

90-06-285

Elders in Residence Collection. Jimmie and Mabel Toolie are interviewed in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Keywords: St. Lawrence Island, Siberian Yup'ik Eskimos, Yup'ik song and dance, composers, dream song, reindeer song, herring song, men's houses, traditional Yup'ik customs, diseases, missionaries

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Summarized by: Cecilie R. Ebsen

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[Jimmie and the class sing and drum] [The microphone is placed in a way so there is a lot of distortion]

Jimmie Toolie

00:13:49.03

Jimmie was 30 years old when he started performing and around 40 when he starting writing his own songs. [Then refers to 1924 when he met his wife, not clear why]

Jimmie Toolie

00:21:30.53

Sings a song about a dog team coming

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:22:01.45

Asks if they have emotional songs, like sad songs for when someone dies or happy songs etc?

Jimmie Toolie

00:22:25.20

[Mabel says something and Jimmie translates] They do have different emotional songs, but no specific songs for sadness or happiness.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:24:42.42

Explains how in her village, when someone dies they sing songs to lift their spirits.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:26:01.45

Theresa explains how in the old days they used to wait five days to burry a person because that is how long the spirit stayed, but today's religions don't

follow that custom.

Students

00:26:15.88

A student asks if Mabel does grass [something?]

Mabel Toolie

00:26:35.70

She used to use grass for scrubbing floors [and other things that are not clear]. They got the grass from the beach.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:31:03.60

[Translates for Mabel] They also use it for cleaning walls and dishes as well. They scattered the grass on the floor and on the roofs as a kind of insulation.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:35:25.41

Did you have steam baths or saunas in the old days?

Mabel Toolie

00:35:35.01

Yes they did. They used a seal oil lamp to boil water.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:37:19.96

Recalls how in many mainland villages they have fires going too.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:37:42.20

What did you use before you had shampoo and soap?

Mabel Toolie

00:37:53.11

Mabel doesn't know what they used before.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:38:53.10

Recalls how they made this acidic potion that they would wash their clothes and their hair in. It was effective to get rid of lice.

Mabel Toolie

00:42:04.93

If they had big open soars [specific thing, they struggle to find the right English

word], a kind of skin disease, they would use seal oil on it.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:44:03.77

They also had something else, something really strong, but they can't remember what it's called.

Jimmie Toolie

00:44:35.77

Jimmie knows a girl who had a skin disease. Her grandmother took some mixture of seal oil and something else [pokkoq?]. It made the girl better.

Jimmie Toolie

00:46:40.09

When they felt bad in the old days they used tea to treat themselves.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:47:01.24

Asks what they did to treat ear infections?

Mabel Toolie

00:47:27.15

They were healthy a long time ago. They were not very sick.

Teacher (Theresa John)

00:51:24.44

A long time ago did the men used to sleep in one house?

Jimmie Toolie

00:51:34.93

Yes they did

Mabel Toolie

00:51:38.80

In a big house.

Jimmie Toolie

00:51:41.33

[Jimmie offers to draw it]

Mabel Toolie

00:58:06.96

By the time Mabel was around they had block houses [They stopped using the men's houses before she moved to town]

Jimmie Toolie

01:03:41.46

Their houses would get very cold in the wintertime. Generally two families lived in each house.

Students

01:04:22.28

Where do you get any privacy when you all sleep in the same room?

Teacher (Theresa John)

01:04:35.45

They don't [laugh]

Unknown

01:05:56.71

[Awkward conversation follows where the students try to ask how Mabel and Jimmie ever got any alone time, how they made their babies. There is not really an answer given to these inquiries, except that there was just not very much privacy]

Teacher (Theresa John)

01:08:35.35

Was it possibly when the priests came that the men started living with their families?

Jimmie Toolie

01:09:35.97

In 1914 the minister came to Gambell [Minister Gambell came to the town that would later be named after him?]

Mabel Toolie

01:12:30.54

By the time she was around they had their individual houses and there was already a minister in town.