and body. I feel that it was rewarding when you can goout alone and find that you can better achieve, make achievements in yourown wayof setting your own goal by just basic hard work Hum.

Aftercoming home, finishing school and beinga parent, I feel that my accomplish.ments in some of the things that I have looked to and what I've, what I'vecontributed 10 my home., my family and my village, what services I have provided with others. What I gave and what I took, you know, so far as some misunderstandings sometimes, but I feel fairly well with what my accomplishments are. I try10 digest that I did the best I could. I think that everyone should come 10 a conclusive thinking that you're notalways perfect. but I feel happy with what my accomplishments are. I believe that I contributed a lot to my community and made. made uh, perhaps regional, a regional impact on my people.

I worked for the Tanana Chiefs as Director of Wildlife and Parks. I was in that capacity of

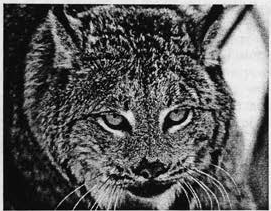
service for four years. I found that the challenges were there and I found that there was not any

more that I could do to serveso I came home after that to serve mycorporation. I worked on the Board as president and as chief in it'scapacity for the Council. And I worked for the··E "board (Executive Board of Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc.)and I worked on,..

Also after being injured I became paralyzed but I found mycapacity not limited. I was appointed by the Governor to serveon the Vocational Rehabilitation Commission. And that was from '85 to '90, I believe. And I served that to the best I could. In fact some of the things I incorporated with.in the state acknowledgment of vocational rehabilitation regulations were that hunting a vocational setting for people like myself to go hunting and fishing whenever we can. And so subsistence is not an issue for me. And I feel very comfortable to. to say and still display some gratitude in my accomplishments. I might be a littleselfish with. selfish with it. but I'm Still happy about thaL

Hum.

#### Niiduey



*Pho10 Counrsy of Hank Timm*

#### Lynx

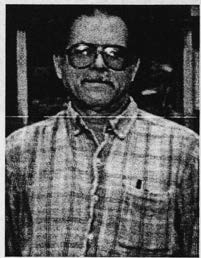
Lee Saylor

***born 1941 in New Albany, Indiana***

*lee grew up in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. At eighteen he joined the annyand came to Alaska. I.Areri,e married Stella Healy from Healy I.Ake. They had two sons, Patrick and Be11jamin Saylorand l,e became step-fathuto Stella"s daughter, Jo Arm. Stella Healy Saylor died in 1971. Her mother Jeanie Healy lived in Healy I.Ake during tl,e summers a11d in North Pole with****Lee*** *and his children during the winters untilherdeath. During those timesshe shared her memon·es, stories and traditions with lee and her grandchildren. Size lefther pictures*

*including na.nu!s1 stories and histories in his care and these are what he has generously shared with usall. Lare,Lee married Rita Paul from Tanacross who died in January. 2000.*

*Lee cominues to livein North Polemaintainsclose ties with his children and grandchildren and activelyassists Healylakein whatever way he can.*



Interview with LeeSaylor North Pole, Alaska December 8, 2000 Interviewer, Connie Friend

CF: We'll just start with the date. r thought it was the9'", December 9"', I think.

LS: Okay.,December9'", the year 2000, about 11:30, Nonh Pole, Alaska. rn see if it is the 9'".

CF: And I'm Connie Friend, and!his isLeeSaylor and we're doing an interview here in his home.

LS: Okay. what uh? It's the 8'", by the way. It'sthe8"'of December, correction. Now just

exactly what information do we need here,Connie? Just go back,on Healy Lake?

CF: Yes, the history, your perspectives, what.

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----··.......... \_ you know, what you see as outstanding and



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what you see as, you know that was a little bit problematic and the challenges for the tribe

* and those kindsof things.

**LS: Okay, the whole thing with Healy Lake**

.. The first time I wasover at Healy Lake, it

was in 1966 and that, that was with my first wife, Stella Healy and that was daughterof Johnny Healy and Jeanie Sam. And a lot of

*Johnny*

*,H,aly.Fronk Luk,* other people, they would come in seasonally.

you know. fish, as we did , go fish and hunt

and stay there, but in a way it'sasif Margaret and Paul were discouraging people from re­ set1ling Healy Lake because at that time the old Healy Lake people were scattered. And uh, well, Lucy and Frank Luke were in Tanacross and Abe Luke. But in1966 Healy Lake. you know, the village was practically, the old village on the point wasabandoned then and you know, Margaret Kirsteauer and her husband, Paul they had built a cabin on the next point near where the village is right now and uh really. just them, they werestaying there all yeararound as well as David Joe. Abraham Luke was in DotLake. Jennie Healy wasat Little Gerstle. Now, Lena had married Moses Thomas in Tanacross and that was, you know Ruth's mom (Ruth Woods) and at that timeeveryone was, you know, just scattered all over the place. And my first wife, Stella, to her, that old village of HealyLake was... You know she kind of thought of it as... I don't know how you describe it; kind of a mini• paradise that everything, she kind of referenced it back 10 that. you know, when her dad was alive and you know it's just the way that, a lot of what Jknow, that is what she'd be, she'd tell it 10 you so much you'd get tired of listening to her.

Bui, you know, her dad,Johnny Healy he worked on the riverboats. He went fromDelia up toward Nonhway and Tanacross. He worked for John Hajdukovitch1, and I think for Herman Kessler and other people running goods up the river. Bui uh, well,and a.lso in those times there was really two villages. There was oneon 1he point in the lake, the really ancient village site there and the other they used to call it Healy River or fish camp was right at where you go in the river, right at the point thestore, the trading post was on one sideof the point and then there was the point and kind of a little nat spot and in there is where people, where people lived and... I think it was Paul Healyand his wife and Frank Luke and Abe Luke. Well, Abe had a cabin there. They built a cabin and there was one littlese1tlemen1!here a11hat time, and then one over at the lake and probably between the two there was maybe fifty,sixty people. Maybe more, I'm not sure. I could dig it up, but...

CF: There was a reference that there were about seventy-fivechildren in school there at one

**time.**

LS: No, no, no, probably about seventy-five people in the villages. Yeah, um hum. Bm1he children. that one reacher from up Tanacross, Mr.Aeischman. He came and just taught 'bout three or four months school al one lime around 1940or so and there must have been around thiny kids that weren't geuing any school and you know, like my *first* wife,1ha1's all the schooling she ever had and well, you ask Ellen. She never had any schooling and Agnes,1hey

grew up there. They never went 10 school. And uh,so this was, you know they were petitioning for school and actively working10 gel school there. And that was during World War a and

again, all this is whal I've, I've been 1old and I'veseen papers and documents from Little Gerstle at that timethat 1ha1was happening.

