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Wendell Oswald, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1951, No Location, Interview by Mrs. Geri Shakura [sp]

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This is the second in the series of Eskimo archaeology with Mr. Van Stone and Mr. Oswald. An important excavation to be carried out next by the University was on the Kobuk River. The excavations were done by Dr. J. Louis Giddings at the University of Alaska. Point Hope artifacts seemed to indicate the people lived in the interior of the Alaska hunting caribou and then to the coast to hunt seal for the summer. Giddings was looking for similar artifacts in the Kobuk River. He thought the conditions were ideal for people to live at the Kobuk River all year round. He dug at numerous sites all along the Kobuk River from Shungnak clear down to Kiana and then to Noorvik. He also dug at Kotzebue to tie into these river sites. Giddings found the oldest site was dated about 1250 A.D. In a village called Atuk on the upper Kobuk he found that there were artifacts of flints and different kinds of bone tools that were somewhat similar to the Point Hope finds. They had an inland cast all their own. There wasn't a concentration of sea mammal hunting, but there was a lot of evidence of netting so the people must have ate salmon and they must have went to the mountains to hunt caribou. The people in the lower Kobuk toward the Squirrel River and the Kiana went down to the sea periodically and hunted seal. These people had part of their year on the coast and another part of the year on the interior hunting caribou. There is evidence of caribou and seal, and ivory on the Squirrel River. Giddings used what is dendrochronology or the tree ring method dating. The trees in Alaska add annual rings and by establishing different patterns older and older sites are allowed to be dated. That's what Giddings did. He could tell by the trees used in certain houses that the houses were from around 1250 AD. Dendrochronology [using tree rings for dating] is a very accurate way of dating.

Some fascinating finds near the Kobuk was near the Kavet Creek. The Kavet Creek find was interesting because a house had been burnt down where the people lived. In the middle of the house there was a man buried and in the middle of his back was a large jade knife and it's difficult to imagine what happened to him. He could have been murdered or the man wanted to be killed because he was older. Dr. Giddings has done some work in other parts of the Alaskan mainland. The site further to the south is at Cape Denby (sp) on the south side of Norton Bay and just north of Shaktoolik about 10 miles. Here Giddings found that there are three successful layers of Eskimo culture. The upper layer was pottery and harpoon heads. The next layer was of a culture related to the Putak (?) people at Point Hope. There were fine flint blades and there were also oval stone lamps. In the lowest level here we found what has been designated the Denby (sp) flint complex. There has yet to be a date set but it seems to be likely over 3,000 or 4,000 years old.

The best connection is with the southwestern United States. At Cape Denby there is a Folsom Point which is similar to the same kind of point from the southwest. We also have the Yuman point at Cape Denby. Each one shows considerable antiquity. The Buren [?] must have been brought over by the people from the old world to the new world. It is a type of cutting tool it's used to cut bone and antler. The upper paleolithic finds of Europe are much older than the ones found at Denby.

The best thing you could say to summarize Eskimo culture is that the older cultures tend to use flint projectile points and all sorts of flint material, but as the cultures becomes more recent you find that the people used to rub slate. One notable exception was at Point Hope where people used flint material until relatively late. Another point about Eskimo geography was that the people who lived on big sand spits like Point Barrow, Point Hope, and St. Lawrence Island were all whale hunters. The people who were on the coast hunted seal and then went inland to hunt the caribou for part of the year.

Sites can be found where there are old ruins or depression of houses. The sites are apparent by their color because the grass would be a little greener. In the Interior, the rivers are cutting continuously so it's hard to find villages on the interior point. Habitation sites are sometimes found in caves so it's very important that everyone get located.

Mrs. Geri Shakura of the College Women's Club thanks you all for listening and wishes everyone a grand night.