

April the people start to set trap in the Flat. In crow Flat that where the people make their living too. I think it's about 200 people in old crow."

The Old Crow Flat is the gathering place of muskrats and muskrat hunters. Grahame Keast is the young principal of the school at Old Crow and last spring he went muskrat hunting with Charlie Peter Charlie and his two sons, Richard Charlie, thirteen, and Timothy Charlie, fourteen. The ridding is done around lakes some fifty to seventy miles north of the settlement. The ratters come by dog team in April or May when there is still snow, or they wait till June when the river ice is "gone out" and go by home-made canvas canoes. The Charlie family stayed with the boys' uncle, Andrew Tizya, who'd already set up his tent. In June north of the Arctic Circle there is sunlight twenty-four hours a day so it doesn't matter much when one sleeps. Grahame Keast sketched out a "typical" day, though as he pointed out each day is different: "10 A.M. Arise for a breakfast of hotcakes and bacon. A few odd jobs after that, such as fetching wood and water. 12 A.M. Forty rat skins to stretch that were not done last night. The rat skins are stretched over boards called stretchers which give them shape while they dry in the sun. 3 P.M. Go around to the traps, get the rats, re-set the traps and maybe shoot a few as well. 5 P.M. Still out around the lake, light a fire and have some tea — maybe even barbecue a rat in tinfoil. Skin the rats collected so far. 7 P.M.

Arrive back at camp. Have a sit down. Maybe Andrew has cooked something and there's some left over. 9 P.M. Go out in the canoe after more rats. 12 P.M. Arrive back weary but with enough rats to bring the day's tally to thirty-five; not as many as yesterday but it was a bit windy tonight and that makes it harder when shooting rats. Skinning the rats takes perhaps another hour, then wash up, have something to eat and go to sleep. Maybe it is 3 A.M., maybe it is later — with twenty-four hours of daylight it doesn't really matter what time it is."

Old Crow and Whitehorse have not changed much in seventy-five years, but the winds of change are now sweeping the North as never before — the northern Yukon is criss-crossed with miles of seismic lines; the southern Yukon is scarred with mining exploration. The Territory's mineral resources are not fully known and some that are known are not yet exploited. By airplane and helicopter, on horseback and snowmobile, prospectors are searching.

The Hon. Jean Chrétien, Minister of Northern Development, has expressed a determination that the new changes will not destroy the old ways. "We do not intend to destroy the North for the sake of the material wealth it can produce. Nor do we intend to leave it isolated and unused."

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