CF: Do you remember what they were?

**,AL•**

You know that was my wife's oldest brother and 1he territory and also theBIA. And uh, this. you know in 1946 for a little while, everyone from Healy Lake moved over to Liule Gerstle because they1hough1 if they went lo the highway, they'd get a school. And uh, you know a 101 of people died.



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Well, in 1943at Healy Lake probably two-thirds of the people there died within months. And what I've noticed was the ones 1ha1died were the poorer families and the ones with really youngchildren and all **the**

old people. It just rook the old people right off the map. There was

none, none left after1ha1 went through.

H,.tyR,mTradinJPO>I CF: Do you have any idea what that might have been?

**circa 1920 *Annion f'ilht***

'John Hadjdukovitch who was born in Eastern Europe was a trader, entrepreneur, U.S. Commissioner and friend10 the Native people of the Upper Tanana in the 1930's. (Cf. Simeone, William E. 1995:27-29.) Chief John Healy worked on his river boat asdid other Natives of the UpperTanana including Chief Andrew Isaac.

LS: Well,1 think ii was, you know, some kind of nu or respiratory, bul they tell me lha1 they'd be bleeding out of the nose and mouth and sometimes even the earsand it hit Tanacross al the same time, close, you know close 10 the same time, but they had the army doctors there. That was the army base righl across the river there and thesame, like Northway. Bui1he kidsand people died then al Tanacross, but ii didn't take 'em like Healy Lake and at Iha!time, you know, Stanley Young was running lhestore there, the trading post and he wen!out and sen!people out several timessaying,"Everyone's sick. They're dying in Healy Lake", and no one ever came in

to them. 11 about run its course and there's graves up in that hill that are jus1 unmarked from that lime. They could just barelydig a hole and dump people in. Thai, you know, Mary Healy, she, shedied, herdaughter and fivechildren, all of 'em. Ellen probably 1old you about some of

that herkidsdying and Blind Jimmy and Selene going. Old Sam and Belle Sam and Annie and all !hoseold people, Josie Healy. I'vegot a little notebook with uh, someplace that Arthur Healy had written in and it was May 1943 and he wassaying one place. you know Belle Sam died that day and then uh, Selene died and you know just linle notes in Iha!. And uh, you know he was sick al that time with TB. So uh,!his uh, that, that thing kind of has, I think it'smarked all!he people in Healy Lake and what's been passed down on ii and there's another thing that I just kind of infer, you know that old chief Healy, you know he died in1928 you know the year after that big potlatch they puton over there and he kind of ran that territory with an iron hand and you know he did not like any gold miners. You know bedidn't, heharassed them and lried to get the prospector just out of his country. A trapper. that was okay or someone like John Hajdukovi1ch, you know trader and guide, some one who could hiresome of these people, bu1 he didn't like gold miners. It wasn't like...Healy Lake wasn't like Ketchumstuk where they'd go over to Chicken and work for gold miners and hang around Chicken. Bm sometimes l think that Old Chief Healy built up some iU will towards Healy La.kc at 1ha1 time by1aking tha1attitude.

Sol don'!know thisfor sure, bu1 i1's just something that I, Iha!I gc1 a feeling that maybe he had.

CF: Do you think that disease might be related?

LS: No, no,1ha1disease...Maybe no one coming in might have been rela1ed, but no, no, i1's just that siclmess came up with the army and ii spread to the...and I think it's all!here is 10 that

Bui anyway, it was there you know, during1he sixlies1hat Healy



Lake s1arted becoming a village again. Now well, uh, you know my wife had an allotment over there and we s1arted building on ii and about thal time, you know, Josephine Well.anyway, it was

Margaret's daugh1er, Josephine was living over there now and anyway

her and her husband buih a house and David Joe, who wasover there at that time started buildinga community hall. And really the present village dates from that and some of the people that had moved out, started comin' back eventually.

But uh, J think that even back in those old days that Healy Lake

people kinda tended10disperse. They'd be all there and there'd be something like a disagreement and a bunch would move, move. Well, Sam and 1hem moved up to Sam Creek for a while. there by Dot Lake. Chief Joe madehimself ano1her liltle village at George Creek.

*'>)'.*

Around1930 you had Healy Lake village and a couple people overby the trading post and you had Chief Joe over at George Creek and you had Old Sam up at Sam Lake and some people with each of them. But it was only uh,oh, God, I forget the exact year, but it was 1937 or '38 that everyone from Sam Lake moved back to Healy Lake.

Well, you know, maybe I should ...with Healy Lake, maybe I should go way back. These are stories that I've heard from Jeanie Healy and Abraham Luke who, you know, who learned them from Old Sam and his brother, *Katha,* LittleWhite Man, theycalled him.. And you know during that time when that sickness hit, he was the oldest man in Healy Lake in 1943, and he diedduring that sickness. But it, really it goes back to that Old Chief Healy's father and Old Sam'sfather, the one that they called him *Theeg.* I think uh, it sounds like those two were the most imponant men way back for that area.

And anotherone would havebeen Jeanie Healy's grandma, her and Lucy Luke and Eva Luke and Lena, theirgrandma. She was from that Healy River area and she was, you know, a relative of Old Chief Healy's mom. Bui she married down10Saleha, or it might have been Saleha or Chena, but down river, and she had three kidsdown there, two girls and a boy and her husband died. Now like is often the case and I've heard thisstory from different places with different peoples. Her husbands' relatives weren't treating her good. Theywere mistreating her and using her as a slave, nol allowing her to re-marry or an)'thing. She took her kids and she went back 10 Healy River.. At that time, from what I gather, is uh, you know, Chief Healy was chief by then. Hisdad was gone. But anyway, these three kidsshe had, the boy was, you know, later known as Chief Joe. The one girl was Belle which married Old Sam, well.one of Old Sam's brothers first and later Sam and uh, that that one, Bellewas mother to Margaret Kirsteatter's mother, Agnes, to Jennie Healy, Lucy Luke, Eva Luke and Lena Thomas. And Chief Joe, his onlydescendent now is David Joe and,and hisson, Alex there in Delta Junction. And the other, that othersister. she married back down to Saleha and she was the mother of John Joseph and Joe Joseph. And uh. Joe Joseph is Manha Isaac's dad so that's howeveryone is related, through that.

And then, the otherone then, and there again, this is, you know, a relative of Old Chief Healy and that is that Annie. And her husband's who's just named Fred and she was widowed real early and then she took up with one of those miners in Canyon Creek and her daughter, Manha later married Paul Healy and that's where Ray Fifer and MikeFifer and Gary Healy, that's where they come from.Old Annie and Paul Healy which was Old Chief Healy's youngest son by his second wife. His second wife was Josie who wassisterof Old Sam. I know that gets complicated.

