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Barrow today: Tenement Health in the Arctic Environment, Candy and Quaq

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Notes: Original in 7-inch tape, master copy on CD. Produced by Roger McPherson. THESE TAPES WERE PRODUCED AS A PART OF AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM NOW DEFUNCT AND WERE BROADCAST OVER THE RADIO FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

[Theme music plays.] Barrow Today: Tenement Health in the Arctic Environment. The announcer Jeff Kennedy introduces the program by saying that it may seem strange that sparsely populated Arctic would have health issues similar to the crowded urban areas of the world. In both places, one finds overcrowding of homes and lack of sanitation due to lack of services and health education.

Dr. Osamu Matsutani from Public Health Service of Alaska Native Hospital in Barrow talks about the problem: He has heard from the statistics people in Anchorage that Barrow is growing faster than any other place in the world, including China and other countries. Two years ago, birth control was initiated in Barrow and the number of births decreased for two years but has gone up again. Dr. Matsutani thinks that after two years, people wanted to have babies again.

One of the major reasons for the spread of infectious diseases is that it's not uncommon to have 15 people living in a one-bedroom house. If one person gets a cold, undoubtedly everyone else gets it too. That's how tuberculosis spread and it was controlled only because of outside influence. The other infectious diseases spread well too.

At 2:59 the interviewer Roger McPherson asks a lady how many siblings she has and she counts 5 brothers and 3 sisters. Then the interviewer asks if she can count her cousins but she says she can't since there are too many. He asks another

woman how many siblings she has and she says there's 7 and that she has lots of cousins.

A woman's voice asks another lady how many children she has and she says she has 5 boys and 3 girls.

3:32 Alice Neakok, a family planning aide, was asked how large the average families are in Barrow and she said that the most people in one family she knows of, is 17 children. Barrow people like to have big families. People have 8 or 10 children.

The narrator says that the house type varies in Barrow from remnants of an aboriginal sod house to modern Farmer's Home Administration financed dwellings that were made possible by the advent of natural gas from nearby well that's leased from the Navy.

A man's voice says that the town has grown and there are lots of new houses built with Farmer's Home Administration. They are larger and there are less families per house. Having natural gas helps people to have bigger houses as they now can afford heating them. It has also lessened oil fires that have burned 25 people to death while he has been living in Barrow.

Another man talks about changes due to conveniences they have now: This year they had a power-failure due to gas explosion that really affected their town. In the past they would have just shrugged it off because they used blubber, drift wood, and coal for fuel. This year they realized that they have taken on something they can't get out of. Some of them almost panicked when the gas explosion [and subsequent shortage] happened and it made the speaker realize that things change so fast for them. It makes him feel like it's not an Eskimo life anymore and that the people who are adults now, or older than the youngsters, know the Eskimo way of life. Today their children hardly know what ordinary oil or a coal stove looks like. How well they act if they are left alone in Eskimo land without the conveniences that they now have?

At 7:14 the narrator mentions that technology has been brought to most homes but there is still a lack of sanitation in waste and water. Dr. Matsutani says that sanitation is another problem in Barrow. There's no running water or sewage

facilities, except for in the hospital and in school. Sanitation is a major factor in diseases in children and in summertime, one can see puddles that are turning green due to fecal contamination. Honey buckets are not disposed of correctly and the people just don't know the concept of sanitary measures.

Roger McPherson asks how the people in town get the most of their water. The interviewer says people haul it with skidoos [they melt ice] or buy it from the supplier. They only have one supplier that is running now. They haul ice cubes by truck and they cost \$1.25 a cake. The road going to the freshwater lake should be open at all times but right now it's closed up and everybody has to utilize their own skidoos to get ice from the ocean. Some 50% of people's water is from the ocean. One has to look all over for ice that's not salty and know what to look for. Quite few of the people still use snow but large percentage is using it only for washing purposes. The speaker uses ice water for drinking after boiling it since it's contaminated.

