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THE ESKIMOS OF HUDSON BAY AND ALASKA

RECORDED BY LAURA BOULTON

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4444

LAURA BOULTON RECORDING ON SOUTH HAMPTON, HUDSON BAY

FOLKWAYS FE 4444

THE ESKIMOS OF HUDSON BAY AND ALASKA / FOLKWAYS FE 4444

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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- Dance Songs
- Hunting Songs
- Game Songs
- Conjurer's Songs
- Animal Calls
- Animal Stories
- Story Songs

FOLKWAYS FE 4444

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THE ESKIMOS OF HUDSON BAY AND ALASKA

Drum Orchestra, Pt. Barrow

Introduction and Notes by Laura Boulton

In the great barren region of the Far North which begins where the trees end, the Eskimos eke out a difficult existence by hunting and fishing. Their territory, the largest habitat of any primitive people in the world, stretches from Siberia in the West to Greenland in the East. In this almost limitless space they number fewer than 50,000 souls. Although denied the resources of other peoples, they are among the most resourceful and cheerful people on earth. Sitting up on top of the world in a land where no other people could survive, they live in twilight for much of the year.

An ancient people, the Eskimos are still loosely organized. There are no organized tribes-only dialect areas or linguistic provinces and the local communities. The elders have influence and prestige but there are no powerful chieftains as with the American Indians. A small community of families lives and hunts together. There is no private ownership of land but certain hunting and fishing grounds are regarded as the domain of certain groups. The group wanders from one hunting ground to another, its movements largely controlled by its environment which makes the struggle for food never-ending. The natural resources of the country are so limited that the men have to spend nearly all their time and energy hunting and fishing. The women care for the children and prepare the food, which is not strenuous as a common dish is raw fish or raw meat. They make all the clothing and the boots. All the skins must be carefully softened by chewing, and someone always needs new boots as the hard rocks cut through them quickly. The women also prepare and sew onto the frames all the skins for the summer tents and for the kayaks and umiaks (the family canoe) and they must constantly keep them in repair. They also collect the moss essential for use as the wick of the whale oil lamp, the only source of heat and light. Also they work very hard in the brief summer weeks gathering berries and the twigs of the dwarf willow, heather, and the lichen that creeps over the rocks. The Eskimos come from the same division of mankind as the American Indians -- the Mongoloid stock that predominates throughout Eastern and Northern Asia. They are dis-

tinct in appearance, in language, and in customs from all the American Indian tribes, yet there are links that suggest a certain amount of borrowing of cultural traits, probably on both sides.

Alaska and Greenland each have twice as many Eskimos as are to be found in the whole of the Canadian Arctic, due to the greater abundance of fish and sea mammals in those two regions. (In many areas, the sea mammals are locally scarce or abundant depending on the movement of the sea-ice.) Alaska also has had a more complex social organization, with formal partnerships between individuals for mutual aid, with stably organized whale-hunting crews, and inherited obligations between families.

The Eskimos of the Barren Lands west of Hudson Bay never visit the coast to hunt sea mammals but depend entirely on caribou for food, clothing, bedding, and covering for their tents. They often suffer from famine in the winter months because so few caribou remain behind when the great herds migrate south, and they have only the fish in the frozen lakes and rivers and occasionally a muskox. They have no great herds of reindeer as in Alaska, where the United States Government has introduced them.

In the Hudson Bay region the Eskimos still pursue their nomadic existence, travelling by dogsled in winter and kayak and umiak in summer. They live in snowhouses in winter and tents of caribou skin in the summer. In Greenland where the Danish Government has provided well for the Eskimos, they live in large log houses, and in Alaska also they live in wooden frame houses.

We can discover in Eskimo music certain influences of northeast Asiatic and American Indian music, and occasionally of the white man as well. Due to the closer contact with other peoples in Alaska and Greenland, and to a lesser extent in the Hudson Bay region, the music is more developed than in the Barren Lands where there has been less contact with the outside world.

The rhythmic chanting is sometimes accompanied by drumbeats, especially in the dance songs; however, many songs, for example the conjurer's songs, play songs, lullabies and story songs, have no accompaniment. The melodies are extremely primitive, the text of the songs are often meager. Nonsense syllables such as aayaa, yaayaa, yaiyaa, etc, are frequently used, especially in the refrain.

