

*Interviewer:* And where were you born?

*Interviewee:* Stebbins.

*Interviewer:* Did you grow up here?

*Interviewee:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* And so you've lived here your whole life?

*Interviewee:* I went to Chemawa Oregon, that boarding school.

*Interviewer:* Oh, okay.

*Interviewee:* Till I graduated.

*Interviewer:* What grade did that start?

*Interviewee:* From ninth to twelfth.

*Interviewer:* And what's your preferred language or first language?

*Interviewee:* English, Yupik and English. We hardly talk Yupik anymore, just talk English. That's what my daughter says. "I wish you had taught me how to talk Yupik." We all end up talking English, but my oldest girls learned from their grandma.

*Interviewer:* Oh, nice.

*Interviewee:* So they understand. You talk Yupik too?

*Interviewee 2:* Only little bit.

*Interviewer:* Oh. And are you single, married, divorced, widowed?

*Interviewee:* Widow since last year.

*Interviewer:* Oh last year.

*Interviewee:* My husband left us with cancer.

*Interviewer:* Sorry about that. And you graduated high school?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, in **Chimawa**, Oregon.

*Interviewer:* Did you do any college at all or –

*Interviewee:* No. we couldn't afford to go to college. And my mom was alone and I had to stay and help her out.

*Interviewer:* How many people including you live in your home?

*Interviewee:* My house?

*Interviewer:* Um hmm.

*Interviewee:* My grandson, just my grandson.

*Interviewer:* Just the two of you? And do you want to stay here in Stebbins as you grow older?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I go like Anchorage, stay for maybe a month or come to my girls call me. But when my mom was alive, I hardly left her unless she had somebody to watch her.

*Interviewer:* So you'll go visit Anchorage, but you want to live here?

*Interviewee:* I always get homesick. My grandkids want me to stay, but I tell them I've got to go fishing.

*Interviewer:* And what's your box number?

*Interviewee:* 71093. But K. is closer and whenever she calls me, I go over to Unalakleet.

*Interviewer:* Oh yeah. It's a shorter flight. So how did you become an elder? What has your life been like?

*Interviewee:* Having no running water is pretty hard. Like when you go fishing, you have to pack water, but my boys used to get me water with the Honda. Other than that, I don't – when I tell them, "I'm not going to fish if you don't get me water from their house. " That's the hardest thing mom used to say. But we used to make sure she gets water. Yeah. Having no running water is really hard and we used those washing machines.

*Interviewer:* I saw that on the porch.

*Interviewee:* That's what I use because there's no water, but my son has to pack water from the washeteria.

*Interviewer:* So you used to help your mom get water and now your kids help you?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. They're looking after me now for that poor dad lives across. And that other one lives in St. Michael. He'll come and check on me. And those girls say "You have no running water, you better come move to Unalakleet and I said, "No, I still can live."

*Interviewer:* How does it feel to be seen as an elder by people in your community?

*Interviewee:* Good, like they're friendly people. It's – but there's a lot of mischief kids around here. They like to climb. They need a

playground. That's what my husband wanted to get them, but he got sick. Kids like to climb around or get hurt.

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

*Interviewee:* Like if they have kids that care for you, they'll help you, but if you have no help, it would be really hard. It's sad. Kids that don't care or don't grand. My kids, they look after me. That's what mom used to tell them, or my husband. And he used to tell those kids, we used to tell them, don't leave your kids to grandma. Your kids – get kids you take care of them. We took care of you all the way till school is out. The girls and the boys sometimes give me a hard time.

*Interviewer:* Try to get you to babysit?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, sometimes, but they don't – like I tell them, remember grandma used to say I can't babysit you guys, raise your kids like she took care of us and don't leave your kids to grandma.

*Interviewer:* So in order to age well and be healthy, you need people, your family around to look out for you and make sure you're doing all right?

*Interviewee:* Um hmm. Look after me, especially when it's fishing time so everybody, all of us have to work together. And my mom was really strict. She used to get everybody working to even the girls learned how to cut fish. She was very strict. I have no dad to take care of, so all of you got to – I'm a mama and a dad to take care.

*Interviewer:* Sounds like you learned how to age well from her.

*Interviewee:* That's what everybody says. Lately, after M. left, I've been like I got really tired. But the girls were here to help me and the boys. So they did help me lots.

