

Interviewee 11: Don't like to send us wipes, I don't know why. Medicare or whatever.

Interviewer: I wonder why.

Interviewee 11: I don't know.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 11: They just sent us about four or five packages a month. That's nothing, so we start buying our own now.

Interviewer: Yeah. I'm sorry about that.

Interviewee 11: Yeah. They sent them enough supplies for what they need but for some reason.

Interviewer: Not enough wipes. Yeah. Are you ready to do some questions? Would you mind telling me a little bit about yourself?

Interviewee 11: My son.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 11: When I grew up it was so different from the way it is now. There was no cabins in Hughes when I left there. We just mostly lived in camps like spring camp, summer camp, fall camp, and winter camp. I didn't go to school till I was ten because there was no school. I did not talk English, not one word. Until it was taught at school, poor teacher, he had a tough time because he didn't know what we said. He must have been a good teacher because in three months time, we learned to talk English, speak English. I don't know how good we were but we learned to understand him anyway.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee 11: And from there, go to school, I was behind because I started when I was ten. I had to go to school 12 months one time too. I went to Fairbanks December 27th and finished my eighth grade year there. May I graduated and after that I went to [Highschool Name].

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee 11: So, it was different, those days. I don't know nobody from Hughes because we don't travel to villages the way they do now. So I didn't know anybody



down here too. There was one girl that went to [Highschool Name] same time I did. We became close together, of course we were from close villages. She was alone too. So everything was so different from growing up in the woods and moved from here to there according to the time of day. But it was good, ate fresh food every day because they have to get some fish for supper tonight. No trees, nothing it's okay because everything stays frozen. Cut wood, cut wood. We'd cook for dogs and that was work, we had to do that every day because our parents used dogs, nothing, we had nothing, all the things we have now.

When I tell those kids, how did Grandma survive? It was fun in those days. You had no toys, nothing.

Interviewee 12: Go out and do snares for rabbits for our next dinner.

Interviewer: Yes. So then you, oh go ahead, I was just asking so, you grew up around here in Hughes.

Interviewee 11: Yeah I was never down this way. Just around Hughes, go to spring camp and summer camp and winter camp is about 40 miles out of Hughes towards Copika area. So, we just had warm clothes, I had a moose skin parka, I pulled it over, and that was the only jacket I ever owned, seemed like. No stores. And we started getting these boxes from church, outside sent us boxes, little dogs oh that was really good.

Interviewer: So you went to school at [Highschool Name]? Is that where you met?

Interviewee 11: No.

Interviewer: No?

Interviewee 11: I met him when he went to Hughes. Summertime, we played boats on the river. We were young then, and then went back to [Highschool Name].

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee 11: Down there four years. Finished. By that time he was working in a mining camp.

Interviewee 12: Gold mining.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee 12: \$1.90 an hour I started.



Interviewer: Oh wow.

Interviewee 11: October we'll be married 63 years.

Interviewer: Oh wow. What did you think when you first met her?

Interviewee 12: Nothing.

Interviewee 11: That was us.

Interviewer: Yeah that's beautiful. I love that. Okay so then after you met and got married, then you moved here to this house?

Interviewee 12: Little cabin right next door. That was our first cabin.

Interviewee 11: Way back when the bank was really far out.

Interviewer: Oh yeah the bank was different. Alright. And so then you moved to this house and this is where you had your kids?

Interviewee 11: Yeah. We lived in Hughes and _____ [0:07:00]. Anyway, our kids right away, nothing because we just don't know nothing. Got married in 1960 and our oldest son was born in '63 and the next one one year later in '64. Two girls, [Name] was born in '68, [Name] was born in '70. Our late son, born in '75 and our youngest daughter born in Hughes was born in '81. There was space between them but they take care of each other.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewee 11: And when they go to college, that's when I had to work. I worked for a couple years. Just putting them through school, they're going to nursing school so I go to Anchorage on my way home, I just go to _____ [0:08:13]. They all share everything. My oldest son had two kids then and my oldest daughter had two. So, you could buy Pampers and what they need while going to school. Excuse me.

Interviewer: And then you said you were a health aide for a while.

Interviewee 11: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.



Interviewee 11: Well going out firefighting was most of our job, him and I. But different crews so sometimes we don't see each other but we could babysit her. I can't pass my step test no more because I'm too old. So I said they need a health aide, there's sign ups, a big list _____ [0:09:15] at that time I was scared to poke people, it was nothing later on.

Interviewer: That's brave of you.

Interviewee 11: Yeah. And then I worked for _____ [00:09:35] as a health aide and chief and so I was all over. I was 70 when I last worked. I couldn't travel no more. I was carrying my two weeks supply of food. So I just, I came down with cancer too and that's when my job ended.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 12: I was a dog musher when I was younger.

Interviewer: You were?

Interviewee 12: Went to Nome. _____ [0:10:18]

Interviewer: How long does it take?

