

Thursday, October 19, 1989, summary by Margie L. Derenoff
 Knowledge of Native Elders - ANS 401
 Elder-in-Residence: **Tatiana Saunders**

Tassie discussed how her late husband used to forecast weather and tell time by looking at the sky. She said she used to go out with him in the evening, because he would say what the weather will be the next day.

She said he would go outside in the evening and look at the sky. He'd report that it would be windy the next day, so they wouldn't go to their trap lines along the creek. As the small creeks on Kaiyuh flood when it is windy. She also mentioned that it is only the small creeks in Kaiyuh that flood when it is windy. The wide creeks or river such as Nulato River doesn't flood. He knows it is going to be windy when the clouds are wavy and stringy-looking.

When it is going to be a cold spell, he would say in Athabaskan, "Noduggu ees doit'ol dedzey neenok'eneeltaanh." The moon up there put something (its dog) next to its ears again'. Meaning that the big evening star is close to the moon. The closer the star is, the colder it will be.

When he predicted that it would snow tomorrow and last a couple of days, she would ask him, "How do you know" Are you a weather reporter or what?" "Yeah," he said. "Look at the ring around the the moon." Sure enough there was a ring around the moon. The next day it started to snow and it lasted for a couple of days. Then when it will clear up he said, "It looks like it is going to clear up tomorrow." When she asked, "Husband, how do you know?" He said, "Well! Do you see the clouds? The clouds are not moving anymore. And they are pointing from north to south." "Gee! I wonder if it is going to clear up?" she wondered. Yes, it did clear up. The weather always changed as he said it would. Tassie said she predicted cold weather last winter during the cold spell the evening star stayed close to the moon for a long time. The couple from Koyukuk, who was stranded in Nulato, and stayed with her got annoyed at her for saying it will stay cold for a long time.

Her husband also used to tell time by looking at the sky. He would go outside before midnight, look at the sky, and say, "it is 11:30 p.m." She would ask him, "How do you know? It doesn't say 11:30 up there." (Laughter.) He knew by the way the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper are pointing.

Tassie sang a rain song.

Yoonts'e yoodots'en' yoonts'e yoodots'en' deneege ggon tekk'e haa'ooghaalesgunh. 'Coming from a south west in the distance coming from south west in the distance I am dried around the space between the shoulder blades of the moose (due to lack of rain)'

She said she sang that song and also prayed real hard for rain last spring, so it will be a good year for berries. It rained for about a month and half. It was a good year for berries but there was so much rain that it wasn't a very good berry-picking weather. She also told another story of possible reason for the unseasonable weather. There is strong belief that people are not suppose to kill raven or even bother them. It doesn't bother people. It can mess up a camp by eating fish that are on the fish racks, but otherwise it doesn't bother anyone. Last summer a boy wanted to kill the baby ravens that were in the nest up on the hill. His buddy tried to talk him out of it, but he went ahead and shot all the baby ravens. Then they waited for the mother to return. The mother returned and made two circles around the nest and flew straight up into the sky out of sight. It came back down sounding like a jet. It hit near the water and was killed. That's when the thunder storm started and it never stopped raining all summer. It was also a poor year for fishing it was so wet. Fish in the smokehouses spoiled.

Another thing that people are not suppose to bother is the camp robber. When you tease it or bother them it turns cold. Tassie came to believe this one spring when it turned cold after she shook a tree with baby camp robbers in a nest. Her companion begged her to leave the birds alone, because it will turn cold if she bother them. It was already turning warm and thawing during the day when she shook the nest. There was a cold wind from the north the next day and everything froze. "they told me, 'It is all your fault.'" This was while they were out camp in Kaiyuh at a trapping camp called **T'eghel Noo Kkaakk'et** 'cottonwood island creek' also known as Cottonwood City. There used to be 12 cabins there before the big flood in 1947 that took all the cabins. It stayed cold for two weeks and people ran out dog food because they couldn't set fish traps for devil fish in the lakes. The fish are also called black fish. It was also too cold to trap muskrats in the lakes.

Tassie said it is important to listen to stories like these. That is how they are carried on. She said she learned most of the stories from her husband, because he was older than her. He learned the stories from his grandparents.

War Story:

The Russians had a large fort in Nulato called **Gazaalma**. It had a large gate around it, made of timber. This was over a hundred years ago [Feb. 16, 1851]. There was no village in Nulato at that time. The Native village was at "Two Mile" (below Nulato) called **Nele Nohudaal'o Denh** 'the place where the river bend sticks way out'. There were a lot of people living here and there along the Yukon River and over in **Kaiyuh**. There were so many people in Kaiyuh that they could look out over the country from on the roof, early in the morning, and see smoke rising here and there all over where people lived. The **Gazaalma** had a small village around it. It was between where Nulato is at now and the Two Mile village.

A young couple had gotten married over in Kaiyuh. The young man's name was **Deloghe Hudaatlggunh** 'he who dried up the tree tops'. His father-in-law was a great medicine man.

They heard there was going to be a Stick Dance in Gazaalma. The young man told his wife to ask her father for permission for them to go to the Stick Dance the day before the Stick Dance. Father-in-law and son-in-law did not speak directly to each other. She asked for permission for them to go and he refused to give them permission saying, "No, I don't think you can go. There is going to be war. I see a weapon over the village." Deloghe Hudaatlggunh still wanted to attend the Stick Dance. He was a very fast runner. The medicine man gave his son-in-law permission to go in the evening before they went to bed. He instructed him not to stay in a house while he was at Gazaalma. He told him to stay in a smokehouse. He also told him to loosen a post before going to bed, to escape from in case of war. He told him to walk on all fours like a dog out in the open from the smokehouse back to the caches where the snowshoes were kept. He also told him to leave his weapons on the south bank of the Yukon River, not to bring it into the village with him. When they woke up in the morning the man exchanged his light caribou skin underwear with his son-in-law. He also gave him an ivory amulet and a rawhide belt to take with him. He told him not to loose them. He left. It wasn't long before he was in Gazaalma. An old woman reported seeing something that looks like smoke way out in the hills (the warriors breath). No one believed her. They told her she is always seeing or imaagining things. He attended a food potlatch that evening and singing afterwards. He left before it was over and went to bed in the smokehouse, where an old couple were also staying. He heard a clamor early in the morning of people yelling, screaming and crying. He realized they've been attacked. The old couple urged him to escape through the wall where he had loosen a post. They decided to stay behind realizing that they were too old to escape. He walked on all fours back to the line of caches where all the sleds and snowshoes were kept. He put on a pair of snowshoes

backwards and escaped. One snowshoe was a man's and the other He was detected as he was running away and they sent two fast runners after him. He teased them by running slow then fast. When he reached the opposite bank of the Yukon River. They were afraid to follow him so they turned around. He informed everyone in Kaiyuh of the attack on Gazaalma. All he saw was fire and smoke when looked from the south bank. They prepared for war. They put all the women and children in one place and the men gathered near the Yukon River where they expect the war party to travel. They waited there a few days. Then they sent out a scout to check for the warriors on the Yukon. When he returned he informed the people that the war party had gone back.

They didn't try to go up the Kaiyuh because Deloghe Hudaatiggunh had escaped and warned the people up there. That is how he saved the Kaiyuh people. He lived a long time. He died on the way to camp in Kaiyuh area near a place called **K'ets'uts Keeyet**, He is buried on a little knoll on the **Enzoeeine Slough**. We saw the grave site once on the way to camp. There is a big spruce tree and birch at the site. This story was told to my husband by his grandmother.