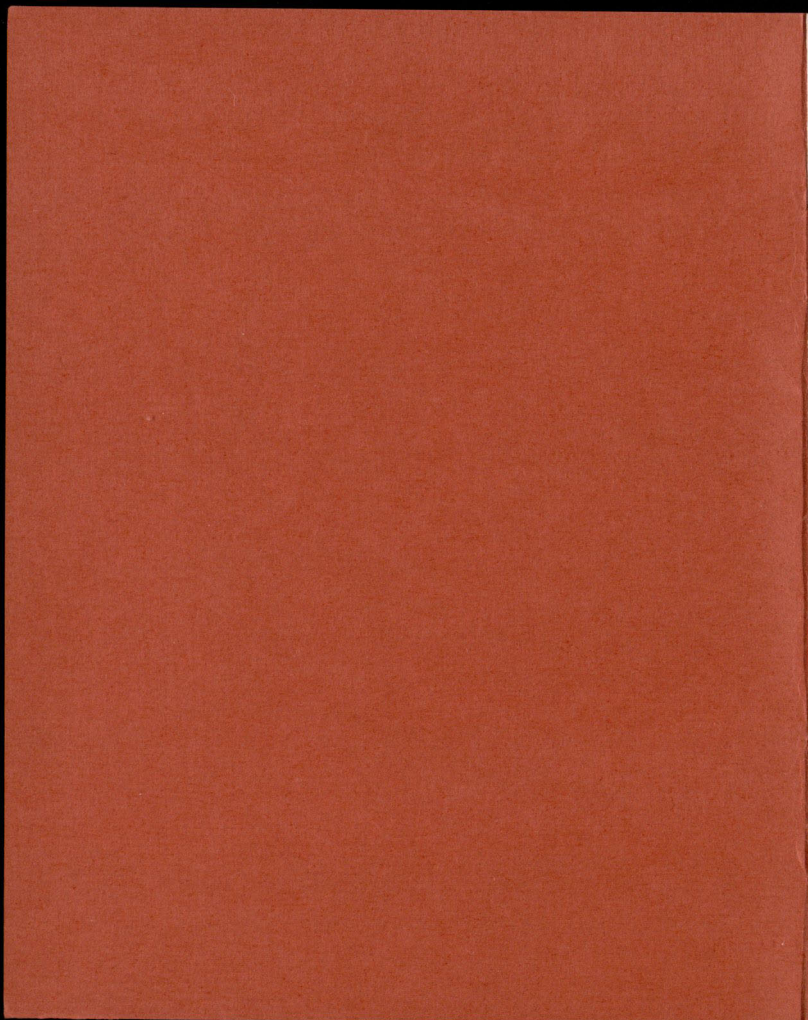


KOYUKON RIDDLES



RD



Book 7

KOYUKON
RIDDLES

adapted by

Richard Dauenhauer

June 1975

6-75-500

Book 7
of the
Athabascan Indians of Interior Alaska
Social Studies Unit

A Production of the
Alaska Bilingual Education Center
Alaska Native Education Board
4510 International Airport Rd.
Anchorage, Alaska

6-75-500

In the winter, after the hard work of summer and fall was done, after the winter food supply had been gathered and prepared, the Athabascans had leisure time for entertainment. Many of the Athabascans used to pose riddles, and riddling is still very popular among some groups.

Among the Koyukon, riddles were asked in the second half of winter, beginning in

December when the sun begins
to come back and the days
grow longer and brighter.
The riddles were associated
with the return of light.

Riddles are like poems.
A riddle is an act of imagin-
ation -- an act of seeing
something in terms of some-
thing else.

The world of the riddle
seems different from the every-
day world because riddles

turn things upside down and inside out. When the riddle answers put things back together again, we see that the riddle world is the same as the everyday world, but gives us a new or different way of seeing the everyday world.

The two dozen riddles in this book have been adapted from the collection of Koyukon riddles published in 1913 by Fr. Julius Jette, S.J. They

will lead you to the world of
the riddle-imagination, the
world of Athabascan poetry.
Why not enter it by making up
some riddles of your own?

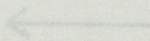
ANSWER



1. I drag my shovel
on the trail.

Answer →

Answer



1a. A beaver.

24a. Bare ground

when the snow is melting.

2. At the tip it's
dipping in the ashes.

Answer



2a. Ermine tail.

24a. Bare ground
when the snow is melting.

3. Far away, a
fire flaring up.

bedded down on snow.

24. It is like a herd

3. For snow, a

3a. Red fox tail.

23a. The northern lights.

53

4. Small dots
far away.

I broke my bow, shooting
at a caribou.

23.

4a. When the birds return.

22a. Paddle whirls.

5. It really snowed hard
in opposite directions
on my head.

22. We go singing
in the water.

5a. A mountain sheep.

21a. An island.

6. We come upstream
in a red canoe.

tears away at me.

21. The water

6a. Red salmon.

20a. Eating.

7. It sounds like when
we shake a quiver.

really fast.
little hills in there

20. When we dump

flapping in the wind.

7a. Hanging birchbark,

19a. Eating.

8. Like a broom, I'm
sweeping with my body.

When we put small sticks
into a house.

19.

8a. The tops of grass
in winter.

18a. A stump on which

18 the snow has fallen.

9. Cache-like,

leaning to the side.

a sheep skin hat.

18. We are wearing

9a. A salmon berry.

17a. Sled runner tracks.

10. It is like a herd
trailing up the hill.

sun on water, streaking
in opposite directions.

17. Grease-like, like

with totems.

tombstones carved

10a. The graveyard,

16a. Sled runners.

11. I make chips.

we drag along the trail.

16. With a noise

11a. An ax.

15a. A fire poker.

12. I brace it
with my back.

into the heat.

15. I dive

12a. A ridge-pole.

14a. The sun
or moon.

13. I stick my head
in the fire.

beyond the mountains.

14. I reach

13. burning on the end.

13a. A log,