Interviewee 12: The first year was 21 days. I think the last time was about 12 days.

Interviewer: Oh wow so you got there fast.

Interviewee 12: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah you have so many trophies.

Interviewee 12: That's not all, there's lots more.

Interviewer: Lots more, oh goodness.

Interviewee 11: Our kids too.

Interviewer: Oh from the kids.

Interviewee 11: Yeah.

Interviewer: Wow. Yeah would you mind telling us a little bit about yourself?



Interviewee 12: I was born in 1940 and like I said, I did run a thousand mile race four times. I came in second twice, third once, and fourth once.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness.

Interviewer: Congratulations that was quite a task.

Interviewee 12: It wasn't easy, the first time was tough because it was 21 days, almost a month out there, sometimes I took crackers or something. Something to eat anyway.

Interviewer: Yeah when did you start mushing?

Interviewee 12: Since I was young, ever since I was probably about 12, 13 years old. My dad used to be a dog musher too and he'd take off with a whole bunch of dogs and I'd hook up one dog and tried to follow him but no. Go a little ways and that dog just lost interest and turned around.

Interviewer: So the dog was in charge.

Interviewee 12: Yeah.

Interviewer: Wow. Yeah and where did you go to school?

Interviewee 12: I went to school here, I went to sixth grade, school just started, I was too old to go to school by then. So I just went out camp. I got a lot out there, cabin out there. We'd go out there most times, spring out there and now we're getting too old for that now.

Interviewer: And then you were gold mining for a while? Working in the mine camp?

Interviewee 12: Yeah I worked back there, about halfway from here to Hughes there's a mining camp there and I spent about four or five years there.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee 12: That's where I started \$1.90 an hour. And when I ended up I was doing about \$12 an hour.

Interviewer: Oh much better.

Interviewee 12: I knew how to operate the stuff too. I practiced. When our operator would take a break. Big levers.



Interviewer: That's great. Wow. So you're self-taught.

Interviewee 12: Yeah. When you get on, _____ [0:14:12] you have to sit there two hours and watch them go back. You just jam it and you can take it down, throw some of the big parts away and wrote it off or something. And eight hours though.

Interviewer: You've got to keep yourself awake.

Interviewee 12: Noisy. And just go right by and back.

Interviewer: That sounds like hard work.

Interviewee 12: No it was easy work.

Interviewer: Yeah but you got to stay away.

Interviewee 12: No work at all. Just sit there and watch the rocks go by for eight hours.

Interviewer: Yeah. And you also were in the firefighting team.

Interviewee 12: Yeah we'd go firefighting.

Interviewer: Oh those are the recorders, the little ones, yeah.

Interviewee 12: It was interesting, it was fun because I had never worked before. I had worked here for quite a while, \$40 a week or something like that.

Interviewer: So how does it feel to be viewed as aging successfully? How does it feel to be viewed as aging successfully?

Interviewee 11: That's a good question. Go from day to day I guess. Yeah. We cannot plan for the future because we don't know what's coming. So people ask are you going to go there this month or something, I said only time will tell. I don't know what's coming. We both have a lot of appointments and he's going to see the cardiologist every week now.

Interviewer: Wow every week.

Interviewee 11: After this yeah.

Interviewee 12: I got a pacemaker. It works good though.

Interviewer: Good.



Interviewee 12: My heart was really off beat, but this pacemaker is really good. And any time it starts to miss a beat, it jumps in, it kicks in and you don't even feel it.

Interviewer: That's what it's supposed to do, good.

Interviewee 12: Yeah doctor said that, amazing what they can do.

Interviewer: That is amazing.

Interviewee 11: We did a lot of things with our kids when we were living here. We'd move out and up and _____ [0:17:33] they did their schoolwork when they're done with their chores, they all sit there and do the homework. They did good. The teachers checked their schoolwork and they did good.

Interviewer: Oh nice. So you were still able to get out and go to camp and come back.

Interviewee 11: First when we used to go out for one night, we used to have this tent, but now we built a cabin there. So we have a cabin.

Interviewee 12: We have 36 acres I own out there.

Interviewer: Wow 36 acres. Wow.

Interviewee 11: The water is high but we can't go on boat, _____ [0:18:31].

Interviewer: Me too.

Interviewee 12: Learned how to swim.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 11: We have a boat out there that's been sitting there for two years. Never even put it in the water because we can't drive it.

Interviewer: Yeah. So when did it come to your attention that you are an elder? When did it come to your attention that you are an elder?

Interviewee 11: Oh, when we can't do nothing no more, after the COVID.

Interviewee 12: Probably was 70.

Interviewer: Yeah for you maybe 70.



Interviewee 12: And I'm 84 now.

Interviewer: When was the first time you realized that you were an elder?

Interviewee 12: My youngest said you're 50 years old.

Interviewee 11: Grandkids start saying Grandma.

