

*Interviewer:* What is your date of birth?

*Interviewee:* 06/04/48.

*Interviewer:* And where were you born?

*Interviewee:* Here in Koyuk, or a little out of town, I think.

*Interviewer:* Okay.

*Interviewee:* Down the coast. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* And you grew up here in Koyuk?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, 'til I went to high school. I went to Wrangell Institute in Wrangell, and then to Mount Edgecumbe for three years. Then I went to Lawrence, Kansas for a couple years for nursing school.

*Interviewer:* Okay, great.

*Interviewee:* Then I went back to work at Mount Edgecumbe Hospital for about six years, then tried going to school in Anchorage, and then moved to Nome, worked at the hospital there, then came back here.

*Interviewer:* Okay. So you've lived here off and on for your whole life, then?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Okay. I won't ask you, you probably don't know how many years you've lived here, just—

*Interviewee:* Um, since the 1980s.

*Interviewer:* Okay. Over 40 years—great, yeah. You've had some good experiences all over the place.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* And what is your first language?

*Interviewee:* English.

*Interviewer:* Okay. And are you married, single?

*Interviewee:* Divorced.

*Interviewer:* And you—what's the highest grade of school you've completed?

*Interviewee:* Let me see. I completed 12th grade high school, and then I went to two years of junior college.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. And how many people, including you, live in your home?

*Interviewee:* Right now there is three.

*Interviewer:* Okay. And you want to live the rest of your years in Koyuk, or are you gonna plan to move again?

*Interviewee:* No, I plan to live here, I guess. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* *[Laughter]* It's a good place.

*Interviewer:* So, our first question for you—other than all those *[Laughter]*—is, how did you become an elder? What did you do to get here?

*Interviewee:* Okay. *[Laughter]* Let me see. I know the first few years, you know, went by fast. I was trying to get an education, working, and it seemed like, from 40 years to 50 years, that time—I mean, it changed, it was changing in my life. Because I was—my health started to change, health-wise.

*Interviewer:* Yeah.

*Interviewee:* And right now in my 60s, I'm kinda in, at, around my age 50s, I used to wonder if I'm becoming an elder, you know? *[Laughter]* Now I know I'm an elder, yeah. So, when people say elder, I know it includes me. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. So is there something that marks that transition to elderhood, or?

*Interviewee:* Um—*[Laughter]*. Just...getting older in years, I think, yeah. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. So just—just simply aging gets you to there?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, mm-hmm.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. How does it—so we've asked for nominations of elders who are aging well here, and you were nominated. So what does it feel like to be considered an elder in your community?

*Interviewee:* I know in the past there were a lot of elders, you know, when I was growing up, when I was young. But then, and then there were more, a little bit—I mean, less, and now it seems like there's fewer elders right now.

*Interviewer:* So it doesn't seem like there's very many?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* As many as there used to be when you were young?

*Interviewee:* There were more.

*Interviewer:* There was more elders when you were younger?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, uh huh. So, I know there is an older guy that's older than me. *[Laughter]* And then you've got **Ady**, I know she's older. There's a few older than me, but I think people always say I'm a younger elder. *[Laughter]* One of the younger elders.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Is there anything besides age that makes someone an elder?

*Interviewee:* Hmm. *[Laughter]* Not that I can think of or, you know, just getting there, up in years or aging.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. What do you think it means to age well?

*Interviewee:* I think you have—I know, in my younger years, I didn't think of watching my weight. In my 30s, I gained too much weight, and it was hard to get off. *[Laughter]* So, ever since then, I tried keeping my weight down, but it's hard to get off. And then I started getting health problems.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* What was the question? *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* What does it mean to age well?

*Interviewee:* Oh, age well?

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* Take care of your health—my health, and maybe take care of your family well, and just be out and about.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* Socializing. *[Laughter]* Be in the community activities, and we love to all go do whatever is going on in the season, like **polling** in the summertime or the way we get around is—what's that? *[Laughter]* Snow machining, or travel by snow machine. Before there was a dog mushing here in Koyuk.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* But the ones that have snow machines or sleds to get around with, then it's fun to go out in the country snow machining or—and what else? *[Laughter]* About aging? Just take care of yourself, I guess—your body, and—

*Interviewer:* And your family, it sounds like.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* And your community.

