



*Bella catches fish with her hands and pops them into her mouth.*

ing for us hourly, walked the last mile to meet us and seemed clearly relieved, though a little surprised, that we had made it.

Inside the trailer Susie fell onto the bed in exhaustion but still managed to laugh and joke as I put her feet up and pretended she was an invalid.

It was, indeed, Old Woman's last long hunt. She was to get her caribou the next day, and ironically, without my help.

Leaving her and Edith settled on the floor of the trailer and their sealskin sewing artifacts, and Bella happily riding the rolligon with Mac, I flew back the next day to Sachs to collect the sled, Susie's parka and Bella's dress parka. If I couldn't get caribou at least I could pictures! Within 24 hours I was back at Johnston Point with the supplies.

As the plane taxied to a halt Mac came rushing towards me.

"Quick!" Bring your cameras. Susie has just shot two caribou half a mile from the trailer. She saw them from the steps as she was sewing. They're sectioning them to fit on the rolligon when I left. You may get some shots for the end of the story — but you'll have to hurry."

It was ironic that while I was making arrangements with white men to find caribou in the old way by wandering great distances, the Eskimo women

had quietly found their own in the new way, sighting them from a warm house, stalking a couple of hundred yards to the kill then signalling the white men to pack the meat home by motorized transport.

Next day Susie and Edith sat on the ground outside the trailer to skin and cut up the meat. Using their ulus they cut off the heads by boiling, the fore and hind quarters for roasting, the sinew for sewing and the ribs and chest for slitting into strips which were hung on a sawhorse to make dried meat.

Each hide was stretched out on the ground and the women knelt alongside and scraped off the fat. As soon as I'd taken a few pictures, they moved operations inside the trailer, it being too cold and windy for them to work outside.

Mac packed their meat in plastic bags for storing in the company freezer until they were ready to leave.

Old Woman, had indeed, trudged the tundra with her dog team and in all seasons. But not any more. Once you've been taken by plane and truck to the hunt, why go back to the dog team? Especially if you're over 80!

And as Edith said: "It's fall now and so cold. Better to hunt in the summer. It's good we hunt every day at Johnson Point and come home every night to the trailer. The caribou will come to

us."

Susie is perhaps the last of the Eskimos to live in the old way. But no longer does she live in a snow house and warm her frozen body over a seal oil lamp. When her hunting days are over she will not have to walk quietly out into the cold and die.

The government will take care of her food and shelter and, when she gets sick, a government plane will take her to hospital.

In murdering the lifestyle of the Eskimo we have given them independence from the elements and security from starvation but have they retained their personal dignity, their self-respect and their pride in a culture that harmonized with those elements?

I think of Cambridge Bay where more than 600 Eskimos are living in stereotyped houses in an area devoid of wildlife and where there is little to do except sit and wait for a welfare cheque. I think of white man towns like Frobisher Bay and Inuvik. There, too, drink is the great escape.

Then I think of my time on the tundra and the words of Old Woman on our last day: "We'll miss you when you're gone, Lyn Tikalik."

I feel sad we have lost respect for the value of diversity in human culture. And I feel sad that Susie has made her last hunt.

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