But anyway, that Old ChiefHealy's dad, you know in those times he was an imponant man and they were considered rich at that time and I'veonlyheard him referred 10 as *Chit'ai Theeg* which just means kind of a tall old man and even Chief Healy wassometimes referred 10 that way, but you know the story is about ii that, that Old Chief Healy's dad, he was really, well they called him "stingy" but he'dsave things up but they said that old muzzle loader that he'd just put a little charge of powder in that ball and he'd beverycareful. going right up on a moose and and he'd just shoot it and it'd bejust enough 10 knock it down and he'dgo up there and cut it'sthroat or shove a spear in it and then he'ddigoutthat,dig out 1ha1bullet and melt it and re-cast ii again because in those days they had that l.illle deal to re-caste lead bullets. And it wassaid that if he missed. he'dgo look and look until he'd find 1ha1bullet and then in the moose where it shatters, he'dget every little piece and re-caste that. And this is thestory that I heard that Old Sam and

*ataba,* his brother and Old Cruef Healy and probably BLind Jimmy were all young boys at that Ume and uh.\_theygot a hold of his musket and shook the load out of it and put a whole bunch of powder rn thJs old muzzle loader and had it loaded up that way. They said, bygolly, here there's moose came out and they said it was brush and the old man couldn't reallysee so he went up a tree until he got where he could see that moose and he always took careful aim, 'cause he didn't wanna miss and heshot and the moose went down and he come flyin' out of that tree and fell down, and you know, wasall sore and he was really mad and they kept their mouths shut.

No one would ever say whodid that.

And also, that old chief, he had two wives. And you know, one was the motherof Old Chief Healy and the other was motherof that Blind Jimmy and that was the brother or half-brother of Chief Healy and that was Ellen's step dad.

So then I heard a story about that Hissecond wife.some boys.from Ketchumstuk was down at Healy Lake and I guessshe was messing around with these Ketchumsruk. one of these Ketchumstuk boys and when they took off to go to Ketchumsruk, she went along and that Old Chief there when he saw that, he chased after 'em and he caught up and that one guy that was with them, not his wife's boyfriend said, "Hey.just take this woman back. **We** don't want any trouble". And instead that old chief, he tookout his club and just worked the guyoverbad and you know. took the woman back. And I guess he made it to Ketchumstuk. but he was beat upso bad, he died a liule, a liule while later. So I heard that story from there that he ruled with an iron hand there. And he was a pretty tough old man.

CF: That wasChief Healy or his father'

LS: His father, yeah, because Chief Healy and Blind Jimmy, they were brothers. And then, you know Chief Healy. I could never really figure out how his first wife was related up in Kctchumstuk because that's the area she must havecome from because she was *Diik'aagiyu* clan. You know, Johnny Healy and Mary Healy and Paddy Healy, they were all *Diik'aagiy11.*

And you know, Annie and Chief Healy and Belle Sam and Chief Joe, they were all *Naltsiin.* And that old,old Sam and *Katba* andJosie's dad. I'm not sure about him, but l think he, he might have beenon, you know, Seagull sideof things somehow, but his wife has definitely gotta be *Chaaz* because, you know Josie Healy was *Chaaz.* And Old Sam and *Kataba.* They were all *"Kamai"* say it in Tanacross way. But anyway, those were the ones that Healy Lake came from.

Then Old Sam's dad, that *Theeg* He was supposed to bea real powerful medicine man. And I don't know if you heard about that medicine man up Mansfield, *Deshen Gai* how that they brought him back from the dead. This old man tried it. He was gonna come back from **the dead,** but right when it was supposed to happen, a dog barked and destroyed the medicine so he stayed dead. And he was buried up at, up by Sam Creek and l heard a story about that: that hiscoffin was washin' out by the riverso they went out to re-bury him and it's said that when they.that he looked like he was still alive and that even his beard and mustache had grown while he was in there. They re-buried him anyway. .

It just uh, there's just all these stories that people have told me about and someumes I

remember more of 'em and sometimes I don't.

But another thing around the time of World War l at...You know Healy Lake petitioned to have a reservation and I guess, nothing came of it. That was just not what they were doin' in those days. But, you know Frank Luke told me about it and you know,some other peoples...

Well. you know when the land claims wascoming along, Healy Lake petitioned to be put as a listed village. And this was turned down. I guess the BIA went and looked to *see* how many kids had been taken out for school there and well, there was David Joe and Sarah Joe and you know, Paul and Margaret's three kids and theysaid that's not enough population there and then you know a lot of people had allotments, you know, camps around there, and uh. you know of the original Healy Lake people and when the land claims come up.enough registered for Healy Lake. After

what actually go, to **be** a little bitof a nasty fight it was,

you know certified as a village. And I shouldn't comment



***1/eoly Lott circa /94()***

***Uft 10 right: Logan l.M , AdaLuk . LMcyUIU. Btntly Mcln10Jh, Frank LJ,,u and J« LuU,***

on that.that fight. 'cause now lookin' backon it, it was, you know it might have even gone clean... You know someof the feelings thatcame up might haveeven gone clean back to Chief Healy. And you know, Chief Healy was probably a pretty arrogant man. And he made his own way. He, he was a medicine man,successful hunterand actually he, at his time he supported a lot of otherpeople in the village. You know he'd get their meat for 'em,share his stuff, but they paid for that. When he wanted work done, it better get done.

But there was. you know Healy Lake people staying at Dot Lake. Abraham Luke, which they all signed with Dot Lake and then with Tanacross. You know Frank Luke and his family signed with Healy Lake and they had the allotments on Healy Lake and George Lake and then later Louise (Luke) and them moved back there.

But to tell the truth, Healy Lake was,I almost figure there was some kind of old medicine power intervened to let that village get anotherchance. But uh, youknow right around1972, '73

there, it ...Well,! got uh, I was ready10go up and whipsome people. you know up the river.

Well, I can see now that...Well there was some people that thought it was a scheme by Paul Kirsteatter 10 control the land there. which. well if it was. it didn't work.

It just uh, well it's like I told someone that one time, 'cause this wasafter myfirst

wife haddied that it heated up. They wanted me to register my kids and I had to tell 'em, said, "Look, Icould go with,"( you know they want me to register my kids at Tanacross or Dot Lake because, "if you register them at HealyLake you're not gonna get anything," they'd tell me. I had to tell 'em. I said,"Look, Stella never told meshe wasfrom Dot Lake. She never

told me she was from Tanacross. She said that, you know," Mydad wasHealy Lake Chief'. He used to run up and down the river, bring stuff back from Healy Lake. I said, "Even if it don't gel to**be** a village, that's where the kids' name'sgonna be". Andafter that theynever bugged **me** about it. I told 'cm,''I'm more scared of a ghost than I'm scared of you guys". But that's what went on right there and I could say more about that, but maybe it's belier left unsaid. because people recognize that Healy Lake's now, it'sa village. It'scome back from that.