*Interviewee:* Uh huh. Physical, mental, and emotional well-being, I guess.  
[Laughter]

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. How did you learn about aging well?

*Interviewee:* I just know—you mean that poster note?

*Interviewer:* No, just in your life, how do you know what to do to age well?

*Interviewee:* Just maybe by reading or um—I don't really pay much attention.  
[Laughter] Just by reading, I guess, and my, when I was studying for nursing.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Was there anyone that taught you, or that you **know**?

*Interviewee:* Just by observing the other elders or my parents.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* My dad lived 'til he was in his 70s, and my mom, she was 86 when she died, so.

*Interviewer:* Wow.

*Interviewee:* Both of them didn't smoke or drink or anything. And they were both religious.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* And they took care of their health. And the other elders, when I was growing up took care of their health. [Cross talk]

*Interviewer:* Sorry. [Laughter]

*Interviewee:* [Laughter]

*Interviewer:* They're a little distracting.

*Interviewer:* So it sounds like they were good role models for you.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, so role model would be it.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. [Cross talk] [Laughter] They're busy. So what's your day to day life like right now? What do you do every day?

*Interviewee:* I have my own home [*Cross talk*]. I recently retired three years ago from being a health aide. So, I mostly stay—stay at home. [*Laughter*] But when there's something going on, I do go out and participate. Most, along with everybody that does—does participate in activities or go to church or school activities and things like that.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. And who is it that lives with you?

*Interviewee:* My son, he's in his 40s, and my grandson.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. So sometimes they keep you busy, probably, too, huh?

*Interviewee:* Not that much. [*Laughter*]

*Interviewer:* No?

*Interviewee:* They help me a lot.

*Interviewer:* Do they?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. Yep.

*Interviewer:* How do you think aging has changed your relationships? Or do you think it has?

*Interviewee:* Let me see. I notice, you know, the younger generation notice that I'm an elder. I mean, you know, some in a good way or some in a [*Laughter*]—

*Interviewer:* Not as good way? [*Laughter*]

*Interviewee:* Yeah, yeah. [*Laughter*] Like, maybe, “Oh, she's old, or an elder” or whatever. [*Laughter*]

*Interviewer:* So sometimes that comes with, you can feel more respect and sometimes—

*Interviewee:* Yeah, yeah. [*Laughter*]

*Interviewer:* - not so much?

*Interviewee:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Has it changed your relationships with your family?

*Interviewee:* Just in the past 10 years, the more I'm getting old and [*Cross talk*] not as active as I could be, and they respect that.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* And I'm getting to know that more, too, that I'm **not that**. *[Laughter]*  
I can feel it.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. You have to be a little more careful?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, mm-hmm. Because about 10 years ago, I used to be able to drive a snow machine, like, an hour and a half, to go ice fishing way back there, or up the river or across there, but now I'm not as brave as I could be. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* And they know I'm aging, my son and grandson. We don't really—or I don't, I don't think about leaving them. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Yeah. And so they help and support you while you're here?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Was there anything else that helps you age well here in Koyuk?

*Interviewee:* Um, I know for—now I'm getting more, I mean, I'm getting checkups. I know I'm going to Anchorage next week for tests and all that.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* I wanna take better care of my health and stay on top of it.  
*[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Yeah. So you're doing a little more medical stuff to try to keep yourself healthy?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, mm-hmm.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Why do you think some elders age well and some don't?

*Interviewee:* Hmm. I guess maybe the ones that don't start using alcohol or smoking.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* At middle age or younger age, and that affected their health.

*Interviewer:* Health, mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* How can you tell when an elder isn't aging well?

*Interviewee:* Hmm, just by their health, really. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Their health? *[Laughter]* How can you tell that an elder is—that is aging well? Are there some signs or things they do that—

*Interviewee:* Yeah. To me, they're more active and—I can tell they're taking care of their health or eating better or just doing that, I guess. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm, so you can see that their—you can see that their physical health is good, but then they're staying more active, too?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Let's see. Sorry, some of these are repetitive or you've already answered them, so I'm trying not to ask you again. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewee:* *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Do you think that, in general, that elders in your community are aging well?

*Interviewee:* Here in Koyuk?