*Interviewer:* What do you do in your day to day? Like what's your day like?

*Interviewee:* Work on the house, clean up, make sure my grandkids are okay. But I don't like to go flying whenever they want me. Yesterday, my daughter from Medford called me, grandkids, "Grandma, you want to come for Mother's Day?" No, no, I want to stay home. I've been gone from home. And the other kids would say, "Grandma, don't go." They were begging for me. Tell them I want to stay home. It was too hot for me down there when I went to my granddaughter's naval academy graduation. That's her, that K.

*Interviewer:* Wow.

*Interviewee:* I didn't know it was going to be too hot.

*Interviewer:* Oh, it was hot?

*Interviewee:* It was too hot for me.

*Interviewer:* Yep.

*Interviewee:* I was so glad to come home. I had a bad cold before I came and I had to wait for another week, but they took me out to California for boating. I said, "I missed the ocean."

*Interviewer:* So they took you out?

*Interviewee:* Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Nice.

*Interviewee:* I don't know if I go for the boys' graduation though. It's too hot though out there.

*Interviewer:* Yep, and they graduate right in June too. It's so hot.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, it's so hot. And my grandkids, make me to put a cap on, those big hats, when it's too hot. They – but they take me out for cool-off. I told them, I hope I won't have heart attack. No, you won't have heart attack. Just go take a break out there. Too many people. I see too many people in the graduation. But they had fun with me. I kept saying I was the shortest one in the family. I had fun though.

*Interviewer:* Do you think getting older has changed your relationships like with your family or –

*Interviewee:* A little. Like when I want to go someplace, there's a time to go so I can't be riding too much or I'll get sick or like my older daughter would say, "Can I go someplace?" No, mom, it's too cold you can't go out.

*[Phone ringing]*

*Interviewee:* Is it hot in here? Are you getting too hot?

*Interviewer:* It feels okay to me.

*Interviewee:* My grandson, he was cold. He took it up and \_\_\_\_.

*Interviewee 2:* Can I use your bathroom?

*Interviewee:* Go ahead.

*Interviewee 2:* This one?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. The switch on the side.

*Interviewer:* Have your relationships to the community been different since you started getting older?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, lately after I came home from home from D., it was so cold out there this year and I hardly – they wouldn't bring me down or I'd go by car to go to D., too cold. And I missed the Potlatch this year, the gathering.

*Interviewer:* Because it was too cold?

*Interviewee:* I had a bad cold then too.

*Interviewer:* You were sick.

*Interviewee:* It was too cold, yeah. I was feeling sick.

*Interviewer:* That's sad to miss that.

*Interviewee:* Huh?

*Interviewer:* Sad to miss the potlatch.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, I did – then K. called me and said, "You could come with us." We'll have a car in Anchorage and go watch the tournament ball game 'cause my nephew plays – grandson was gonna play. I attended two days but I got tired, so the third day, I woke up with sore throat. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* Too much. What helps you to age well?

*Interviewee:* My family, they are helping me. Tell me not to stay alone or they've invite me to – my grandson invite me, the kids would come here too. When it's nice out, take a walk around the bluff or back there. But when it's cold, they don't take me. They take me by Honda little ways.

*Interviewer:* They get you out and about or they come visit you?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, make sure I'm not lonely or not be alone.

*Interviewer:* Good. Why do you think some elders age good and some don't?

*Interviewee:* They don't help them or just ignore them or they don't take it. Like, we took care of my mom, my daughter and I, we took turns, make sure she's clean, not hungry. I take her to the Washeteria and wash her up. There's some elders that families don't take care of them and they have kids, their own kids playing around in the house and they get tired.

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

*Interviewee:* Sometimes they tell me that, "C., you're so lucky to have family, your girls, your grandkids." They look after me, make sure I'm not hungry, not being left alone in the evenings. There are some families that don't take care of their elders, the mother or the grandma. Mom was lucky we were all here for her.

*Interviewer:* And how can you tell when an elder is aging well?

*Interviewee:* You could tell them when they're healthy, healthy. I always think there's a lot of ladies that don't take care of their parents, but when my husband got sick, those girls got excused from working and they were – we were with him all the way. They took turns, let me rest and they always wanted to make sure that I get rested and take turns cooking. And the boys would – they are – like G. would stay up, watch his dad when we're sleeping and the oldest one would take turns. Some elders need help from their – they got to be close. And when we went to Anchorage, all the girls were with me, but the boys stayed home and watched the house. We were in Oregon. They wanted us to go to Texas, but my husband said, "I think I'll just go home. I don't think I'll get better." He wanted to stay with the whole family.