Well, from those up at Tanacross that used to go 10 the Old Healy Lake village sometimes, they're mostly gone now. Doris Charles and Kenny Thomas.' cause Kenny worked the boats. I even had a picture of him over at Healy Lake there with John Joseph's widow, there in frontof a house. I don't know if he had something goin' with her or not, but uh. but never-the-less, I got his picture standing there.

And then, well, I don't know, there was Chief Joe that was kind of in and out of the Healy Lake scene a lot. He hada house there. Right on the point there where you, it's, youknow it's

kinda busted down now. I can remember when there wasstill partof a roof on it2• But, you know that w\_as BelleSam's brother and he was also, Chief Joe that guided Billy Mitchell down the Fony-M1le down the Good Paster. And at Healy Lake, besides the village there at the mouth of the river they had what they called the old village upriver called Ground Hog or *Gaayifer.*

And then Joe village. Joseph Village was named for that Chief Joe. And the Joseph some.times, Ketchumstuk people and Healy Lake people would be there for caribou. And they had caribou fences on the upper Healy River and over by Joseph Creek and Molly Creek and those places.

And old Ch.ief Healy stayed up at Ground Hog a lot of time. That whitefish runs up the Healy

River. He had fish traps there and it wasqt far to caribou. And Jeanie Healy would tell me that h d show up from up riverand stay there in the village for a while. And he wanted people to stay there in that villageon the lake instead of over near the store because he thought that was bad influence having 10 be over near the store especially when Emil Hammer staned an illegal still there. ,Course that was during prohibition and of course he wasselliq to miners and peopleon the river that would come for fur or something. H d sell,em. And then that Emil Hammer took up with Old Annie. She stayed with him at the store there. Again this was just stuff that Jeanie Healy told me and ....

*J,ani,(Sam)ll,alyandJol,nnyllealyand* Well. you know that old Chief Healy, he had those three kids

***daughtu* that survived from his first wife and Lhat waS Johnny Healy who**

married Jeannie Sam and then Mary Healy and Paddy Healy. I don't know if I should go into all that relationship because that really strings out into the Mansfield area, Ketchumstuk and...

CF: If you can,do because all those genealogies, how they fit together is really **good** to know.

LS: Well, anyway, as you know, that wasfrom Old Chief Healy's first wife, then he married Sam'ssister.Josie. The onlychild they had that survived 'till adulthood was Paul Healy. Now, you know, that Josie, when she married Old Chief Healy, she had two kids, a boy and a girl and they were, you know, bornout of wedlock. There was no special father to them, but after she was, you know afterOld Chief Healy manied her, those two kids, they were walkin' over to **the** store. It was from old village about a six mile walk on that trail. clean around the head of **the** villageover there and I guess theysaw some ducks or something there in the slew. It was Spring. There was stilI ice and when they tried to catch those ducks and they went in the water and they both drowned. So That wasa whole tragedy there.

But,anyway of those children of Old Chief Healy, now Johnny Healy, he was first married to one of Belle Sam'solder daughters, Maggie and what Jeanie Healy told me is her sister was just sick.just coughin' up blood and she was with Johnny Healy and it wasobvious TB and before

'In the1950's the army held maneuvers throughout the Upper Tanana valley. The soldiers chopped the roofs off of some of the cabins in the old village for firewood. Ellen Demit's cabin wasone that was destroyed.

she died,she told Johnny Healy not to go off and marrysomeother woman,10 wait for Jeanie10 get old enough and marry her. And well that's what he did.

And that Mary Healy, Old Chief Healy's girl,she manied a guy named David Charlie from overby Ketchumstuk And I suspect 1ha1 he wassomehow related to *Deshen Gai* or to Belle Abraham's mom. But I don't know. It'sso many...When those old people died in Healy Lake in 1943, they took a lot of thoseexact things with them. But anyway, that's... that Mary Healy, that's whoshe manied and had one daughter, Emma. And then after that, she manied that old medicine man from Ketchumstuk, Old Saul and he was bad medicine man.

**i**

Jeanie Healy told me that he was there a little bit al Healy Lake and he got sick and he was dying and she said she was tending him when he wassick and she said he was really biner about Healy Lake. Says they didn't treat him right

or anything and she says he put a cur.;c on the

village as such. She says he sees the future

where just this whole village, all the houses • .

falling down and the grassgrowing through ii,

**which it is right now.**

But, anyway, after hedied, you know **Mary** Healy,she,that's when she took up with Frank and AbeLuke's dad. That's Old Luke. And so that was her third husband right there, which you know after Old Luke died, herdaughter, Emma manied John Joseph. That was, you know wife of Joe Joseph, Martha Isaac's dad. You know, Joe Joseph. He was a widower al the time, h.is first wife was from down river, maybe Nenana, but she diedover **at** George Creek when he wasstaying there over at Chief Joe's liule village. Got buried over there. But anyway. you know, he married 10 Emma and for a while, I gather that Mary Healy just minded their business and tried to run, run things there. so...



*John. Maryand Paddy11,aly 1927*

CF: So she was married to two bad medicine

**men.**

LS: Yeah, well before she... Well. here'sa

story about Silas Henry. Yeah, well, Mark Henry and Rika Paul's dad. You know when

he was just young, he came up from Saleha and wanted 10 marry Mary Healy. He wasjust a little Shon skinnyguy and they say Old Chief Healy run him off and said,'1 don't want my daughter manied 10 a littleskinny runt like you". He says."I'll decide who she can get manied 10". But I hear that before Mary Healy died, that Silas Henry was a widower by that time and he just moved in with her for a while, so like he got the last laugh on Old Chief Healy.

Then. you know, Paddy Healy, you know he married another one of Belle Sam'sdaughters,

Agnes. And that Belle Sam, she first married one of Sam'solder brothers. rdon't even know

what ltis name was, then when he died, shetook up with his, you know, Sam which was another brother there, and uh...

CF: Do you know if that was traditional?

LS: Yes. verycommon and also vice versa and I gather sometimes it was forced almost. They told 'em, "You will"." If you want to stay here, you will". It was sometimes that...

Anyway this otherdaughter, Agnes. she married up 10 Mansfield first and uh, married Gus Jacob. And that Gus Jacob wasSilas Solomon's dad's brother and also Belle Abraham's brother.

There were three brothers and one sister there. But they were Ketchumstuk. CF: I thought that Gus Jacob wasTitus Isaac and Walter Isaac's brother.

LS: Half.

CF: Oh, half?

LS: Umhum.'

CF: So on whose side? I've been so confused about him.