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* Hi! *[Cross talk]* Hmm. Let me see. Some and some aren't. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. So kind of mixed?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Do you think that's changed compared to, like, 20 years ago?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Yeah?

*Interviewee:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewer:* How so?

*Interviewee:* Because of use of alcohol.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* Smoking. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Yeah. That, too.

*Interviewee:* And stress or whatever. *[Laughter]*

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm, yeah, stress.

*Female:* Isn't \_\_\_\_\_ back there, too?

*Interviewer:* Hmm?

*Female:* Isn't [*Cross talk*]?

*Interviewer:* Did you put that on? Was it on there when—

*Interviewer:* They're still back there.

*Interviewer:* Oh, okay. Yeah, they're still back there. Sorry.

Why do you think some elders choose to move away from Koyuk?  
Or why do they move away?

*Interviewee:* I know some move away when they can't take care of themselves, and so their family, they have Quyana Care in Nome, the Nome Hospital.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Sometimes when their health is bad enough that they can't take care of themselves?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Do you think that it's different to age in Koyuk than it is in a bigger city?

*Interviewee:* [*Laughter*] I guess it depends on how you were, where you were born or how you were raised. They're used to village life, and so when they move to the city—or the ones that live in the city get used to it, maybe, and it's different to move back to the village.

*Interviewer:* Yeah, so just whatever you're used to?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Would it be—would you be able to get used to living in the city, or do you prefer to be here?

*Interviewee:* I prefer to be in the village.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. What do you think—

*Interviewee:* Only if it was easier to live in the, if I had an income or knew how to drive and had a good place to stay out. [*Cross talk*] I'll probably move to another place.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm, so having transportation and money helps a lot in a big city. [*Laughter*]



*Interviewee:* Yeah, yeah.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Do you have any advice for people in Koyuk as they, if they want to age well?

*Interviewee:* [Laughter] Just watch—I mean, you know, take care of their health and for the younger people, respect elders and honor them, and just enjoy life, I guess. [Laughter]

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* And live to the best of your ability. [Laughter] Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm, so try your best and respect your elders?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Try to be healthy.

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* How do you feel about sharing what you know with youth, or younger generations?

*Interviewee:* I know, as I was growing up—I'm not used to thinking\_\_\_\_\_. [Laughter] But if I had to, I would.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. Well, you're doing great today. [Laughter]

*Interviewee:* [Laughter] I know my mom, she was more outgoing and talkative. I know there's people like that.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* And then my dad was kinda quiet, but he was pretty smart, too.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Yeah. Do you think there's benefits to sharing what you know with younger generations?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. [Laughter]

*Interviewer:* Can you think of an example of—

*Interviewee:* How do—you know, starting with education in earlier years.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm.

*Interviewee:* Learning well in school and I don't know if they have, you know, where they learn their social skills. And just have—learn their culture.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. What are—are there any challenges to sharing your knowledge with—

*Interviewee:* [Laughter] Just knowing how to communicate, I guess, you know? Communicate well. [Laughter]

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Do you experience any benefits when you share with youth?

*Interviewee:* I haven't done that very much, so.

*Interviewer:* What do you think the most important thing you can share with the youth would be?

*Interviewee:* Okay, yeah. [Laughter] Let's see. Just live your life as well, and to love one another, and love yourself, too—take care of yourself. Know that people care. [Laughter]

*Interviewer:* Yeah. Nice. And last question—is there anything about aging or being an elder that you want to share with us that we haven't asked you about?

*Interviewee:* Okay, I know there is studies or, you know, something, but I forgot about that, or that's what I'm doing, I start reading a lot, [Laughter] and I noticed there's dementia and Alzheimer's. I know more about that, too, Alzheimer's.

*Interviewer:* Yeah.

*Interviewee:* But I'm glad you're doing a study—or doing this for aging or elders.

*Interviewer:* Mm-hmm. Good. [Laughter]

*Interviewee:* [Laughter] Yeah, that's good.

*Interviewer:* Do you have any questions for us?

*Interviewee:* No.

*Interviewer:* Okay.

*Interviewee:* And so I remember your name is Carrie?

*Interviewer:* Yeah.

*Interviewee:* And?

*Interviewer:* Jordan.

*Interviewee:* Jordan, okay.

*Interviewer:* Yeah.

*[End of Audio]*