Besides the game songs, lullabies, story songs and conjurer's songs for healing or weather incantations, there are numerous hunting songs, animal songs in which animals often deride each other, songs of tender sentiment (e.g. the song of the sick old man who begged his wife to find another husband who could be her refuge). The songs of derision are extremely important as a form of contest between men who have become enemies. These songs have an important social function: they relieve angry feelings and sometimes reestablish friendship. The texts are ruthless, elegant, cutting, but they must also be amusing in ridiculing the opponent. There are many types of songs to express the thoughts and moods of the people, sung when traveling or hunting in solitude or at home with the family group. The dance songs are not only sung when they want to express joy and gratitude for success at the hunt; in adversity they are sung for consolation to the fearful and depressed and to influence the gods to help them.

Music and poetry are by far the most important of all Eskimo arts. The texts of the songs are often meager; the audience is expected to be familiar with the whole subject and fill in most of the meaning. Although difficult for us to grasp the meaning, the songs frequently have profound and beautiful poetry. The folk-tales also are told in appealing poetic prose. The contents of the songs may treat of almost anything imaginable: the beauty of the summer, the thoughts and feelings of the composer while pursuing a seal or when angry with someone, or it may recount an experience, or describe a hunt or a journey.

Mother and child, Baffin Land

Notes on Eskimo Music by Henry Cowell

Almost the first very primitive music ever recorded (circa 1902) was the music of Eskimos. Along with equally simple music from the Veddas of Ceylon and some recorded a little later (1904) by Tierra del Fuego Indians, this primitive music, played on the scratchiest Edison cylinders imaginable, was studied in Berlin by Erich von Hornbostel and his students as representative of the world's most elementary music. It required considerable training and experience to distinguish pure noise from the recorded sound.

The simplest songs were half sung, half spoken, and used only two, or sometimes three, different tones (plus the octave); the pitch was likely to be indefinite at the start and to settle down only gradually. The rhythm also was vague at the start and took a little time to jell into its regular, accented undivided beats. There was some hand-clapping, and occasional beating on something that was probably a stretched hide: no descriptions were provided.

At a later stage the songs showed more rhythmical security from the start, more than one drum tone was used, as well as clapping, and four and sometimes five different scale tones could be heard.

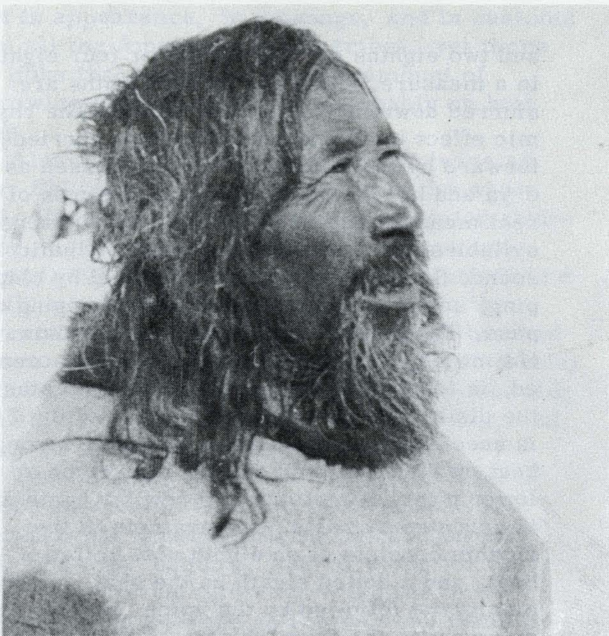
The Eskimo music recorded by Laura Boulton with good modern equipment comes from a different part of the Arctic but it illustrates the same 2-tone, 3-tone, 4-tone and 5-tone music, with one important difference: Whereas on the old recording s a 2-tone singer could be presumed to sing nothing else (since music using other tones came from a different place and so one could assume a different clan and a different singer), on these recent recordings the same men may sing a song with 2 tones, another with 3 tones and then one with five. This means that the more primitive forms are a survival and no longer represent the most elaborate stage of musical development that the singer has reached.