LS: Gus Jacob that, you know the four that were full brother and sister was uh, Belle Abraham, Solomon, David Soloman, Ketchumstuk Charlie Dem.it and Gus Jacob.

CF: So then, is that from their mom? Oh, the mother was Belle Abraham, right? No, she was a

**sisler, so who was her mom?**

LS: I have10 think about what her name was. I have to ask Nancy(Nancy Paul)about that. CF: So that mother was with Isaac Isaac?

LS: Yeah, see that , I think that was his second or third wife anyway. I think that Old Isaac had

two wives at one time and they both died and he married another one and I'm not sure which...or where she fit in to that. Yeah, but that was a half- brother.

CF: That helps to explain that. Thank you so much. Lee,l've been going in circles over him for years. Margaret was his daughter, right? Margaret Kirsteauer.

LS: Yes, 'cause her mom was Agnes and they had two daugh1ers, it was Alice and Margaret.

But anyway when Gus Jacob died there in Mansfield, again she was havin' a really hard time of it and Old Chief Healy brought her back to Healy Lake and I don't know if he told his son, Paddy

'Later, afterchecking with Nancy Paul (formerly from Tanacross), Lee told Connie Friend that Gus Jacob was a first cousin to Waller Isaac rather than half-brother.

who wassingle to go marry her, but anyway, it wouldn't surprise me a bit.

But anyway,1 remember Margaret teUin' me that she thought when she was a little girl that Paddy Healy was her, was her really dad and it was only when she grew up a little bit,eight, nine years old that she found out that he was her stepdad and, you

know that she was, be always treated everyone nice and you wouldn't know the difference. But anyway there in the late '20's his wife, Agnes died and there he had those two little girls. And that's when, you know those girls were, you know, they'd stay with Belle Sam sometimes. They'd stay with Chief Joe sometimes and got kind of kicked around a little bit. And Paddy Healy, he went up, said he wanted to get Jessie Isaac, marry her, but it didn't work out and when he was comin' back down to

Healy Lake he stopped down at Sam Creek and Belle Sam and Old Sam and them were stayin' there then and they had their youngest daughter, Lena, just in her teens. You know, Ruth Woods' mom. And she was always real hard of hearing. Her ears were bad even then and that Old Belle Sam says,"Well, you know I've got my youngerdaughter here and she not much good. She don't hear well and a lot of things she don't know, but might as well take heralong". And so he did. And they had one child, Steven, and he died and Lena was probably not even twenty years old and a widow already.

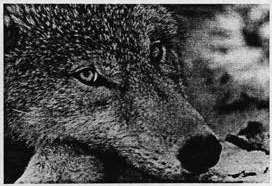
And Steven died when he was in his teens. My wife told me about that. It happened at Lillie Gerstle. It was obvious he had TB. And he was coughing and must have been out playin' or something and he came in the cabin. He was justcoughing. He said it was just like meat hanging out of his mouth and blood all over the place.

And he died right in front of them. CF: What year was that?

It must have been 1950. But he was just coughin' and came in the cabin and then just bled to death right there. He's buried there at the Little Gerstle.. And after that some others caught it right there. My first wife had to be sent to Sitka.

For a while all of the Healy Lake people were staying at the Little Gerstle. And my wife's, two of her sisters died there at the Little Gerstle and they died from bootleg booze. Bootleg booze that some guy up at Sears Lake was making.

## Tikaan



*PhoroCounuyofHank Tinrm*

*Wolf*

###### Jo Ann Polston Born February 5, 1958

***at Tanana, Alaska***

*Jo Ann Pols1011 is the daughterof Stella Healy. She was bom at the Native hospital in Tanana, Alaska. Although she spe111much of her childhood in the lower forty-eight states with her mother a11d stepfather. shealso has many memoriesof summersat the Lala,. Herfidelity to HealyLala,* ***andher pe.ople is evidenced in* rhe *many hardships shehas endured in1he process of making a*** *home thereforher children and herself. Jo Ann has been a key figure in the rebuilding of the village. Until recemly she held the positionof Community Health Aide, providi11g the only locally available medical care to the village. She is cu"ently assumi11g the positio11 of Tribal* ***Family and Yomh Services Coordinator. She conth1ues to sit 011 both the Tribal Council and*** *Tribal Co1m.*



Interview with Jo Ann Polston Healy Lake

August 17, 2000 Interviewer: Don Callaway

My name's Don CaUaway. This is Healy Lake, August 17'".Thursday. Today JoAnn Polston's going to talk about her life.

Jo Ann: Well, I was born in 1958 and I was bom in Tanana. That's where all the babies were bom at that time. That's where they had the medical, Native medical hospital there. And when I came back, it wasn't too much longer, just, I wasa few months old when my mom got sick and was diagnosed with TB and they sent her to Anchorage. She had to stay there for I think almost two years. I don't remember. I'm going back on stories now, obviously. But at that timeT stayed with my grandma at Little Gerstle and Grandma was the onlyone there. It was just Grandma and I when I was a baby. And then my grandma got sick and wasdiagnosed with TB about the same time my momgot out and she got me and my grandma went to Anchorage for her stay. And then I was raised. We were all over. We went to the East Coast with my mom's second husband and I stayed there until I was, I think fouror five yearsold and then we came back to Alaska and very soon after that my grandma (Jeanie Healy) came to live with us and has pretty much lived with us all her life and in fact spent her last, her last three years with me until she passed away in uh...lt was in1986 she died. My mom died in 1972.

And all my lifeas far as J can remember I think from the time I waseight yearsold...No, when I was seven and eight I went with my grandma to fish camp. She used to have a fish camp on the Chena River. And where the Chena andTanana come together and I went there to summer camp, with her fish camp when I was real little and then after that I turned eight or nineyears old, I staned coming here 10 Healy Lake and spending thesummers with my Aunt Margaret and her family. l would come right afterschool ended and stay until school staned again. And we did all kinds of subsistence things here is where I learned to cut fish. It was pan of myjob 10 help take fish out of the net and cut it for drying and or eating and for the dogs. They had a dog team at that time. And hunting season I, generally I didn't ever get that.I was back in school then so whatever I learned from there,1 learned from my grandma and my mom.

