Durability and constancy of the indigenous peoples traditions of the north of Siberia allow us to reconstruct the traditional way of life at the rather wide chronological period - from the middle of the 7th-6th millennium BC and until the middle of the 20th century. Such a wide range can be explained by the stability of natural conditions in the taiga region of Western Siberia, stable biocenosis and stable results of hunting, which were the cause for the constancy of the main types of economy: hunting, fishing, gathering, because in these natural conditions agriculture could not be developed, no more than gardening in some cases.

(3) In this region there was no deer breeding as a food resource due to stable effective hunting, there was no threat of starvation. Domesticated reindeer were only used as transport, no more than 10-15 reindeer for one community. The main food species, according to archeozoology, were large ungulates, reindeer and elk. (4) The most effective ways to hunt for herd animals were passive hunting with the use of pitfall trap systems or paddock hunting with leather net traps. Both ways of hunting were based on the natural seasonal migrations of animals. The hunting for other animals had either ritual or trade purposes. Nowadays there is no archaeological complex of hunter's pits that has been fully investigated. Nevertheless, there are hundreds of them are being found, there are examples which could be a good source of information for studying ancient hunting which is the leading branch of taiga economy.

(5) Collective hunting, when all the members of ancient community were somehow involved at the different stages, its features and basic methods are closely related to the landscape and the biocenosis. Collective hunting due to geographical conditions, it is not suitable for all territories, but in the Far North of Asia, on the West Siberian Plain the necessary conditions existed. (6) Annually thousands of herds of wild reindeer made meridional seasonal migrations. Collective hunting made it possible to obtain a large number of food resources for a long time, so it led to stable survival

(7) One of the regions we are going to talk about, is the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug-Yugra, is located in the central part of the West Siberian Plain, almost the entire territory is located within middle taiga. 52% of the territory are forests. In Yugra, there are approximately 5,800 archaeological sites from the Upper Paleolithic to the late Middle Ages, about 900 (20%) of this list are groups of hunter’s pitfall trap systems. (8) Another region, the Yamal-Nenets Okrug is located in the north of the West Siberian Plain, it is the region of the Far North and more than a half of its territory is located beyond the Arctic Circle. This is the zone of taiga in the south, forest-tundra and tundra in the north with many lakes and marshes. In the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, about 550 archaeological sites have been found, about a 100 of them are classified as hunters pits, they are mainly in the forest-tundra zone, in the territories adjacent to the Yugra borders.

(9)These 20% of hunting sites for the northern taiga is from the Upper Paleolithic to the Middle Ages. Most of them belong to the Neolithic - the middle of the first millennium AD. But in the south, in the steppe, there is no this type of sites, in the Russian European north-east they are extremely rare, which is incomparable with the massive number of this type of sites in Siberia.

(10) There are single pitfall traps, there are systems of several of them, some of them are dug in chains, stretched in a line, some are located chaotically. Кэотикли (11) Here is the example of pitfall traps of Kedrovaya 20 in a plan, there are 8 of them in a line. In the Purovsky District of Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, where is a large-scale system of pit-traps stretched for several kilometers. Not all of them have remains of wood or archaeological material, so it is not always possible to date such pits. (12) Some pits are square, cone-shaped or sub-rectangular in shape, sometimes up to 3 m deep. (13) Here are also the examples of excavations. Average depth is 1, 5 m. The size depended on the hunting object, most of them are for reindeer, the main food resource for this territory from the Upper Paleolithic. Sometimes, on the walls and at the bottom, carbonaceous spots are being found or (14) these are the remains of wooden construction to prevent the sand walls from drifting down. (15) At the bottom of the pit there were sharpened pins. (16) Above the pits were covered with rods and branches. (17). This is how it looked like.

In addition to the pit-traps, other methods of collective hunting are known from ethnography. The simplest, and probably the oldest, was a "pokolka or pokolyuga (from word "to wallop”), it was practiced in the places where traditional ways of seasonal migrations of wild deer were crossing rivers. While crossing the river, the swimming deer were practically helpless, and they were killed in large numbers by spears or axes.