Interviewee 12: Then we know.

Interviewee 11: They're all grown up now.

Interviewer: Yeah. Hearing that, somebody calling you Grandma made you feel like an elder.

Interviewee 11: I used to, there used to be a lot of aunties, auntie and aunt, pretty soon grandkids are calling hey auntie.

Interviewer: And you're like.

Interviewee 11: And I became Grandma now.

Interviewer: And you said around 50 you started to realize you were an elder.

Interviewee 12: Yeah.

Interviewer: What made you realize that?

Interviewee 12: Oh most of the time we had to live off the country. We have to go cut wood, cut our own wood, use dogs, there was no snow boat in. So we used dogs to haul wood.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 12: Everybody in town, everybody every day people going back and forth. Good size logs.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 12: And we used a saw to cut it. We didn't have no chainsaw, _____ [0:20:55]. Me and my brother, we used to argue, oh you're just holding back, you don't even pay attention with your cutting. We argued.



Interviewer: Nice. So did you realize you were an elder when some of those things became harder?

Interviewee 12: No I think it was hard to start with.

Interviewer: It was always hard, yeah.

Interviewee 12: There was no chainsaw, just a regular saw, takes a long time to cut one block off. Just a plain old sweet saw they called it. It's one they called a two man saw. Me and [Name] always, you hold back, you're not taking it at all.

Interviewer: So, what do you think successful aging means?

Interviewee 11: Successful, I don't know about that. I have a lot of aches and pains all the time from the treatment, the chemo. So I'm also having pain in my chest and my feet mostly when I'm trying to sleep. It hurts so bad just like you know how it feels when our skin burns, that's how it feels.

Interviewer: Ooh, ouch.

Interviewee 11: And my fingertips, but I'm learning to live with it. They tried all kind of pain meds and everything, I said nothing will help. But I'm doing okay.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 11: Hard to get around, if we walk a little we get out of breath. So we can't walk very far. _____ [0:23:11] broke too and mine did, mine is flat.

Interviewee 12: Back to walking again.

Interviewee 11: Even though I don't do the beads and needle, I just look at them, that's how I, I did bead work and making stuff.

Interviewer: Oh wow, beautiful. Well it's a really big thing to overcome cancer, that's amazing you did that.

Interviewee 11: Yeah it was a tough battle. I thought I would go anytime. All the people that were having cancer same time I did, they're all gone.

Interviewer: Sorry, yeah.

Interviewee 11: But I survived somehow.



Interviewee 12: We just avoid it longer. It's hard.

Interviewer: That is hard.

Interviewee 11: We both are cancer survivors.

Interviewer: Yeah that's a big thing.

Interviewee 11: Yeah it's with so many people right now too. Cancer.

Interviewer: And what about you, what do you think successful aging means?

Interviewee 12: What?

Interviewer: Successful aging, or aging in a good way. What do you think that means to age in a good way?

Interviewee 12: Well, it takes a long time to get used to that woman there. I got it made now. We had fun together all our life.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 12: Only a few of us stayed together like this. Most of them were split apart or wander off.

Interviewee 11: Once our sister and her husband brought us down to the states with a motorhome.

Interviewer: Oh fun.

Interviewee 11: All the way to Biloxi, Mississippi. It was really different from what I imagined all those years going to school and studying about the states and stuff. I thought they would have a lot of trees like us but some places nothing.

Interviewer: No trees yeah.

Interviewee 12: And Canada, no trees.

Interviewee 11: We went to Canada, that was fun, we just camped any place with that motorhome.

Interviewer: That sounds amazing.



- Interviewee 12: Yeah it was a nice trip, really enjoyed it, then we went down to Vegas.
- Interviewer: Oh Vegas. What's the secret to 63 years of marriage, how do you do it?
- Interviewee 11: We worked hard to raise our kids later on, going to school, sent them off to college. All of our kids went to school out of state because if they go to school in Fairbanks, their friends will be around there interfering with them. [Name] went to Oklahoma, [Name] went to Phoenix, [Name] went to Hawaii once and then, I forgot where she went next. When they started studying for nursing, went to Anchorage.
- Interviewer: Oh nice.
- Interviewee 11: By that time they had kids. So that's when I had to work up north and I just stopped there for one night and _____ [0:27:14].
- Interviewer: Yeah. What about you? What do you think the key is to 63 years of marriage?
- Interviewee 12: How long? 60 what?
- Interviewer: How many years have you been married you said?
- Interviewee 11: 63.
- Interviewer: 63. How do you do it?
- Interviewee 12: I don't know. So many bugged up things that I don't know even want to talk about.
- Interviewee 11: He worked at the mining camp all summer, I had to take care of all the dogs and the kids, I had to work. No four wheeler, no truck then. I used wheelbarrows to haul the fish from up the bank all the way back, our bank was way out there, and hanged them at the smokehouse around the house. Dried them for all the dogs for the winter.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Interviewee 11: A lot of hard work, I can barely walk now.
- Interviewer: So, how did you learn about aging well? Like from whom did you learn to age well?
- Interviewee 11: What was that question?