And when my daughter' was born in1980 l moved back over here too when she wasjust a

baby. She wasn't a year old yet. And my stepfather had begun a house here. a logcabin for my mom. And when she passed away. he just quit constructing on it and so there were onlya few logs up. That'sall it was. The foundation was down and a few logs. My husband and I at that time, we finished that house. With the helpof family and friends we got that house completed. And we lived in a cache, a liule tiny !Ox10 cache all summer until it was finished. And then we moved into the cabin and spent a winter there. At that time Pat and Ben'came out to Healy Lake

'Jeanie, named for her grandmother, Jeanie Healy

'Jo Ann's brothers, Patrick and Benjamin Saylor ( See genealogy p iv.)

to Jive. They were very young teenagers at that time. I think they were only founeen and fifteen. But, I gave that house to them and 1old them, you know," go ahead", that's theirs anyway and I moved across the lake with my family. And we lived then in a wall tent untilour house was finished over there. I lived in a wall tent all that summer until my house across the lakewas

finished. And I stayed there until mydaughter was four yearsold. Most of the time, too I was over there by myself, just mydaughter and I and when she turned four yearsold,I decided that the once-a-month correspondence program for school that she had been on since she was three wasn't going10be enough. She neededsocialization,I thought, with otherchildren. So we moved 10 Fairbanks and, and I uh, from there I went back to college. I stayedout in theStates for a coupleof years, three years and then finished up here in Fairbanks, moved my kids back in 1990 and I finished here. And then **we** moved, the kids and!...By then I had Corey too. We moved back here in 1992 and I spent the winter here, helping this village get their office. their first office up and running ; with the computer, the fax machine **and** xerox, all the things that we neverhad here. There wasn't anything here. And at that rime we didn't even have telephones and **electricity. We had ourown generator out there that ran thepower just on a very minimal basis** for this community hall and most everybody just had candles or kerosene lamps and there wasn'1 electricity in the homes. And no telephone here. We had a radio phone and that's howI communicated with Fairbanks for our everyday business, that winter, getting this office set up.

And in theSpringtime events occurred that I needed to move back to Fairbanks and so we did. And a yearafter that.my daughterdecided that she, she had enough of public school and that this is whereshe wanted 10 be so she moved back here with my brother in 1994. And she's been here **ever since.**

And I didn'tcome back here to live. I came back here in *'95* and helped the formation of the Council in 1995 and I lived between here and Fairbanks, back and forth for about four months until thiscouncil was up and running. And then in '97 we moved back here and I've lived here eversince and now I'm purchasing a home and there's employment here with our development and I guess we're here10stay. Idon't see myself leaving anytime soon in the near future.

We've had uh... I'veseen a lot of change here. When I first stancd comingover here when I was a kid, the onlyhouse here was my Aunt Margaret's house. That was it. And it was a little tinycabin. It wasso small that her son didn't even live in there. He had his bedroom, it was a little cabin separate from there. And then the, her two daughters and her niece shared the one otherbedroom beside their own that was in that little tiny cabin. And when I came to visit, I stayed in a... in a tent, in a big, in a big army tent that was partially used for storage too. So I.here, it was a tiny Jinle cabin. And now, before she passed on, I.hey were able to build a large, a large cabin for her and her children have homes here. Her son,Fred has a, most recently just a new HUD' house, a four bedroom Hud house he just got in the last two years. And now there're several homes: There're six new Hud houses,and 1here're three new community buildings. a new school. Things have reallychanged from the time I was here as a child. We used to just playon this ground. Thereused10 be nothing on it.

And at that time too,I remember the old village wasstill fairly intact. At least there were still roofson the buildings. Now you'll see there's just a few logs laying down here and there.

'acronym for"Housing and Urban Development"

\_ I was here when John Cookcame over with his archaeological crew and began to dig in that village and they dug everything up. The whole village was noth.ing but a seriesof square holes. And I spent quitea bit of time overthe.re outof general curiosity and, and uh watched them take

out all kindsof things. And it helped me later on wheo rheard more of thestories about how that

village died. I could really feel it when I was watching some of the things that they were unearthing. And at that t.ime something that really touched me was they had found...They began digging in what wassomeone's dog yard and had found that the dogs had died literally on their chains tied to their posts. And that there was even a person that had been buried not 100 far from his home. People died so quickly and so suddenly that they weren't even able to properly bury their dead. And in fact they laid with theirdead relatives in the house with them before someone well enough couldcome and help them remove the people that had passed away. It was a very tetrible time and ii was reflected in the way they left. They, the houses still had old um... You could see the dishes where someone had just had tea. Their teacups and plates werestill on the table. Their tea kettles and cooking pots were stiU on the rusted up stoves. And it was just as if the people who'd lived there had just disappeared one day and pretty much that's what happened. And now when I go over there it'sgelling to be pretty much as a grass mound with some logsshowing where there might have been structures here and there.

In the last years too thiscommunity has begun 10 function truly as a village again with all the people moving back, all our families as we're growing. growing up havecome back. And we had, we had an open house when my aunt was alive to open up thiscommunity hall when it was finished and lotsof people from the Upper Tanana came. About sixty people came for that.

And then in 1997 or 1998, I'm sorry. My Aunt Daisy Nonhway' had a memorial service here for her two small twin siblings that had passed away. And that. uh. a lot of people came for that. And then, what had happened was myGrandma Ellen and her husband wereso ill themselves at the time and so weak that when the twins died they weren't able10 put a full six feet of eanh there and over time the eanh had shifted and had receded and you could actually begin 10 see the comers of some of the boxes and so they had to be re-buried and the fence re-erected and our culture that required basically a new funeral service. So we did that.

And then just some weeks ago we were notified that a member of our family that had passed away in1953 was being removed from Sitka back to thiscommunity for burial. His name was Charlie Healy and he wassent away to Mt. Edgecomb 10 school as the last dying wish of his father. His mother had passed away here in the village and his father had taken him and his sister, Minnie, the only survivors of their family out10 Little Gerstile to join the rest of what was left of this band here. That's where they first went aftereveryone...The survivors went to Little Gerstle and put up makeshift homes as best they could to winter out there. The fearof disease wasso great that they literally took nothing with them and they ended up out the.re with uh...

They had 10 re-doeverything. They had 10 rebuild. They had 10 get skins. They had to stan all over again. It was very hard. And so the people that had fallen ill to TB and other things due to the hardship continued 10 die.

And so when theygot to LillieGerstle, not too long after that Charlie Healy's father, Paul,

Paul Healy, knew he was dying and so he talked to mygrandfather, John Healy about thefuture

'Ellen's youngestdaughter

of the band and what was going10 happen 10 the children. And they decided al that time that the best thing10 do was10send them out lo the boarding schools lo the missionaries and that would be thesafest thing and thateducation would give them the best possible future that theycould see. And so Paul Healydied and he was the last one that was transported back 10 this village for burial.

After that nobodycame back for many years. And so Charlie and his sister, Minnie were sent

10 Mt.Edgecomb. And at that... During1ha1 winter Charlie got sick with the flu and he wassent 10 a hospital there, a couple of different hospitals. One in Juneau where he met up with Tim Luke who is, was his cousin. Tim Luke's mother was Eva Luke which is my mother, Jennie, Jennie Healy's sister. And she was my... Mygrandmother, Jennie Healy was married to John Healy.

