



BOOK TITLE  
**LOREM IPSUM**

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## UNTITLED

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## INTERACTIVE 1.1 Ghost Story

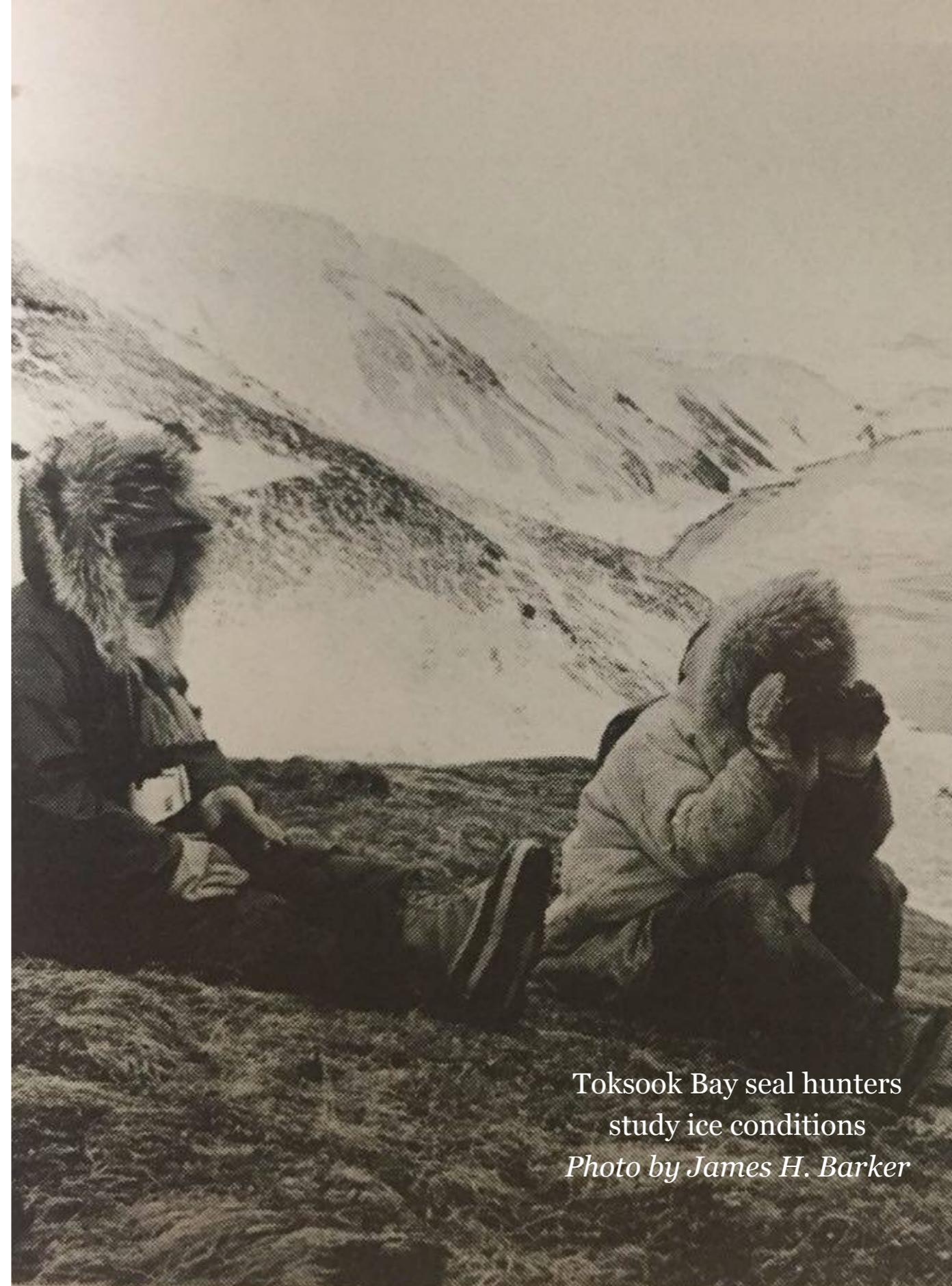


John Active shares a ghost story

## YUP'IK ORAL TRADITION

By Jimmy Andrew

The purpose of education today is to “ensure that each new generation is capable of surviving and contributing to society” (Roderick, 77). The current western school system generally focuses on encouraging students to become productive citizens in a global market economy. Before the arrival of Russians and Americans, Yup'ik people in Western Alaska were more dedicated to learning about skills, attitudes, values, and information on how to survive through all seasons. Instead of going to school to make more money in the future, Yup'ik children were educated to bring home the fish, wildlife, and plants that sustain them (Roderick, 77). These skills were not learned through the school system, but were orally passed down from generation to generation.