Interviewer: Yeah. How did you learn about aging well? Like who taught you how to age well?

Interviewee 11: You mean to live this long?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 12: Indian life.

Interviewer: Indian life. Was there a person.

Interviewee 12: All we had to do was learn, do this, cut wood, make a living the hard way. We learned that as we go along. Most of the things we learn as we go along.

Interviewee 11: When our kids were small, we used to take them down the road, we had an old truck, fill up the back and have a picnic down there and take our kids out. We did a lot of that.

Interviewer: Yeah. How does aging affect your day to day life? Do you have any examples?

Interviewee 11: You mean like right now?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 11: We feel like we're just handicapped, can't do nothing, can't barely feed that one pup out there. Have to use a cane to walk to feed it. So, I thought we had tough days working hard raising our kids but this is even tougher yet.

Interviewer: Yeah I'm sorry yeah.

Interviewee 11: I hate to go to a home, I tell my girls I'm ready to go to a home. Mom you can't because Grandpa would be staying with us if you do that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee 11: So, most of our grandkids are out at Fairbanks. We'll go up there for a week sometimes to stay with them and get to visit with them.

Interviewee 12: Our daughter, that's the one that just lost the boy, _____ [0:30:56]



Interviewee 11: She's going to go to work at one of the mining camps. She worked a bar last two years but this year she says she wants to be close so she'll be working upriver.

Interviewer: Yeah. How does aging affect your day to day life?

Interviewee 12: What did you say again?

Interviewer: How does aging affect your day to day life?

Interviewee 12: Oh how we work?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 12: We kind of automatically learn what we're supposed to do. Simple things around here, simple things out there, what you got to do every day, be ready to do the stove and put the food by the stove before night, by morning it's all gone, everybody is cold. That's all we do is just keep the place going. We can't have much more.

Interviewer: You do good.

Interviewee 11: We used to travel to different villages with snow machines, we can't even get out of town right now without snow machines. If it goes and snows, we can't pull it back up.

Interviewer: Do you want me to grab that for you?

Interviewee 11: Thank you. Hello.

Interviewee 12: Oh yeah. Yep. Hey. No we're telling stories to a couple ladies.

Interviewer: Do you need your inhaler now? No? Okay. Okay if you need me to go fetch it I can.

Interviewee 11: Once a day I use it.

Interviewer: Okay once a day.

Interviewee 11: I never did smoke cigarettes in my life, I don't know how I'm having chest problems. It's just I had the shingles.

Interviewer: Oh it's the worst. So sorry.



Interviewee 11: That was after I had cancer.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Interviewee 11: 2010 and 2011 I had cancer. Like 2014 or '15 I had the shingles. Man it was so irritating. _____ [0:34:00] any more than it is now. He said oh no you can't drive it, I told him so, I drove all the way.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee 11: It was two days, next two days that was sore, so much pain already.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness, you didn't let it stop you.

Interviewee 11: No, I said I'm just going. So.

Interviewer: Alright. So how has getting older affected your relationships with your family, your friends, your community?

Interviewee 11: We managed, he has his own room, I have my own room, after I had cancer.

Interviewee 12: This corner, as far as I can stay. That don't sound too good.

Interviewee 11: [Name] is doing good, she washes our bedding all the time, she cleans our room. Hard for me to make the bed even now.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 12: Yeah we got _____ [0:35:35] very hard.

Interviewer: I'm so sorry that's really hard.

Interviewee 11: I was sad that we had we lost him, make sure we had a washer and dryer. So we don't have to go out and hang clothes. Every day I hang towels out there they're still hanging.

Interviewer: It was pretty bad weather though, so maybe today they're going to be good.

Interviewer: It sounds like he took good care to make sure you had the things you needed.



Interviewee 11: He fixed our lights, the only thing he told me was Mom if you buy a fan, I'll put it up for you.

Interviewer: Put it right there.

Interviewee 11: Put that new stovetop down and fan went out on that one he said if you buy a new one, I'll put it in. I should have, I don't know what I wanted for. Now if I buy it, who comes to put it in.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah maybe when your nephew comes.

Interviewee 11: Yeah my grandson.

Interviewer: Oh your grandson. How have your relationships affected your understanding of aging?

Interviewee 11: We manage to be happy together.

Interviewee 12: Took us 84 years to get used to each other. We don't even argue anymore.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewer: Even that passed.

Interviewee 12: By now when you get old.

Interviewer: What supports you in aging in a good way? What supports you in aging in a good way?

Interviewer: What helps you?

Interviewer: Yeah what helps you to age well?

Interviewee 11: Oh, our grandkids I guess. And people who visit us. Talk to us, the way they talk to us. They're always on Facebook with me. What they're like and all that.