The singers in this record are familiar with all five tones of the five-tone scale, but in one recording there are only two main tones, with some embellishments as each tone is approached. There are also examples of three and four tone tunes. In another, however, there are five main tones with a suggestion from time to time of a leading tone, probably as a result of musical influences from "outside" rather than as a natural development toward a later form of the scale. The other cuts use five-tone scales, some of them with a range of an octave and a fourth.

The underlying rhythm in all these records is 2/4. Wherever there is a drum with the voice, it goes along mostly in patterns using quarter and eighth notes -- sometimes by exception there will be a half-note, or occasional sixteenths. Once in a while there is an interpolated quarter note, which should be considered an extra measure of 1/4 meter, since the regular 2/4 goes on from there; the extra beat is not an extension of a measure into 3/4 but a real "extra", -- an interruption or a reinforcement. The figures in the voice are a quarter and two eighths or vice versa, or four eighths in a measure. Often two of the eighths are slurred downward in a minor third. The rhythmic effect is constant and flowing, carried forward by the voice with syllables such as e-ya and ha-ya, along with longer words of real meaning that are repeated like nonsense syllables out of pleasure in their rhythmic sound. Some songs are accompanied by clapping, some by drums and some by banging on pans. The most primitive rhythm we know, 1/4 meter, a series of equal beats all accented, is found with some of the songs; in others the distinctive strong-weak pattern of the 2/4 is accentuated at times by putting the strong beat on the high pitch and the weaker on a lower pitch. Sometimes the regular beats are interrupted by rests. One example in the rhythm consists of an eighth note before a beat, and a dotted eighth on the beat, a complexity not followed by the voice. Indeed, in many cases the drum rhythm and the voice rhythm run along together with no apparent relation, so that the beats don't coincide and the rhythmic patterns are different.

The last cut on Side A contains the most primitive type of music one can conceive of: It is music for women and girls, who breathe gustily into a resonator, in a fast even 2/4 rhythm, so regular and driving, that one is not sure at first one is not listening to one of the imitations of trains produced on harmonicas in the southern mountains of the United States. This panting music is known also in the South Sea Islands, but it must be the rarest in the world. Among the Eskimo a second girl whispers words breathily, four sixteenth notes on each beat for a while, then two sixteenths plus an eighth over and over, using rhyming syllables. On Side B cut 1 the girls sing a short rhythmical figure on 2 or 3 tones, beginning on the last eighth-note of the measure, and then they echo the pattern with their aspirated breathing. Again, they sing syllables on the first three eighths of a measure of 2/4 and pant on the fourth one, inhaling for the panted eighth-note on one measure and exhaling in the same spot on the next.

In their style of singing, their tone quality, the manner of moving from tone to tone, as well as in their rhythmic patterns and the relation of drum to singer, the music of Eskimos from northermost Greenland that I heard in the Hornbostel collection (not illustrated here) was much like that still found among the very primitive Pitt River, Shasta and Digger Indians in California and in the case of most of the Eskimos heard on this record there is a style which in some respects resembles that of our southwestern Pueblo Indians in New Mexico and Arizona.



Hudson Bay Eskimo

Side I, Band 1: JOHNNIE BULL SONG. (Polly, Atitah, Mikusha, Billy Boy -- Southampton Island) --

Southampton Island, 19,000 square miles of rock, lies to the north of Hudson's Bay, directly west of Cape Dorset (on Baffin Island). The Eskimos that inhabit the island call it "Shugliak" -- "The Island-puppy Suckling the Continent-motherdog". The indigenous people known as the Sadlermiut, died out in 1902, destroyed by a mysterious epidemic.

The two groups that live on Shugliak at present, the Aivilikmiut and Okomiut, were brought by the whalers and by the Hudson's Bay Company from Repulse Bay and Baffin Island in the first quarter of this century. When I was there, the population consisted of approximately 150 Eskimos (1954: 250 or more) and a half dozen whites including one trader and a couple of missionaries. The mission services were attended by some of the Eskimos who enjoyed the candles, the ceremonies and the singing, but these people have developed a dignified culture with a religion which suits their environment, and they are serenely content not to change except superficially.