 (18) The third type of collective hunting is recorded from the 7th century, late oral ethnographic evidences indicate that there was a method of building some sort of fences on the animal paths, in the fences there were passages with hunter’s pits that were carefully masked, there were special devices making noise sounds, frightening animals and forcing them to go the right direction. The animal fell into a narrow and deep pit, at the bottom of which were installed sharpened pins. Here it is. The most recent ones are the methods of paddock hunting with the help of stationary devices such as (19) (20) nets on the edge of a shore, so the nets were not tighten very tight, and the running deer got entangled by them, or with crossbows on the reindeer natural migration routes. (21) (22) As you can see, there are no pits but there was a system of crossbows triggered when an animal entered inside. (23) Here is the picture of a hunter over there waiting for the deer. In the ethnography the systems of paddock hunting with fences, crossbows and large leather nets was used at least from the middle of 1 millenium AD until the middle of the 20th century.

In the the tundra, starting from the Neolithic, lived economically independent collectives. These collectives, judging by the dwellings, (24) it's a modern one, but it was very similar, led semi-sedentary, seasonal lifestyle. One person or one family could dig out single pitfall trap, but there are systems of several dozens of them it means the use of a large number of people. This is the work of organized hunting groups of several family collectives united together that could dig out large hunting systems for the large animals, already from the Neolithic.

 (25) One more specific feature of the north of Western Siberia that we need to mention is the almost complete absence of stone for making stone tools. The finds of stone tools are rare, there are few arrowheads from the settlements. In the burials there are no more than two or three of them. Of course, there were bows and arrows, but stone arrows were not widespread for use, even bone arrowheads were rare, because to make a bone arrowhead in the Stone Age there should be a suitable stone tool. So it is possible to conclude that the individual hunting was minimal, in the archaeological materials is not known a lot, so collective hunting was more developed and effective. Only with the arrival of the Russian population and the firearms, this accent in hunting was obviously shifting towards the individual hunting (26) or (27) or (28) and by the 19th century collective hunting gradually disappeared from the traditional culture, being replaced by an individual one.

(29) Territorial isolation was the reason for preservation of the biocenosis throughout the entire Holocene. Northern reindeer appear in the Early Pleistocene. Resettlement of Asian tribes to this territory took place in the late Pleistocene -early Holocene from the south (30) There was an important adaptation task for the migrants, especially in the absence of flint, suitable for making individual hunting tools. Collective hunting apparently has been known before, but in the North, in these special conditions, this form of hunting was the result of adaptation, which, due to isolation of the territory, existed until the 20th century.

The construction of pit trap systems and their subsequent use is the result of a collective work, and it leaded to the complication of the social structure of ancient society. The results of collective work, even in the appropriating forms of the economy, are more effective than the results of individual hunting. (31) An indirect confirmation of the development of the social structure of hunters and gatherers of the North of Western Siberia can be the number of settlements and the number of dwellings functioning on them at the same time. So.. Separate settlements of the Mesolithic - early Neolithic usually had up to twelve dwellings, each of them belonged to the family, which allows us to determine the number of the neighborhood community in the range from ninety six to one hundred ninety-two people. In the Iron Age, the average number of settlements is the same, rarely reach up to fourteen dwellings, so the maximum population is from one hundred and twelve to two hundred and twenty two people. For the Far North it’s significant. After this shift from the collective hunting to individual hunting, the population of settlements decreased, from eight-twelve people up to a maximum of thirty eight-forty eight people per settlement. (32) So the individual hunting of the 18th-19th is also can be characterized by high prices for pelts of fur animals, for which it was possible to get high pay, particularly with metal products (iron weapons, copper goods, silver and gold), and the natural resources of Western Siberia are not only poor in stone, but also in metal.

So, a large number of food resources and a lack of raw materials for hunting tools led to the formation of a new developed system of collective hunting, based on seasonal migration, landscape, and biocenosis, which became specific for this territory. Pit trap systems could stably provide large food resources, they were requiring not much labor, because the sandy soils were easy to dig and to it did not seem a complicated process. This is an example of adaptation of hunting groups to the landscape of the West Siberian taiga. The results of the study of the collective hunting systems allow us to conclude that the change and development of the structure of the ancient societies of the North of Western Siberia, can be associated with the use of the collective labor in the absence of raw materials and metallurgy in order to get food resources. The territory of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug is unique in comparison with the adjacent territories, because there were 5,800 archaeological sites found, it can be explained that it was hunting methods that provided a jump in the population, twice as much as it was in neighboring territories and it was stable for thousands of years. 33