Interviewer: Yeah. What supports you in aging well? What helps you to age well?

Interviewee 12: This and that.

Interviewee 11: The phone calls you get from friends. There's hardly any elders here no more. They're all gone. And there's a couple in the center, the only ones that are our age now. But the oldest of the ones here.



- Interviewee 12: Even older than me.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Interviewee 12: Just by a few days.
- Interviewer: Barely. Why do you think some elders age well and some do not?
- Interviewee 11: I don't know, that's a good question. Maybe it's the way they treat themselves, I don't know. But man I sure miss those ladies that had cancer the same time I did. I couldn't even make it to the funeral when it was one from Minto, every time I go down to there, we all had an appointment the same time for the treatment. And after, I was so sick, having funerals for them I couldn't even go there.
- Interviewer: I'm sorry, yeah.
- Interviewee 11: The one was really silly, she talked our language too. We both go to heaven now we'll be together. Have a good time together, yeah I hope so. We'll see each other there. I was hooked up to all kind of machines for three weeks and _____ [0:40:12], three weeks all hooked up to all kind of machines. They took one third of my colon out.
- Interviewer: Wow.
- Interviewee 11: So I think about them once, one of these days I'll be there to see them.
- Interviewer: Yeah. What about you, why do you think some elders age well and some do not?
- Interviewee 12: Say it again?
- Interviewer: Yeah. Why do you think some elders age well and some do not?
- Interviewee 12: Most elders my age, they're just barely getting around. And we're doing fine for how old we are, we both help each other through this and that.
- Interviewee 11: Cancer is the one that's taken most of them.
- Interviewer: Yeah. How can you tell that an elder is aging well?
- Interviewee 11: I don't know, some of them are running around.



- Interviewee 12: Those are the _____ [0:41:35] people.
- Interviewee 11: No cancer.
- Interviewer: No cancer.
- Interviewee 11: They're in their 90s but I don't think we'll go that far because we've battled cancer.
- Interviewee 12: We worked too hard in our days and kind of tough life. We didn't have no money. Until I went to work for the mining company up here and we were good for a while. I had a whole pile of dogs, I used to be a dog musher.
- Interviewer: Oh my goodness yeah.
- Interviewee 12: She got tired of taking care of them while I'm out. We decided that's not working out anyway.
- Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah that's a lot. How can you tell that an elder is aging poorly?
- Interviewee 11: They're in bed or bedridden at an early age, don't really take care of themselves, no one to cook for them, that's one thing. Because the one is still _____ [0:42:48] had cancer together. They were on their way home from Anchorage and they buy beer and stuff to drink and they just party. My kids were so strict with me, Mom you cannot drink, battling cancer. So I let it go. I never touched nothing the whole time. Nine months I was in treatment, so much in pain and they're all gone.
- Interviewer: Yeah. What do you think, how can you tell if an elder is aging poorly?
- Interviewee 12: Oh, just a lot of elders that are having a harder time than I am. Just like [Name], he's the same age as me, he's here in town. And he's having a hard time getting around. I could see it. He's worse than me because he's a bigger man, heavier. Probably why. He worked hard all his life too.
- Interviewer: Yeah. What does a person need to do to age in a good way?
- Interviewee 11: Got to eat a good meal and rest. Sometimes I get out and try to do too much stuff. I just ache for two days. I can sew but I had cataract surgery and I can see good. I started using reading glasses now to sew because I can see.
- Interviewer: Yeah.



- Interviewee 11: And I like to sew.
- Interviewer: Yeah. What do you think a person needs to do to age well?
- Interviewee 12: Work hard. Do a lot of walking, stuff like that. You don't want to lose that. I always wonder why my dad used to walk all the way from that house down there back to spring camp every day almost.
- Interviewer: Wow.
- Interviewee 12: That's a mile and a quarter back there. And he was old, he said it's the only way I can live a little longer, see more things instead of just sitting down in chairs and once you sit down, that's it. You're not going no place after that. So I always think about him and I better walk, I got a four wheeler that broke down and I'm glad it's broke down. I have to walk.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Interviewer: So you hear him every day, go walk.
- Interviewee 12: Otherwise I just start the motor, push the button or something.
- Interviewer: Yeah. What does it, oh I'm so sorry go ahead.
- Interviewee 12: Yeah when you work while you're young, and as you get older, you'll still be kind of young because you're working, you're moving around, that's the main thing in a person's life that you got to keep going because if you stop, you stop and that's it, you're not getting up no more and I can see my dad trying to tell me when he was getting older.
- Interviewer: Yeah. What does it mean to be an elder? What is an elder's role?
- Interviewee 11: What I've been doing is telling grandkids stories and I went to school a couple times telling the higher graders to go to higher education. Leave the village, don't just stay home after school. Because a lot of them, they're just not studying nothing. So, what our kids, we just sent them, I remember our two boys, they graduated from high school. I told them just keep going to school and sign up for that Alaska Pacific University so I did. They said oh no we don't want to go to school yet again. I ordered the first _____ [0:47:46] I ordered pack sack, snowshoes, down jacket, down ski pants, I made boots for them, and he hauled them out our camp.
- Interviewer: There you go.