Winter and summer the constant pursuit of food keeps them very busy. Their diet includes caribou as well as seal, walrus, polar bear, white whale and salmon trout. The netchek-seal furnishes much of their food and clothing. In the winter they trap the Arctic fox for the Hudson's Bay Company, and some of the hunters have thus become relatively prosperous.

The group lives in a communal system, sharing the food from every hunt. There is no wide disparity in wealth. Even the poor hunter is treated as well as those who are more successful.

Singing and dancing are an important part of life. Most of the songs, with the exception of incantations and children's songs, can be used for dancing. Many of the dancing songs recount the experiences of the composer, many of them tell of exciting hunts and other exploits.

This selection is the song of an old man who formerly was a successful and famous hunter. Now his hunting days are over. He can no longer keep up with the others when they go forth in the boats in the summer or with the dogsleds in the winter; he must remain behind. He proudly remembers and makes poignant songs about his good hunting days when he shot the big bearded seal and the huge bull caribou:

"I must think of what to put into the song
that I should have out here in the wild.

I have not much to tell. I gave a piece of
lead to what will be a boot bottom (a
bearded seal).

In the same summer I gave a piece of lead
to a big horned animal (caribou buck).

Though I go no more, I remember them,
for now I can not leave the camp for the
summer."

Side I, Band 2: HIS FIRST HUNT (Kemukserar and Pangatkar--Chesterfield)--

Many songs concern the hunt, as life itself depends on successful hunting, and the gods who control the animals of land and sea must be pacified by certain songs and ceremonies. Weather incantations help to prevent or abate storms that bring ill luck to the hunt. Still other songs are merely narratives of the exploits of the hunters.

Kemukserar and Pangatkar were a very sturdy old couple who had come down from Repulse Bay. Kemukserar was famous throughout the region for his prowess as a hunter and his wife was honored as an excellent sewer of skins. Their fame was further increased by the fact that they knew very many stories and songs.

The words of this song go:

"On his very first hunt
He killed a fine seal
Even in the dark."

Side I, Band 3: ALL SONGS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED (Naitok and Issaluk--Chesterfield) --

There are many songs about song-making. Some of them are conjurers' songs, many are hunters' songs. Some are ancient, others very recent. Often they begin with something like this:

"There is no song about it
Words being far away (hard to find)."

or "I am going to get a song now,
Because they want me to sing."

or "I hooked this song
Last night."

or "He loves to make up words
When singing to his dancing companion,
Being a man
Who loves to compose songs."

The text of this song follows:

"All songs have been exhausted.
He picks up some of all
And adds his own
And makes a new song."

Side I, Band 4: HUNTING FOR MUSK OX (Kemukserar and Pangatkar--Chesterfield)--

This dance song about a strenuous musk ox hunt is accompanied by a big drum. It is the only musical instrument of the Hudson's Bay Eskimos. It is made like a tambourine, a hoop of willow (diameter of about 36 inches) with a caribou skin stretched over it. The handle is a short stout piece of wood notched at one end to fit the rim of the drum, and is lashed to it with strips of sealskin. A new membrane is fitted onto the drum for every special occasion. The caribou skin is scraped clean and softened by the women. Then several men hold the skin taut over the frame while another draws a cord tightly around the rim and firmly secures the membrane.

The short drumstick is of wood wrapped with sealskin, softened by chewing, to mellow the tone as it strikes the drum rim or frame.

The dance songs, according to all accounts, may be about practically any subject, for example games, friends or family, spirits, hunting animals, weapons, and animals. This song tells about hunting for musk ox.

Side I, Band 5: HUNTING SEALS (Kemukserar and Pangatkar -- Chesterfield) --

This dance song recounts the experiences of the hunter while pursuing seals. It is a summer song. In the summer the hunter in his kayak has to be very clever when he spies the seal, he must paddle quickly and silently until he is within harpoon-throwing distance. First he shoots with the rifle, then he must immediately throw the harpoon before the animal sinks and is lost. The sealskin float attached to the harpoon shaft rides on the water surface and the hunter thus locates his prey.