*Interviewer:* Yeah. That was more important.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, he was happy.

*Interviewer:* Do you think – how do you think someone gets to be an elder?

*Interviewee:* Like getting older or –

*Interviewer:* Do you think it's an age or do you think there's something else?

*Interviewee:* If they drink too much, they get old fast. I noticed that. That's what mom used to tell me. "Don't smoke, don't drink or else you're going to get old faster." Don't think old that's what she used to tell me and don't drink. She used to say, "I don't want you, if you're going to drink," or "I don't want to see you cry," or something. You were drinking, she used to notice when I drink a little bit. Or she'll just talk, talk all day to me. She's, "I didn't raise you up to be like that." So I tried to listen to her when she got old. Or when she's alone, she'd be afraid to be alone and then that one time, she said, W. used to call me daughter and say, "Nobody's watching me." But my younger sister used to drink and she'd let me know when she's drinking.

*Interviewer:* Do you think it's different for elders trying to age well now than it was like 20 years ago?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, they're better. I notice some elders who be alone when the have dances or whatever. I notice when I was younger, I used to see elders being alone with the little ones to stay with the bigger ones.

*Interviewer:* So you think it's better now?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, right now it's better. You know, some relatives they have or sisters or brothers, they don't get along too. My mom used to tell us, tell your girls or talk to my girls for us to all stick together, things will work out better like that.

*Interviewer:* You think it puts stress on the elder if their family's not getting along?

*Interviewee:* Yes, sometimes right now, the families fight. The young ones with kids and they stay with their grandmas, sometimes they have to go to somebody's house.

*Interviewer:* Why do you think some elders move away from here?

*Interviewee:* Because they're not having help or something.

*Interviewer:* Do you think it's different trying to age well in Anchorage compared to here?

*Interviewee:* Mom used to tell me not to let her go in a home, that we're young enough to take care of her, but we told her we wouldn't let her go in anywhere – we'd be all with her and we'll help her and make sure she's clean. I know her sister wasn't happy about being hand. She got more sick when they told her she was gonna go – they were going to put her in a home.

*Interviewer:* She got more sick?

*Interviewee:* That made her more sick and she left like being lonely, you know. Young kids watching her after school and she's hungry, she used to be hungry. I want to – I didn't know but when I go check on her, she tells me that nobody – like she tell me nobody cares for her. But I'd go see her and she'd be so happened and let me know that she's hungry. I'd feed her and –

*Interviewer:* So you'd give her food.

So then she had to move away 'cause no one was – she didn't have enough care?

*Interviewee:* They had to bring her to Norman and they brought her over there and they just left her there. She got really lost and lonely and I didn't know they brought her over there. She left early.

*Interviewer:* Yeah.

Do you have advice for people in your community who want to age well?

*Interviewee:* Yes, them too like they'd say they talk to them, talk to my daughter's to take care of me better and not leave me with the little kids or to watch them. They're some, that told me that.

*Interviewer:* Do you like sharing what you know with younger generations?

*Interviewee:* I do when they come in here and talk to me.

*Interviewer:* Yeah? What kind of stuff do you like to share with them?

*Interviewee:* Like mostly take care of your mom or your dad when they get older, make sure they're not hungry? Don't leave them alone. It's whatever used to make her mamas not alone. She wants to go, always wanna go berry picking, make sure she go berry picking. My sister used to get mischief and stop going over. Somebody would tell me, "You mom's up there and where's your sister?" I think she's drinking. So we used to have to go get her and she wouldn't want to go home, but let the younger ones watch her, until she wanna to go home. She used to like berry picking and when she was younger, she'd go up the rivers and take a net and bring some fish home with the younger boys that older.

It was fun with mom. She took us to the camp behind that field over there and go camping, fishing.

*Interviewer:* She taught you a lot, huh?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, but she used to say I was a lazy girl than my sister. Used to run away, but my sister used to help. And the M. was there too. His step mom took mom to a camp and tell her not to be lonely too much or we'll all be leaving her. See that old lady brought us over, that was fun. We'd walk to Stebbins and they'd \_\_\_\_\_ brought back to the tents.