- Interviewee 11: They had snowshoes so we were home two weeks and Mom we decided we want to go to school. So they went to school at Alaska Pacific University. Girls were going to UAA. They lived in the same area.
- Interviewer: Wow. So you taught them.
- Interviewee 11: But not the kids nowadays, their kids don't worry about them, they don't send them away. I sent my kids down to Oklahoma and that was [Name]. She went to school down there. And [Name] was going to go to Fairbanks. She had a lot of interference, a lot of her friends are there, no place to stay for them. They just go to her room and she had no time to study. So, I sent her down to Hawaii.
- Interviewer: Oh wow.
- Interviewee 11: So that's where she went to school. My youngest daughter went to Phoenix for her college. And we had to send her far away, even they cried to us, no you're not coming home. There's nothing for you to do here. Which is true. And then afterwards, they graduated from nursing school and they go Mom, you were a good mother. We're so happy you forced us to go to school. A lot of parents don't do that, I don't know what they think. So I go back to school to talk with kids. We need electricians, we need plumbers, we need everything here in town. You guys could run the whole town and they all looked at me. Hope they decide to go.
- Interviewer: Yeah me too. What does it mean to be an elder and what is an elder's role?
- Interviewee 12: Well, an elder, it's a lot of work like my dad, it was different, he had no snow machine in those days. And I know he did way more work than I'm doing right now. I got it easy really.
- Interviewer: How do you know if someone is regarded as an elder or not?
- Interviewee 11: What?
- Interviewer: How do you know if someone is regarded as an elder or not?
- Interviewee 11: When you can barely walk.
- Interviewee 12: You can say that for sure.
- Interviewer: So you can tell that someone is an elder when they're struggling a little bit to walk. Yeah.



Interviewee 11: When my boys first went to high school in Tanana, I told them there's a lot of elders out there. When you see them buying stuff in store and look like they need help, ask them if they want you to carry the groceries home to their house. So they did that, a lot of the elders used to tell me man, you had good boys who would help us bring our groceries home to our house. So I tried to teach them that. Some people don't I guess because young kids pass us struggling with things. They don't teach their kids.

Interviewer: Yeah. How can you tell if someone is an elder or not?

Interviewee 12: Well, you can tell the way they walk and stuff like that. Because some of them are crippled and that part comes back to them because they're getting older. Then they start limping. That's just the way it goes. Not enough exercise.

Interviewer: Sure. Is there anything that happens to mark that transition from not being an elder to becoming an elder?

Interviewee 12: Oh there's a lot of different ways. How you treat yourself and stuff like that. Got a party going, I'll join the party. I'm an elder.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 12: We don't avoid it, just join right in with them.

Interviewer: How do you think you can mark that transition from not being an elder to becoming an elder? Is there something that happens to become an elder?

Interviewee 11: There's a lot of things we can't do no more. Yeah. Even forgetting stuff. I always sew in the room and then I come out, I want to sew right there and I'm sewing, pretty soon I remember something in the room, so I go to the room and I forget. So I come back and I tell him, I thought of something that I needed and so I walked back and can't remember. He said sit down and think again.

Interviewee 12: Start over again.

Interviewer: Does it work?

Interviewee 11: I'll sit there a long time and I'll find it.

Interviewer: Did you have something you were going to say?



- Interviewer: Oh yeah you said earlier that when your grandchildren called you Grandma, that's when you thought like oh I guess I am an elder now. Is that sometimes when you have grandchildren or is it sometimes also when, at 65 you get store discounts and you sign up for services. Is that when you're considered an elder? Is it all of those together?
- Interviewee 11: We're having a hard time to get on a plane now. I have to go in the place, when they say I have an appointment, I have to go to the clinic and talk with doctors on the TV.
- Interviewer: Oh nice.
- Interviewee 11: Him, he's going almost all the time.
- Interviewer: To Fairbanks?
- Interviewee 11: For his heart, yeah. He's going to go on the eighth. One of our sons that lives up there always takes care of his dad up there.
- Interviewer: That's a long way.
- Interviewer: Yeah. Do you think elders in your community are aging in a good way? And how has this changed compared to 20 years ago?
- Interviewee 11: It was when we had elders cook, now we don't have elders cook. That's who we need right now.
- Interviewer: Yeah. What about you? Do you think elders in your community are aging in a good way?
- Interviewee 12: Yeah.
- Interviewer: Yeah?
- Interviewee 12: Yeah people from around here help us if they see or hear we need work. If we're working and we need help, like if I'm working on my four wheeler, they'll come help you work on it. Free, don't have to pay them.
- Interviewer: Good.
- Interviewee 11: He washes dishes while I cook.
- Interviewer: You work together.