Toksook Bay seal hunters  
study ice conditions  
*Photo by James H. Barker*



*A woman prepares grass mats to cover a building frame for Ena. Martin Family Collection.*

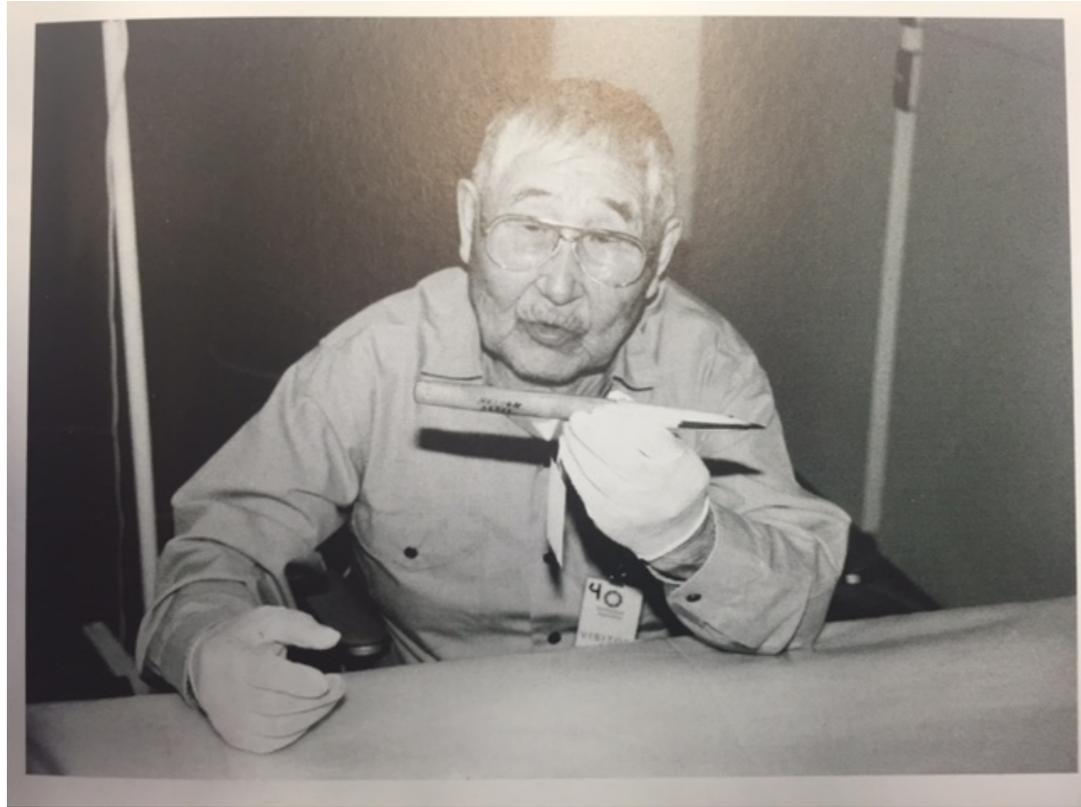
In the Yup'ik region, smaller boys and girls lived in a one-room ena (sod house). Ena was a place where mothers, stepmothers, or aunts taught boys life lessons. When the boys got a little older, they were taken to the qasgi (communal men's house), where their education continued (Andrew).



*Qasgi construction, showing clearly how grass mats were laid over the wooden frame. Martin Family Collection.*

Qasgi was very respected, since men and elders who held authority lived there. It was very shameful to act improperly inside the qasgi, and the only noise you might hear was the pounding of wood when work was being done. Then as soon as an elder began to speak, everyone would stop working to listen to the speaker's voice. Everyone had to sit very still and listen to huge men who looked very imposing and respectable (Andrew).

## Yup'ik Elder Testimony



*Frank examining a spear point from  
Canineq area, 2003  
by Ann Fienup-Riordan*

Frank Andrew, who was among the last generation to live in the qasgi until adulthood, viewed the Yup'ik traditional education and oral instruction as the moral foundation of a properly lived life (Andrew, xxv). He mourned its loss, and noted that the people are “no longer taught how to work. We no longer learned about our way of life. We live today following our own minds.”



*Qasgi tunnel from the entrance lead-  
ing to the big room inside  
Marin Family Collection A22*

Frank stated that when he was young, men ate their meals and slept on woven pads in their designated spots in the qasgi. When they slept, they had parkas over them to keep them warm. But the moment the elders took the parkas off early in the morning, it was time to wake up even though it was cold. They'd be instructed to go outside even during the winter. The moment they went out into the cold, their sleepiness would vanish.

## Storyknife

(yaaruin)



Yaaruin, or storyknife, was a unique form of teaching culture to the girls. Yaaruin was practiced mainland Yup'ik grandmothers with their granddaughters. A small, dull knife was used to draw pictures on a muddy, flat surface such as the bank of a river to entertain children. Knives were usually carved by a young girl's father and given to the daughter. Many stories had helpful information about domestic activities, appropriate behaviors, and about what would happen if they engaged in inappropriate behavior. A common theme was the grandmother telling the young girl what not to do, the young girl doing it, and then something dreadful happening to the grandmother. Through stories, the girls were encouraged to obey and respect. Storyknife still continues today, but as a form of activity (Langdon).