The text of this song goes:

"We were hunting seal
When the mosquitoes were here
In the early summer"

Side I, Band 6: I SING ABOUT A DANCE (Uluyok and Tutinar --- Chesterfield) --

Although the text of dance songs may deal with innumerable subjects, often they are about the dance. They may ridicule a dancer, for example: "Look at the woman, she is clumsy like a bear!" Or they may praise a dancer's movement, noting how the arms wave high in the air, how the hands flutter and wave above the head like the wings of a bird; how they move the feet, shrug the shoulders, shake the body, fold the arms, crouch down, and fold the hands under the chin.

On this occasion the dance songs were only a pleasant diversion. At other times they are performed out of gratitude for successful hunting. Sometimes they are dances of supplication to the gods.

The drummer begins the dance, striking a few beats as if testing the drum. Then, holding it above his head, he turns it from side to side and strikes not the fragile drumhead but the wooden rim, first on one side of the handle, then on the other, beating a slow persistent rhythm.

He circles around the ring, surrounded by the group of singers, balancing alternately on each foot, his body swaying to the music. From time to time he lowers the drum, usually near the end of the refrain, raising it again as he begins the next verse. When he is tired, another drummer takes his place.

Throughout the six-months long winter of twilight and darkness, there is plenty of time for the almost nightly song-fest and dances. Through singing and drumming and dancing the Eskimos forget for a moment the struggles and sorrows of the long harsh winter just passed and soon to return again.

Side I, Band 7: BEFORE WE CAME TO THIS RELIGION (Evaloo--Southampton Island) --

The religion of the Hudson Bay Eskimos has numberless supernatural beings; some are harmless, a few may be occasionally helpful, but many have power to bring harm. The most feared is the sea goddess, who controls the weather and the supply of seals. Also the souls of animals must be conciliated by the observance of rituals and taboos, especially those related to game. The souls of the dead also must be propitiated.

The shamans (medicine men) are the nearest to public officials in an Eskimo group. They are both priest and physician. Men and sometimes women, through the help of their "familiar spirits", bring aid to unsuccessful hunters.

One of the charm songs for hunters is:

"How shall I do it?
The animals were not influenced
by my song when I sang it."

The shamans also diagnose the causes of misfortune and illness and intervene between the people and the spirits. They intercede with the gods when bad weather prevents the hunters from getting seals and other game, and when starvation threatens.

A usual practice of the shaman is to go into a trance, and in that condition make utterances and produce songs that influence the gods. Beside the much feared sea goddess who must be kept constantly appeased, there are a deity of the winds and a god of storms. The gods of the sun, Venus and the moon are also important, especially the moon which brings luck to the hunters and fertility to the women.

Many amulets are worn (one boy wore 80), including miniature whips to drive away evil spirits; front teeth of caribou to bring luck in the caribou hunt; and a musk ox tooth for luck with salmon. The songs also have charms; for example, the skin of a little bird, (the Lapland bunting), fastened in the neck of a coat, gives good words for the harpoon songs.

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In this record the shaman is singing a conjurer's song. He made this song when he was alone, and he had just come out of a trance. He sings:

"Before they came to this religion
They used to meet with strange things
Not seen by ordinary people.
The land moved, the rocks moved.
They used to meet with strange, strange things."

Side I, Band 8: GIRLS' GAME (Angutnak and Matee--Baker Lake) --

Eskimo children have innumerable games, some of them very ingenious. They have a native game with a little ball of sealskin; they play at imitating the grownups --- hunting, fishing, archery, "graves" (when they put stones around the body of a child lying down), family life (when they represent father, mother, and babies); they imitate the sounds of tools, like the saw and the drill; they act out folk tales about animals. One of the cleverest games involves putting the bones of animals together in their proper places.

In the game in this recording two girls, about 15 years old, placed a kettle-resonator on the ground, bent down and whispered words into it. Their rhythmic aspirated breathing imitated tools they had heard at the Hudson's Bay trading post.

Side II, Band 1: CHILDREN'S GAME (Kasugat and Ishmatuk -- Baker Lake) --

In this piece two little girls, about six years old, hold hands and sing a game song, trying to keep from laughing. Finally one of them can hold back no longer, they both burst into laughter and the game is over.