Anyway, thoseboys got together and realized they were from the same place and that they were related somehow. And people were asking them al that rime where they were from and they would... They didn't know how 10tell them other... because they spoke very li1tle English 100. They told them they were from"upriver" and they wereshown maps and they couldn't even show them on the maps where they were from. And the next thingTim Luke knew, they told him that they had moved Charlie10 a different hospital because he was more ill than they thought and Tim neversaw him again. And he heard that he haddied and hehad been buried in...outside of Wrangell on a hill. And nothing much was ever heard pretty much again until most recently ii was discovered that Charlie Healy had been entombed with manyother people that had died in 1ha1era with TB and otherdiseases that were just recently unearthed or I guess it'sinmyopinion, "found10 be inconveniently placed"al a site where the Department of Transportation wanted10 extend an airport and in order10 extend this runway this burial, this storage sitefor all these coffins had to **be** removed and so they were all removed back to their home villages. And so **we** were notified of this. And Charlie came back here on the *5"* of August and we put him in the

cemetery as near10 his parents as we could put him. And from there we'vejust closed that cemetery. There won't be any more people put there in the old place anymore. And lotsof people came and wedid things in the old way as much as we possibly could for him out of respect for the time and theevents in which he died. His nearest relatives were Minnie's children. Minniedied some thirteen or fifteen years afterCharlie and she left behind four children, three of whomsurvive today: GaryHealy. Ray Fiferand Mike Fifer.

And all of us got together. theirclan,and helped them bury their uncle in as old a traditional way as we could find out with grandma's help and otherpeople's help. And so that brings us to today.

I don't know... but I'll..

Okay, we' II talk about the upsides and the downsides of living in such a remote place. Well, in the first place it'skind of hard to explain where we arc. A lot of people gel us mixed up with Healy, Alaska which is down on the Parks Highway and very accessible10 everything. Our mail goes there. Most recently all of our building materials that were ordered10 build the last two houses went10 Healyand sat there for two weeks before someone realized that they were in the wrong community allogether. And things like thatget messed up all the time.

The upsideof living here I'll start with is the fact 1ha1it'ssmall. We're, we're a close knit family. Thisis anexcellent place for raising children in what I consider a very crazy and wild world anymore. And that was the impetus behind my moving back here in 1997 when my son

was graduating up to Middle School. And we toured his middle school and1 was horrified with the conditions and safety precautions that we were hearing about and some of thedifficulties with bussing the children. Here we know where our kjds are. We know who they're with and we know what they're doingevery minute of every given day. They're not toofar outof our sight and they're very um.. We're very able to be influential. Maybe in a world like ...from my own experience in Fairban.ks when I was working in Fairbanks there would be many hours that my son would be out of my direct influence and under the influence of just anyone. But that doesn't happen here. I know who is influencing him. I know where he is and I have time to be with him and helphim with his values and it"s given me a great sense of security. It's something that my daughter recognized long before. She, she as well. She said, "No, f'm not going to school. I'm not dealing with these people". And she's been here all this time. She's twenty year.;old now. Getting ready to go out to college and just not as anxious about that as she was to go to public school. But the sense of community, the slow pace here, um, I believe has added yearsontoevery body's life that's moved here. The stress levels just aren't what they would be if we lived in the cityand dealt with the traffic and the eight-tp-five job and the childcare issues.

Here we take care of each other's children. Some people take their children to work. They've developed schedules that they can share child care. It's just much easier here. Much slower pace.

On the flipside thedifficulties here are transponation... In the summer time youcan go out by boat and there's only twotrue running boats here that people use to go out. lt can beexpensive because you have to help them with theirexpenses should they throw out a lower unitor some other thing that requires them to replace major pans. They have10 be able to fix that.

Then there's theplane service which is an "iffy" thing at best because during bad weather conditions: rain, freeze up break up, cold weather, we won't have mail or flight service here; sometimes for weeks. And it makes the medic...providing emergency medical care quitecrucial because a medivac can take up to four hours and has taken up to four hours to respond. The least amount of time being three hours for which you have to maintain someone until he's able to go

10 the hospital. Um, that's verydifficult. h makes uh, for me, my job difficulr'. I have 10 beable 10 identify. "ls this a medivac or not?" within the first couple of minutes of seeing that person in orderto get timely assistance. Thankfully I've had thesuppon of Tanana Chiefs Conference and this Council. this village council that I'm able to get the training that I need and the suppon that I need to make that happen as fast as possible.

The um, another downside is the fact that we're all related.That's, youknow, it's a plus and it's a minus because you know, God forbid that we should argue among each other. You **know?** We can escalate pretty quickly and so we found early on that we have to talk about things right away. Lt's really helped with our interpersonal skills, I'll tell you. To sit down and talk about

something and 10 keep it open and try not to be judgmental to one another and **be** supponive

instead. I think we've come a long way with that. I really do.

When things are...lt may look like things are rather hap -hazard around here but I'll tell you if something happens, an emergency or even a political issue that might require the Council's immediate attention, within minutes you'll find us all sitting down and ready to operate as a

'Jo Ann is the Health Aide for Healy Lake.

community. as a council and as a government. II really happens quitequickly. We all know whereeach other are pretty much at a given time. And we're all up-to-date on all the issues. We make that comnmnity-wideas much as we can. It'sa must in survival in a village as small as ours that we be politically strong. And str0ng in one another, strong in the belief that we're going to be here for one another and take care of each other when **we** need it. And so we don't have any body...There's nobody in this village that takes welfare or food stamps. There's nobody in this village that's on general assistanceout of BIA. Everybody thatcan work is working and in most instances both parties in the household are working. And even the children as much as they. theycan. There's a very str0ng work ethic here and we encouraage that in the children. It's something that we feelstrongly about and are very proud of. We openour doors as much as we can to people and invite them to, you know, share our way of life and most recently we had a couple move in from Florida that are Cherokee Indian. And they're working here and purchasing a home and melding into the community quite well. We've become quitediverseI think and gettingeven more so. I like tosee that growth happen.