## Citations

Andrew, F., Sr. (2008). *Paitarkiutenka: My Legacy to You*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Edwards, B (Edwards). (2009). *The Yup'ik Way*. (Available from [www.theyupikway.com](http://www.theyupikway.com)).

Langdon, S. J. (2002). *The Native People of Alaska: Traditional Living in a Northern Land*. Anchorage, AK: Greatland Graphics.

Oleksa, Michael. (2005). *Another Culture/Another World*. Juneau, AK: Association of Alaska School Boards.

Roderick, Libby. (2010). *Alaska Native Cultures and Issues: Responses to Frequently Asked Questions*. Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press.

## LESSON PLAN

Not everyone in class might be Yup'ik, but this lesson is going to take place a Yup'ik village. To honor the land and the people of this town, we are going to learn about Yup'ik oral tradition. We'll watch a few clips and observe to see if they still practice the Yup'ik oral tradition today or have exclusively replaced it with the western educational system. Each student will be encouraged to participate to share their experience and the knowledge they have gained from this lesson.

Purpose/Objectives/Outcomes:

Learn in depth the purpose of Yup'ik oral education

Discuss whether the traditional education and oral instruction is continued today

The Student will be able to (The Big Picture):

- Identify the Yup'ik educational methods prior to the arrival of Russians and Americans
- Explain why it was necessary for Yup'ik boys and girls to deeply listen to their elders giving advice to the younger generation

- Differentiate today's educational system and the traditional Yup'ik system

What will engagement look like during this lesson?

1. Since the students in this lesson are already living in Western Alaska, it is assumed that they heard about the oral tradition. But I'll need to find out before getting too ahead of everyone. To get things rolling, I'll start off by doing a trivia based on local community. Some will be fun and some will be serious. (10 minutes) **EXAMPLE SHEET**
2. They will be asked if the elders in the village have lectured them before. I'll make an effort to get the discussion going. (20 minutes)
3. Once the discussion has ended, we'll watch a couple of short clips from YouTube below and "The Yup'ik Way" (20:30-23:30) of how the Yup'ik elders define the Yup'ik oral education. YouTube doesn't quiet define oral education, but gives the student a visual idea (15 minutes)

### INTERACTIVE 1.2 Yup'ik Story



Story about a Yup'ik and non-Yup'ik man traveling to Bethel

4. Before going too deep into the discussion concerning the clip, there will be a short presentation. The students will be asked about their thoughts and understanding. (15 minutes)

5. The class will be divided into groups randomly so students with different interests, abilities, and skill levels will be able to work together.

**ACTIVITY #1-** Each group will make a poster that compares and contrast the oral tradition with the western Educational system. If they can't find a way to make a poster, I'll simply have them do a Venn diagram unless they have any other ideas. As the groups are working on the poster, I'll go around to make sure that each individual's voice has been heard. I'll spark a question if I see a lack of participation. This will be followed by a very quick presentation. (20 minutes)

**ACTIVITY #2-** This next short activity is called road to the ocean. In the western culture, moving onto the next stage of life is often determined by age. The purpose of road to the ocean is to learn what skills were needed to move onto the next stage in the Yup'ik culture. There will be three questions. Informational material will be spread out throughout the class. Each student will need to go around the class to fill out all questions. All kinds of information can be spread out throughout the classroom. We just need to be able to include the answers to the three questions somewhere. It's a little mission game. (20 minutes) **ROAD TO THE MAP SHEET**

### **Assessment of student outcomes: (How will you assess student learning?)**

Accurateness, participation, and completion

### **Materials/Resources:**

- Computer for the movie and presentation
- Movie
- PowerPoint presentation
- Posters
- Markers
- Paper copy containing "road to the map" questions
- Books and paper that contains information

### **Technology:**

- There will be a clip from "The Yup'ik Way" filmed by Beth Edwards.
- If there is a short clip of someone telling a story or sharing knowledge of Yup'ik, I'll try to find a time slot for it.
- Computer

## **Instructional Strategies, Accommodations, and Student activities:**

Since the students are living in Western Alaska, it is necessary to know how the Yup'ik people lived prior to the Western culture.

Through fun quizzes, short movie clips, and group project, students will analyze and understand how the Yup'ik ancestors shared their knowledge and wisdom. If there is a lack of participation during class or group project, I will find ways to get each student involved and make their voices heard. Even though this lesson is focused on one culture, students from different backgrounds will be respected.

- *Qanruyutet*- words of wisdom, teachings or oral instructions
- *Yuilquq*- tundra
- *Nanvaq*- lake or pond
- *Imarpik*- ocean

## **Essential questions**

- Why was it necessary for boys and girls to deeply listen to their elders giving advice?
- How have Native educational methods changed over time?
- Has change in educational system help or hurt the Yup'ik people
- Why?

## **Vocabulary**

- *Ena*- common sod house design where women and young children lived, rectangular, partially dugout structure about 10 by 12 feet.
- *Qasgi*- communal men's house where their traditional education and oral instruction continued