

Summary of Radio Program

Call number of interview: 85-120

Series title: Chinook Radio Programs

Episode title: Chinook Patterns/ Profiles

Date of interview: 1985

Name of person writing the summary: Quinton Blackburn

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Notes: The radio sequence is divided into two different parts. One on the people themselves, and the other on the language they speak.

Summary: The program in question talks about how the native peoples of Alaska live and adapt to the land and ecosystem around them. The reporter, Paula Schuler, talked with Professor Fred A. Milan, whose field of study was human anthropology and cold adaptation. According to the professor, the relationship between the native people and the land was not an adversary relationship, nor an isolated one, but a more integrated, unified way of living with the land. Also, those who live on the northern slopes not only love their life there, but they also consider hunting to be part of the way of life. The women, however, leave the native villages because they see the easier way of life non-natives have in urban centers, and prefer it to the rough and dangerous native life style. Later on, Milan spoke on how there was a lack of adaptation in most native people. The Eskimo population, for example, lacks a certain enzyme that allows them to split and digest milk, and in the digestion of starches, due to how their diet is formed more around meat. In older studies, Eskimos were considered the most carnivorous people on the planet due to how much meat they ate, to the point they became dependent on such protein from whales and seals. This especially conflicts with how whales are under protection, since whales are such an important part of their culture, to the point that famous whale hunters are remembered through history.

Part 2: Chinook Profiles. This section dealt with the talks on the native Inuit language variants spread across the northern slopes. The same reporter spoke this time with Edna MacLean of the Alaskan Native Language Center. The main form of the language present in Alaska is Inupiat, and across the world, it's got various different forms. Across international borders, it is flourishing, but in Alaska, it is at a critical vanishing level as it is being replaced with English and other more common languages, even when schools are teaching it as a second language. The differences between the various forms of the language, while allowing for one to understand the other in terms of individual words, makes conversations between them very hard due to how the endings are formed. The very language has its own set of words, called demonstratives, which are used to describe something without referring to its name. said demonstratives could also break into pronouns. Visual cues are very important for these words. For example, *Somna* would refer to something unseen below you, while *Comna* refers to something below you, but can be seen. Such words were short, and contained a lot of meaning for easy understanding.