Side II, Band 2: BIRD IMITATIONS (Harry Gibbons -- Southampton Island) --

In this recording Harry Gibbons imitates the calls of the Canada goose, the snow goose and the swan. He could call these birds very close with his imitations.

Side II, Band 3: (B6) IMITATIONS OF WALRUS (Harry Gibbons--Southampton Island) --

One of the most useful gifts of a hunter is the ability to imitate the calls of the animals so perfectly that he can bring them within shooting range. In this recording Harry Gibbons gives an imitation of the walrus.

Side II, Band 4: ANIMAL STORIES (Kemukserar and Pangatkar -- Chesterfield) --

Story telling is a social occasion among the Eskimos. When stories are to be told, several families gather together. They sit around, the men smoking and the women nursing their babies and chewing on sealskins to make them soft. The children sit on the skin sleeping bags and listen intently. They are learning as they listen, and they must learn the stories correctly.

The story teller, usually a respected elder, tells the stories deliberately, with gestures and grimaces to suit the narrative --- big eyes when the owl talks, peering among the rocks when the lemming talks to the weasel, showing wild excitement for the walrus hunt, and so on.

All the birds and animals have their own songs, so that it takes many days and nights to sing through the whole cycle. From their hunting experience and accurate observations they explain the habits of the animals, the clever ones, the strong ones, the stupid ones, and so on.

Side II, Band 5: HUNTING SONG (Ashivoo-Baker Lake) --

Ashivoo, the singer of this hunting song, belongs to the Caribou Eskimos of the Barren Lands west of Hudson Bay where an old Eskimo culture is well preserved and where a very primitive music may be found. It is believed locally that the hills west of Baker Lake were the favorite meeting place of the aboriginals. There are four groups of Barren Lands Eskimos: Qaernermiut (around Baker Lake); Padlermiut ("People of the Willow Thickets"), Hauneqtormiut, and Harvaqtormiut. These Eskimos depend entirely on the caribou for food, clothing, bedding, tents. When the caribou are frightened away from their ancient migration routes, the Caribou people face starvation. It is so common that they have learned to face it with stoic calmness; their endurance of hardship is incredible.

Many of their songs have to do with hunger, like this one:

"We were very hungry, Our voices were weak.
We were too weak to go out on the hunt
But we went hunting.
We shot two large caribou with much fat on them."

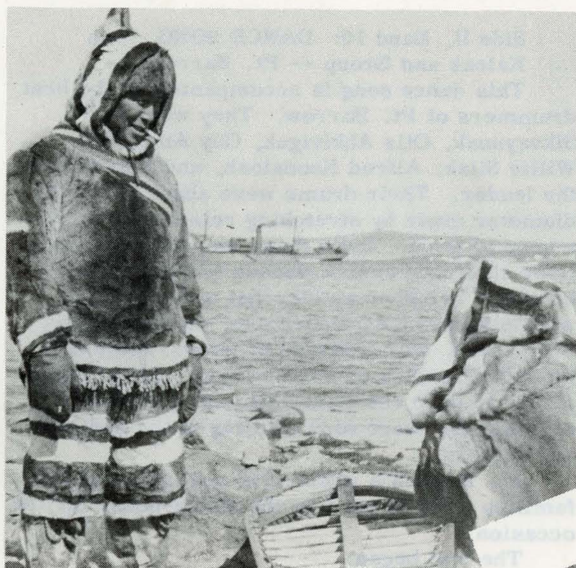
Some of these groups have nothing to do with the sea or sea animals. However, in recent times there has been more communication between the inland and coast Eskimos, and in the Barren Lands far from the sea there are stories and songs of the sea, about the polar bear who tried his strength against a bull caribou, the girl who married a whale, etc.

The religion of the inland Eskimos is different from that of the sea people. There are fewer taboos, and the customs regarding birth and death are simpler.

This recording is one of a large group of hunting songs:

"First they shot a female caribou,
Then two buck caribou came along.
Their horns were just beginning to appear,
All velvet as in the spring."