- Interviewee 11: We have to. It's hard for only one person to do things anymore.
- Interviewer: Yeah. Why do you think some elders move away from here?
- Interviewee 12: Most of them don't move away, they just have a hard time to make it, hard time getting around. Then they have to move to an elder home. Yeah there's one in Galena and one in Fairbanks.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Interviewee 11: We're not going to an elder's home, you guys come and stay with us.
- Interviewer: That's nice. How do you feel about that?
- Interviewee 11: Okay.
- Interviewer: Good.
- Interviewee 11: We'd be glad to live with our kids.
- Interviewee 12: Yeah.
- Interviewer: Good. So, it's [Name] birthday. Nice. So, speaking of, oh I'll let you finish. Might take a little bit. So, speaking of maybe moving to live with your kids, how do you think aging is different in rural and in urban settings?
- Interviewee 11: My cousin from Hughes that had to move to town because no one to take care of her, she's staying with this person, her relatives and they move another place, we have to see her but then we heard that she's really homesick but there's no one to take care of her in Hughes. All of her kids, her girls mostly passed away with cancer. So she had no one to take care of her.
- Interviewer: How do you think it's different in Hughes versus in Fairbanks?
- Interviewee 11: In Fairbanks, she's staying in a home while the people work. But in Hughes, people, she would sit outside or something, people would gather and visit her, she don't see nobody so it'd kind of different. That's probably how it would be for us because our kids work and grandkids going to school.
- Interviewer: Yeah. How do you think it's different aging in a rural place like Huslia versus an urban place like Fairbanks maybe?



- Interviewee 12: Say that again.
- Interviewer: How do you think aging is different in rural and in urban settings?
- Interviewee 12: You know when you get old, the older people we'll see how they're making, they're having a harder time, they quit visiting and they can't walk that far. So when you get old, you have all kind of different problems because, that's just because you're getting older. Kind of hard.
- Interviewer: Yeah. I have about five more questions. Do you need water, anything I grab for you?
- Interviewee 11: No, I have some.
- Interviewer: Oh you've got some right there. Alright do you need anything?
- Interviewee 12: No I'm fine.
- Interviewer: Alright just want to make sure. Do you have any advice for people in your community who want to age successfully? That's so great. Turn it down? Okay. Is it this one? Okay. Do you have any advice for people in your community who want to age successfully?
- Interviewee 11: The ones that are not sick will age a long time but like us, who are battling cancer, we're not going to last too long. So if they stay healthy, take care of themselves, they'll last a long time.
- Interviewer: What about you? Do you have any advice for people in your community who want to age in a good way?
- Interviewee 12: You just got to keep going, keep working, don't just think about your bed too much. Get up and go do something. That's the only way you can do it to keep working. Then you'll be used to it and you know what you can do and you can still go out there and get wood and stuff like that.
- Interviewer: So do what you can.
- Interviewee 12: Yeah.
- Interviewer: Okay. How do you feel about sharing your knowledge with the next generation? What are the benefits and challenges?



Interviewee 11: I go back to the school and talk with them telling them to get a higher education. We need a lot of people here that can do stuff like fixing my poor old tire out there. If there were some one here that can just fix it, I've got to have someone take it off and have to bring it to town to get new tires.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Interviewee 12: I could fix it but she wouldn't let me touch it. That's it right there.

Interviewer: What do you think the benefits are of sharing with younger generations?

Interviewee 11: That's a good question. Like I said, they don't send them to school for their schooling, they need a lot of people here. They have to hire outsiders for stuff that costs a lot of money.

Interviewer: Yeah. What are the challenges of sharing your knowledge with the next generation?

Interviewee 11: They have a lot of chances to go to school really. There's money for them to go for their schools. They didn't have that when my kids were going to nursing school. And they write essays, that's why they get so much a month too. So, things worked out for them even though it wasn't hard work physically but mentally, they have to really think a lot and a lot of times they would call, Mom we're in a bind and we need to do this and and I'd have to figure out what to do for them.

Interviewer: Oh yeah. How do you feel about sharing your knowledge with the next generation?

Interviewee 12: Well, life is not getting any harder, we're getting _____ [1:05:33] and that helps us keep going.

Interviewer: Yeah. And why do you share your experiences with youth?

Interviewee 12: Pardon?

Interviewer: Why do you share your experiences with youth?

Interviewee 12: I don't know. Wrong answer for that.

Interviewer: Why do you share your experiences with youth? With the younger generation?



Interviewee 11: We try to help them out for the future. If they don't learn nothing, what are they going to do? Trapping is not good anymore, can't make a living like that the way we used to.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 11: We did everything together. We used to go 50 miles out to track.

Interviewer: Yeah. What is the most important thing you want to share with the youth? With the children.

Interviewee 12: Most important thing?