*Interviewer:* What would you tell young people about how they can age well?

*Interviewee:* Take care of yourself and take care of your family. Help each other, make sure nobody's hungry and stay together and love each other and treat each other good.

*Interviewer:* So that sounds like that's the most important thing that they need to know is to take care of each other and themselves and to share \_\_\_\_\_.

*Interviewee:* And then mom would say, "Always have faith in God. Help each other. Pray for each other."

*Interviewer:* Is there anything about aging or being an elder that you want to share with us that I haven't asked you?

*Interviewee:* Like what?



*Interviewer:* I don't know.

Do either of you have any questions?

*Interviewee:* Talk to young kids. Like, I tell them like my mom, you've seen my mom, she's – some would say, "Your mom was tough." Always walking around and wanting and wanna to go someplace, she asked them to bring them up to the tundra up there and pick berries or she want fish and then my husband used to say, "Just listen to her. She want to cut fish. Just put her on the ground and give her fish and she'll be cutting." She'd feel better after that, cut a little bit fish and try to teach the younger ones.

*Interviewer:* So it made her feel good to teach the younger ones how to cut fish and to keep busy?

*Interviewee:* Scold them when they're lazy. We've got a lot of pictures of my mom with my – she's always with my grandkids. I've got pictures of her with all my grandkids. She used to love my kids.

*Interviewer:* Do you have grandkids?

*Interviewee:* I got how many? Lots of them. About 16, 17. I got – they're getting old though, those kids. They're grown up now. These when they were younger. But they're -

*Interviewer:* Is that your husband?

*Interviewee:* Yeah. And these are D. – this one guy and then N. and H. They used to come to stay with mom too. I got their Christmas picture over there, D. and \_\_\_\_\_. Not the big one. When I used to work in school up there as a teacher, I worked there for 30 years or 29, trying to pay this house. I was scared to get a loan when my husband said, "You'll have to sign." "How will we pay for it?" "Well, we've got to keep working till we get it all paid for."

*Interviewer:* Um hmm.

*Interviewee:* Yeah. I got – my girls got me a picture of mom. Where did I put that. For mother's day, they got me – I forgot where I put it.

*Interviewer:* You'll come across it as soon as we leave, probably.

*Interviewee:* She used to be sewing baskets and sewing parkas for my kids.

*Interviewer:* Do you also do that?

*Interviewee:* I was a bad sewer, but I used to try. And my sister taught me how to use the sewing machine and I learned. That was easy for me. But then K. got those computer controlled, I don't know, I don't want to use it. I might mess it up, but she just let me use one stitch.

*Interviewer:* Keep it simple?

*Interviewee:* Yeah and then that younger one said, "Mom, you've got to learn how to listen." "But I don't want to mess up your washer or something. I might mess it up." "Watch. Look, you do this and you do this and you press it." Everything is computerized.

*Interviewer:* Yeah.

*Interviewee:* Oh, that other one that's staying in Oregon, she's teaching in Oregon. This is her kids.

*Interviewer:* They are grown up.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, they are. They are \_\_\_\_\_. Those girls \_\_my grandma got real \_\_\_\_\_.

*Interviewer:* Beautiful family.

*Interviewee:* They used to – she was teaching in Alaska, but they moved to Oregon when their – his dad got sick.

*Interviewer:* Cute dog too.

*Interviewee:* K., I had K., but I don't know what that – there's too many, a lot of pictures we used to take pictures.

*Interviewer:* Well, that's all the questions –

*Interviewee:* And my husband used to work in the store like CEO, when he was for me then he take me to Seattle or las Vegas.

*Interviewer:* Oh, nice. There's a lot of people there too.

*Interviewee:* Yeah, I used to visit. I miss looking around and so many people, elders playing. And then he'd say, "Maybe someday the girls can bring you to Las Vegas." I couldn't believe they stay up all night. It's a one-time thing. My husband would say that to me. And he'd let me try a few of them. That was fun though.

*Interviewer:* Um hmm.

Well, that's all the questions that we have for you today. Thanks for –

*Interviewee:* Nice – I'm glad you guys came by.

*Interviewer:* Yes, it's nice to –

*Interviewer:* Thank you.

*Interviewer:* Thanks for spending time with us.

*[End of Audio]*