Eskimo family, Baker Lake



Making a kayak, Baffin Land

Side II, Band 6: DANCE SONGS (Joe Sikvayunak --- Point Barrow, Alaska) --

The Point Barrow poeple live at the most northern point of Alaska on the Arctic Ocean and are called Nuwungmiut. In early times they were apparently a very hardy group, toughened by long journeys, privations, "cures" and athletic pursuits. When white men penetrated their world, wanton hunting and "firewater" worked havoc in their lives. But in more recent years their condition has been greatly improved.

The music of the Alaskan Eskimos, like that of other Eskimo groups, is almost entirely vocal. They have one musical instrument, the tambourine-like drum, which is similar to that of the Hudson Bay Eskimo, but the Point Barrow drum is smaller, with a diameter of about one foot. In the Hudson Bay region one drum only is used, and is played by the dancer. In Alaska as many as five drums may be played together. The musicians moisten the membranes to tune them, but when two or more are played as an orchestra, there is apparently no attempt made to tune them to each other.

In spite of the fact that many hymns and other songs have been brought from the "outside", the people have preserved much of their own music. There is a large repertory of folk songs and game songs, but the songs of magic have almost disappeared. The folk songs are about birds, animals, the aurora borealis, and many subjects. The game songs accompany the "cats' cradles" (string games), games of ball, and other games. These songs are handed down generation after generation with little apparent change.

The dance songs are numerous, but rarely old. They rise up, flourish temporarily, and die in a year or a few years, much like our own dance music. Sometimes the tunes are old with new words added for a special event or a person. Sometimes the words have meaning, but they are slurred over, as if unimportant. There are many nonsense syllables, like "ai ya yanga", etc, and they may be sustained on the same note over several successive beats, ending with a staccato "Ya!"

Most Eskimos have their own songs whose words they themselves have composed. One man when asked how many songs he had, answered: "I have many. Everything in me is song. I sing as I breathe." Another singer said: "Music makes the old young, and the drum is the beating heart."

The singer of the six dance songs, Joe Sikvayunak, is accompanied by a drum. The songs are:

"I am lonesome"
"When I feel like singing, I sing"
"I am waiting for the boat to come"
"Jumping Skin song"
"I will show you the way"
"It was a very lovely day when the water was calm"

Side II, Band 7: STORY SONGS (Otis Ahkivigak -- Point Barrow) --

In this selection the singer recounts three short stories with songs.

The first tells of a boy resting by the river. He saw a girl coming to the river but she was not interested in his attentions. Many boys had courted her but she always said no. The young man was angry and went away in his kayak. Suddenly the girl began to disappear into the ground. Her parents heard her singing but they could not reach her as she disappeared. The young man called back from his kayak: "I made her disappear into the ground, because she will not marry!" The first song was sung while the girl was sinking into the earth.

The second song is about the Nooneedle Bird. This little bird was hunting for fish under the river bank and he came upon a brown bear's hole. He saw the big brown bear asleep, and he began to sing "Brown Bear, you have big feet! Brown Bear, you have big feet!" The Big Brown Bear woke up and said, "Come a little closer, Come a little closer!" The bird came a little closer; the bear caught him, and ate him, and he thought the Nooneedle Bird was finished. But the bird did not die. He began to chew the bear's stomach, and finally killed the bear. He made a hole through the bear's stomach and came out, but nobody recognized him. He had only skin, no feathers. It was so hot in the bear's stomach, he lost all his beautiful plumage.

The third song is about a man who was not a good hunter. His wife had four brothers. One morning he went out on the ice with these four men to hunt seal, and while they were out on the ice, he killed one of his wife's brothers. Then he took the seal that belonged to the dead man. When he got home with it, they had a big feast to celebrate the first seal he ever caught in his life.

Side II, Band 8: DANCE SONG (Joe Sikvayunak, Otis Ahkivigak and Jonas Oyoowak -- Pt. Barrow) --

The three singers here are full-blooded Eskimos, who held important places in their community. Joe Sikvayunak, according to the government records, was born in 1898. He was one of the few survivors of the dreadful measles

epidemic of 1903 when more than 300 people died at Pt. Barrow. Joe had 6 sons and 2 daughters, the oldest boy 12, too young to go hunting, the oldest daughter just married. Otis Ahkivigak was born in 1896 at Wainwright, Alaska. He was the head of a big family of 15 -- 2 daughters and their families. Jonas Oyoowak was born in 1880 at Kotzebue.