Interviewee 11: They can't depend on nobody, do things themselves.

Interviewer: Yeah. Is there anything else about aging or being an elder that I didn't ask about that you want to tell me or you want to tell us?

Interviewee 11: Seems like you asked everything.

Interviewer: There was a lot of things.

Interviewee 12: We don't ask for too much.

Interviewer: I so appreciate you taking time. You have so much great knowledge and experiences and you're taking good care of each other.

Interviewee 11: And teaching my girls how to make _____ [1:07:58] boots.

Interviewer: Oh neat.

Interviewee 11: I went to Fairbanks last winter and stayed up there two weeks and taught them every day after work they'd come. And some of their friends too. My oldest daughter just wanted to make some boots so I cut out casts and so she's working on putting the bottoms on.

Interviewer: Oh wow, awesome. What made you decide to teach them that?

Interviewee 11: They had to learn, nobody knew how.

Interviewee 12: Nobody would teach them.

Interviewer: Yeah.



- Interviewee 12: If you got a chance to teach them while we're still there.
- Interviewee 11: I brought all my beads up to my granddaughter. I go up there and stay with them during the summer and teach them all how to do beadwork. Because it's stuff I learned. I want to leave them to know a lot of things that I didn't know nothing when I got married. I didn't even know how to cook.
- Interviewer: Wow.
- Interviewee 11: Our grandma, neighbor, [Name] was the one who taught me how to tan skins, sew.
- Interviewer: [Name]?
- Interviewee 12: Yeah she used to live right down here. She's gone now.
- Interviewee 11: She was our neighbor and she'd talk our language so when she could, she would always come in. I would tell her in our language and I write letters for her. In return, she taught me how to hang skins, make hats, all of that. Just like we traded. I was writing letters for her. One time she was down in Anchorage, _____ [1:09:52] racing for two weeks, she stayed down there, two months. She came home and [Business Name] wrote to her, the electricity people and told her we're going to cut your line off because you don't pay for two months. I told her in our language, said long arms they're going to have to cut my line down.
- Interviewer: Do you think you learned how to be an elder from her?
- Interviewee 11: Yeah.
- Interviewer: Yeah. Neat.
- Interviewee 11: I stuck to her, when she had questions she'd come back. This person told me this and I don't know why, so I tell her why. Explain a lot of stuff to her. She tanned moose skins till she was old. She died of cancer too.
- Interviewer: Oh I'm sorry. Who taught you? Was there an elder who taught you like that?
- Interviewee 12: Yeah my dad.
- Interviewer: Your dad? Oh he sounds neat.



- Interviewee 12: He was with me all while I was, he taught me a lot of things. He made a dog musher out of me.
- Interviewer: He did, a really good one.
- Interviewee 12: I went to Nome four times, Anchorage and Nome.
- Interviewer: Yeah that's a long one. Wow. Yeah. Did you have a chance to teach it to your boys and your grandchildren?
- Interviewee 12: I take them out, I took my boys out but they're not interested. Too much work for them. Get up and cook every day, middle of the evening.
- Interviewee 11: The grandson that's coming home today, he graduated from high school, I told him we raised him, and I told him you got schooling, you cannot just sit here at home, look at all the friends here in town, all they do is smoke dope and not doing nothing. So I want you to leave again. He said okay, so he went to, down there, Anchorage. So we sent him there. I didn't tell him what he's going to be or nothing, I just told him learn to be anything. He learned carpentry.
- Interviewer: Wow.
- Interviewee 11: That's the only time I worried about him was he had to go out to Pittsburgh for one year to continue his education.
- Interviewer: Wow, yeah that's far.
- Interviewee 11: So now he's home. He worked in Hughes, but he worked mainly Hot Spring for a couple years after he came back. Some people that were doing construction, he worked with. Then he went to Hughes, he lived there for two or three years working up there building houses and stuff. And then they hired people to make those pads on the pipeline, that's what he is now. So, we have one carpenter.
- Interviewer: Yeah. You got him started.
- Interviewee 11: Yeah. Our oldest son went to school for high tech. He was one of them that put fiber optic wiring from down near Anchorage all the way up to Proto.
- Interviewer: Oh wow.



Interviewee 11: So he's out there right now, he's at a meeting right now but he's putting up those satellite dish in the schools right now so he's traveling to different villages. They hardly stay home. He lives next door.

Interviewer: Okay cool.

Interviewee 11: Yeah. He has a girlfriend and they have kids. Our grandson next door, he graduated from high school, he's taking classes online. Right now he's helping build a log cabin up the road.

Interviewer: Oh nice.

Interviewee 11: So, I talk to him all the time telling him not to just stay home, got to go away and learn some kind of trade.

Interviewer: Yeah. You did such a great job with them.

Interviewee 11: I did that with all my kids.

Interviewer: That's great. Well thank you so much for chatting with us. I loved chatting with you.

Interviewee 11: We're happy to have visitors.