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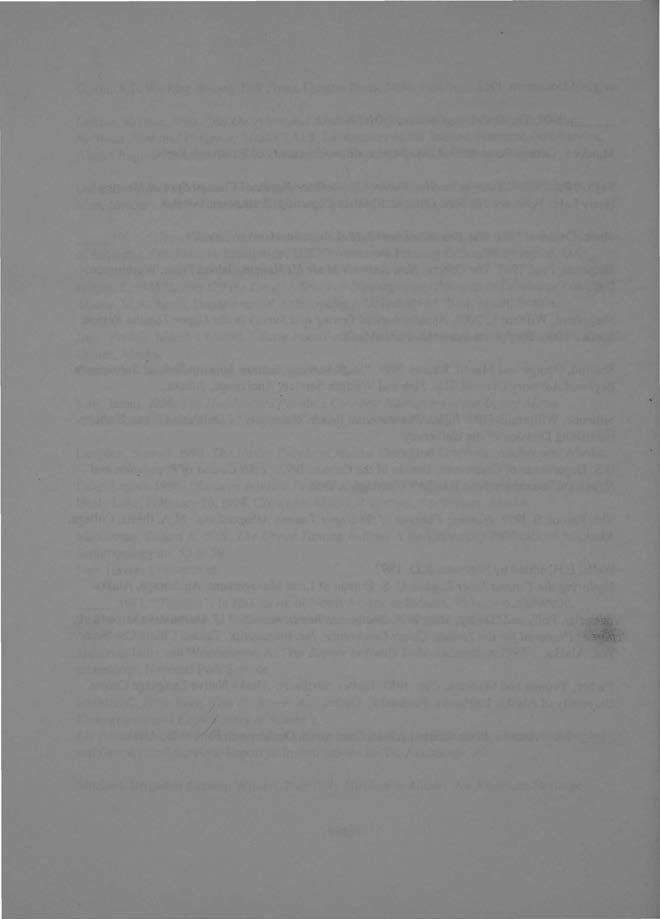
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*AbraanMe11b*

Vollanar Lalce

*TeybCb'ecb'edz*

Old Healy LalceVillage

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Upper **Tanana Athaba,an P1**■**ceN**■**ma**

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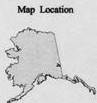
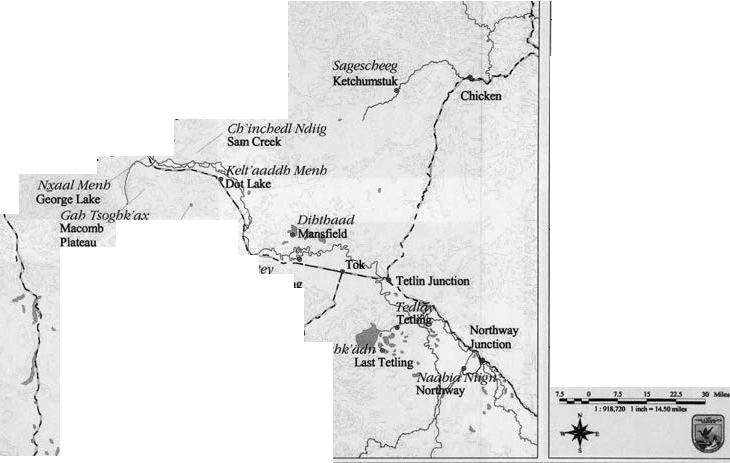
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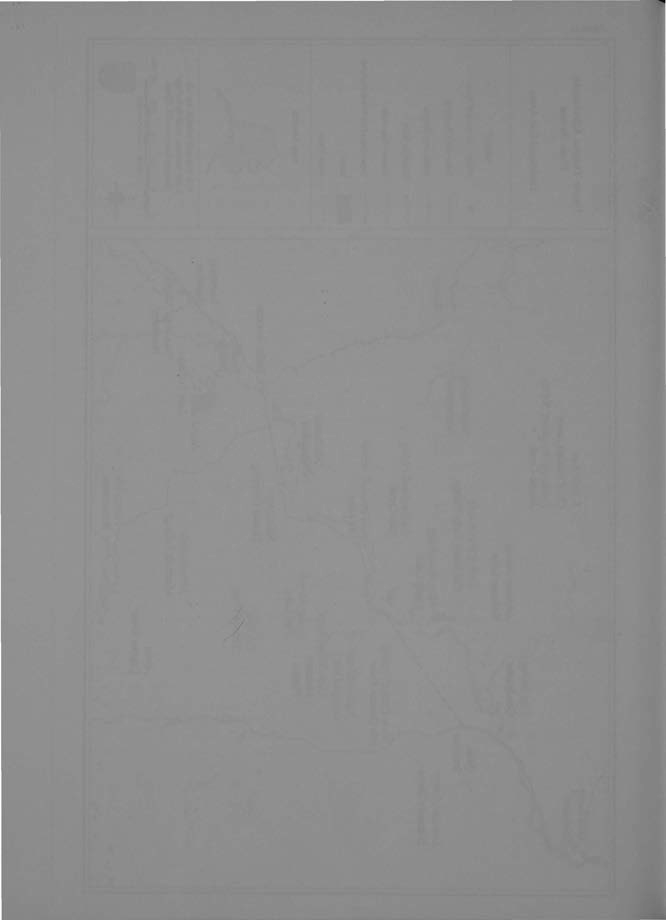
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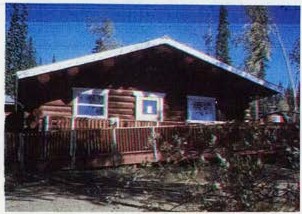




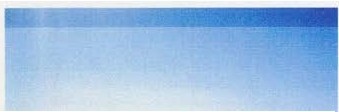
 

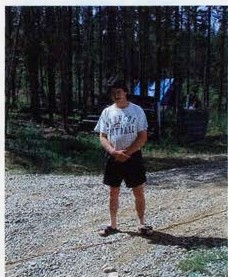
Healy Lake Clinic and Tribal Office Old Teachers House- Healy Lake



Healy Lake Community Hall

Melissa Erickson - Healy Lake Resident



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Healy Lake

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Afterword

In the Seventies when I was working for Tanana Chiefs Conference, I hada supervi.sor who would jokingly remind us as we walked out the door,"Remember who you are and where you're from." Years later it came to me, how profound those few words acrually are. Many events have occurred at Healy Lake since we first decided to write this book. There have been births, injuries and deaths, repatriation of loved ones, potlatches and gatherings, healing ceremonies, tribal business, building a church, improving social services.adding wells and septicsystems. hunting, fishing, gathering, participation in theformation of the Arctic Athabaskan Tribal Council, travel to far away places and coming home. And through it all the peopleof Healy Lake have been remembering who they are and where they are from. They have withstood opposition sometimes from without and sometimes from withi.n. But like their ancestors before them, they persist in the face of all adversity and declare themselves to be *Mendees Cheeg Naltsiin,* the peopleof Healy Lake, strong, enduring, grounded in their identity and ready to face the new challenges of the twenty-first century.

I would like to thank all of the peopleof Healy Lake who haveopenly shared their lives with me, shared food with me, comfoned me when my mother passed away, and made me feel welcome in their homes. I hope that their stories will touch your beans and enrich your lives as much as they have mine. I would also like to thank my son, James Jarrell Miller for his tremendous contribution toward the publication ofthisbook. It is to him that I wish to dedicate any merits resulting from my effons.

Connie Friend Tok, Alaska November 200I

165