Side II, Band 9: "INVITING-IN" DANCE SONG (Otis Ahkivigak--Pt. Barrow)

In the region of the lower Yukon River and Norton Sound, considerably south of Barrow, the "Inviting-In Feast" (Aithukaguk), given in January, followed the "Asking Festival" and the "Bladder Festival", which placated the spirit of animals killed in the hunt, held in November and December. At Barrow, there have been only two types of festivals, the Whale Feast and the Inviting-In or Messenger Feast, so called because messengers were sent to invite other villages.

On one occasion when the latter ceremony was in danger of being forbidden as a pagan performance, an old Eskimo spoke eloquently on the subject. "To stop the Eskimos singing and dancing is like cutting the tongue out of a bird."

The kazgi (in Barrow called karigi) formerly was and in a few places still is the communal house of the village, -club-house, town hall, sweat bath house and dancing pavillion, all in one. It is the center of the Eskimo life. Built on a larger scale than the ordinary native house, it is located in the center of the village. It has a winter entrance for the shamans and the dancers; the public uses the summer entrance. During the festival the guests and dancers mingle freely. In the old times, the spirits were thought to sit and enjoy the dances given in their honor, and offerings of meat and drink were placed here for them.

The principal host of the Messenger Feast has to save for years for he has to feed the whole crowd the first day of the festival. He is often impoverished but he gains fame, and all his guests are forever obligated to him. The head announces his intention to hold a feast, sends a messenger forth with the invitation to the visitors. His group then gathers every night to rehearse. In some villages the songs belong to one old man who "sells" them to different dancers, and he teaches the people the proper dances for the festival. Weeks are spent in learning the songs; every intonation must be exact. The chorus consists of 5 or 6 men led by an old man. Everyone may join in only after the song has begun. At the feast each group presents its best actors and they try to out-sing and out-dance each other. Face masks are worn: some are to make the guests amused, some are to honor the spirits of the animals for which the dance is given.

The dances are varied in character, from the comic dances of the first day through others, more serious, impressive, graceful, to the dances of the third day portraying the animals. Finally the shaman dances. He falls into a trance; when he comes to, he announces that the spirits are placated. After the necessary offerings of meat, drink and tobacco are given to the spirits through a crack in the floor, the ceremony is ended. (Forty years ago, this was the festival. In the 1950's, the full ceremonial is enacted only in the older people's memory.)

Side II, Band 10: DANCE SONG (Leo Kaleak and Group -- Pt. Barrow) --

This dance song is accompanied by the best drummers of Pt. Barrow. They were Joe Sikvayunak, Otis Ahkivigak, Guy Amiyuruk, Willie Silak, Alfred Koonaloak, and Leo Kaleak, the leader. Their drums were about 2 feet in diameter made by stretching reindeer skin over a hoop of wood. Joe's drum was made of whale-liver stretched over a wooden frame, with a handle of reindeer antler; that of Otis was a walrus stomach stretched over the frame as a drum-head, with a handle of wood. Some of them had handles of walrus ivory. All of them produced deep resonant tones and insistent rhythms that were very exciting to the audience and singers.

Pt. Barrow's whole 1946 population of 120 families tried to get into the dance-house for the occasion.

The text began:

"I made this song
For my nephew".

Side II, Band 11: DANCE SONG (Otis Ahkivigak -- Pt. Barrow) --

This example of the old dance songs illustrates a typical form. Dancing is inseparable from singing or chanting. The singing technique is the characteristic which gives any music its individual quality. Among the Alaskan Eskimo singers, we hear the forceful mode of attack and the pulsations on a single note (held through several beats) which are characteristics of the music of the Southwest Indians.

The research workers in Greenland have found that a definite connection exists between the music of Alaska and Greenland, and conclude that the musical culture moved from Alaska to Greenland. They hold that the various different local styles of Eskimo music throughout the Arctic have their origin in the same basic style.

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LITHO IN U.S.A. 159