

**90-06-44**

**Elders in Residence Collection. Elders Jimmie Toolie and Mabel Toolie from St. Lawrence Island are interviewed by students of the Alaska Native studies 401 class at University of Alaska Fairbanks**

**Keywords: hunting walrus; safety and survival; hunting clothes; education-mission; trade; personal history**

**Release agreement: Yes, no Internet**

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**Summarized by: Cecilie R. Ebsen**

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00.00

[Scrambling with recorder, various people talking]

Jimmie is asked about hunting and how he broke his hand. He learned to hunt from his father and grandfather. They taught him how to hunt walrus, when he was nine years old. Before they went out, they showed him how to use a harpoon with rope tied to it.

[Unclear speech, Jimmie draws on blackboard to show how to use harpoon and rope when hunting]

08.50

It took four or five boys to hold a walrus once it was hooked on the harpoon and Jimmie's attempt to hold it on his own is the reason he broke his hand. It healed on its own: no doctors were involved.

Jimmie is asked if he goes up to a hole [in the ice] from a certain angle, for example if the walrus is facing away from him. He explains that he aims for the chin and the whiskers [Shows it on blackboard].

11.10

The kind of rope they use is made from baby walrus skin. They do not use white man's rope, because it twists easily.

Two times in a month a walrus fell in the water after being shot and they used the rope to get it in. They used a specific knife to cut the skin rope.

[Unclear speech]

A man got tangled up in rope. He was using skin rope when it happened. Jimmie almost got his legs tangled in rope one time too. It can be really dangerous when a walrus is pulling on the other end.

15.14

Jimmie was 14 years old when he got his first walrus. He was ten years old when his father first took him hunting.

Talks some more about white man's rope [unclear speech]. Some boys came to Savoonga once and wanted to hunt. They used white man's rope, which Jimmie told them was stupid, but they did not listen. They got a walrus but when they tried to pull it in with the bad rope it never emerged. A boy named Francis got injured [drowned?] in the attempt [unclear speech].

19.50

Jimmie would like to show them a real harpoon with an ivory head. He used to have one and he cuts the tusk himself. One of the students [male] comments on how they might have one at the museum.

Jimmie is asked if people on the island [St. Lawrence] can swim in the cold waters? He explains how they are not really taught how to swim, but some boys try to. They mostly use kayaks. Elder people got the government to teach them how to paddle, so that they could stay out of the cold waters.

Some young boys go to lakes and use the kayaks. Sometimes they tip over and do not know how to use them. The older people try to teach the younger people how to kayak to avoid any accidents.

A student asks if walruses can make new breathing holes and how? Do they keep the same holes all the time? Jimmie explains how they continue to keep their holes open. Every 20 minutes they come up again. They continue to break the ice again and again.

23.10

Student [Rebecca?] asks if they hunt for walrus in the spring or winter? In springtime they used skin boats and harpoons. In the wintertime they went out on the ice.

A student asks where they go walrus hunting? Jimmie points to something [a map] and says right here, in the front. Lots of walrus were always there in the wintertime. He would go every day by dog sled on the ice there. Every day he would kill walrus.

The boys would cut the walrus. They all got to try and everyone got meat. They hunt in different holes. Sometimes the ice cracks and the walrus comes out in those cracks.

26.04

A student asks if the person who kills the walrus gets to keep the tusk? He does. Jimmie's son saw a dead walrus recently. It was out on Oogalik [sp? Kookoolik? points to map]. They took a speedboat and dragged the walrus. Every year lots of walrus come out here. This year they found a lot of dead

ones. It is the small walrus that are dead. Jimmie wonders if someone scared them. Perhaps the older ones crawl over them and kill them in the process.

When they had a village up there [Pamialik?], a long time ago when they used igloos, they had lots of walrus. They put a light outside when it got dark so that the other village could see that the walrus was now there [correct interpretation?]. When the walrus was killed, they would cut everything.

[Unclear speech]

30.58

Student comments on how Jimmie built his house on North East Cape and asks where he got the lumber for that. They would get a lot of lumber from shipwrecks. They found it washed up on the beach.

A student asks what other kinds of things they find on the beach because she knows that they sometimes find Japanese glass bottles. Jimmie confirms this. He also finds fish needles.

What does he wear when he is out on the boat walrus hunting? They use deerskin coats, deerskin pants, mukluks – seal skin boots, sealskin socks with wool socks inside. Their coats are double-sided with unborn [unworn?] skin inside and butchered skin outside, and then snowshoes. They also have sealskin mittens. Today they use less warm clothes. His wife makes sheepskin coats.

[Turns attention to Jimmie's wife Mabel]

She was 15 years old when she went to school. They taught her how to make bread in the morning, how to cook and then they would teach her how to make clothes. They were five big girls.

[Yup'ik speech]

36.35

Translator explains how they used to make sourdough bread and sell it in the store. The money would be used for the school. The school went from 8 am – 3.30 pm.

They were not allowed to say anything in school unless spoken to. The boys would get hit if they misbehaved.

It was missionaries teaching and the church was the first [Reformed Episcopal?] church in Gambell.

The girls primarily did sowing and cooking and if they had extra time they did reading and writing. Jimmie and Mable were both taught reading and writing.

Jimmie's cousin, Paul Silook was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade: the highest grade. He later became a translator for the church. He also wrote a book about St. Lawrence Island called The Old People's Stories.

42.05

A student asks if people rebelled against the first missionaries, when they came in? What were the attitudes towards these people coming in?

[Answer is not clear, they talk mostly in Yup'ik]

43.30

Nine boats came from Siberia to visit every June when the wind was calm. They came to trade. The Siberians wanted walrus hide and rope, because they do not have any female walrus. They also traded them guns. The Gambell people got deerskin in return.

47.55

The Siberians also brought over big leaves used for smoking or chewing tobacco. They sometimes had whiskey in small kegs. Only old people would drink it. Someone comments on how the big leaves were actually marijuana, but Jimmie does not think so.

Someone asks if they also brought chocolate? Everyone laughs.

They did bring something similar to coffee or thick chocolate.

51.24

Mable is asked what the names of her children are and to write them on the blackboard. The oldest boy, Walter, is adopted. Then there is Jackson, Morris, Raymond, Ellen Bayes [sp?], Eugene, Herman, Gene, Gregory, and an adopted girl Daria [sp?].

They will continue to talk about the family tree in the next class.

55.00

[The remaining 13 minutes of recording is general class conversation and practical instructions]