At 10:12 somebody is talking about ice that he takes home [there's music in the background] for fresh water. Roger McPherson asks somebody how she gets her water and she says she gets ice. Yet another person says he pays somebody who is earning money by getting ice for people. It's good water. Other people use ice from the ocean too, glacier ice. They get it from ½ mile away.

Someone says the community is scattered over 3 square miles along the Arctic Ocean. It's divided by a lagoon into two main areas: There's the downtown area and a residential subdivision called Browerville. Because of the size of the community and the irregular development of the area and the downtown business district, it's difficult to plan any kind of a comprehensive water and sewage – package. The cold climate increases costs in planning any kind of a sewage and water –program.

Present system that relies on hauling ice for water and using 55-gallon drums for human waste and garbage is inadequate in a town that's as large as Barrow. Water and sewer would make life easier for people and help in controlling diseases in the community.

13:07 A man's voice [Matsutani?] says that the hospital is trying to get a full-time sanitarian to their staff. They share a sanitarian with Fairbanks and Tanana and he

doesn't have enough time to cover all the area. It's a matter of education and education needs a long time and it has to be done the right way for people to accept it.

[Theme music starts again.] The announcer says that this was the first in two programs about health in Barrow. Barrow Today was written and produced by Roger and Karen McPherson with the support of Alaska Rural School Project, Department of Education and KUAC of University of Alaska. The voices heard were the ones of Dr. Osamu Matsutani; teenagers; Catherine Tucksfield [sp?]; Al Shontz, Samuel Simmons, Nelson Ahvakana and Jack Chenowith. The music was performed by Pete Sovalik's Dance Group. Announcer is Jeff Kennedy.

At 14:41 the theme music begins again. Barrow today: Candy and Quaq. The program starts with Roger McPherson asking teenagers what foods they like and answers were: candied apples, Coke, T-bone steak, hamburgers and caribou soup.

Narrator: In former times the food eaten in Barrow was determined by the game they hunted. Now with the establishment of local stores and jet transportation, many new foods are introduced in Native diet with varying states of acceptance. Some teenagers prefer food from the Anglo society while many prefer foods from the Northern Eskimo diet, such as frozen meat and caribou soup. Choices made may affect people's general health in northern climate and especially dental health.

17:28 Dr. Dwight Boller introduces himself and says he's the dentist at the Barrow Hospital. An interviewer [Karen McPherson?] asks him to describe some of the oral health problems in Barrow. He tells that the main problems are the likes of any problems one might find. They center on decay and cavities and also disease in gum and bones of the teeth. The significant factor in Barrow is the degree with which they [the problems] are seen in each individual and also the incidents that are seen in the community itself. They have a community that exhibits routine dental problems, but to a much greater degree than in normal population. He attributes it to the introduction of white men's food into the Native culture. If a value is not placed in a certain portion of person's health that part of their total health won't be watched over by them as carefully as others. He finds cultural differences and lack of education toward dental health: people don't really value dental health as highly as many other people do.

The interviewer asks Al Shontz if he has seen changes in what kinds of things he has been stocking. Al says he has: frozen foods have gone well, such as pizzas. Maybe 10 years ago it seemed to be a custom after the movies to go into the store to buy sweet rolls and a can of fruit and go home to make tea for a little snack. Now he sees people buying pre-fried chicken and pizzas. The younger fellows eat frozen pastrami sandwiches, beef, and hamburgers. The store brought in frozen blueberries which people like since they don't get them and they go through lots of ice cream. They also bring in fresh milk and cottage cheese.

At 21:03 the interviewer asks teenagers how they get food in the morning: A boy tells that there's always breakfast at the Junior High where they get [unclear] and Tang. They like the breakfast and think it's good. They have hot lunch at school every day and a dinner at home. At home the food is somewhat different than it is in school. It has raw meat and caribou. The interviewer wants to know if they should have that food in schools, too, and the kids say they should sometimes.

22:05 Johnny says he likes to eat [unclear, in Inupiat] and frozen meat with [unclear, in Inupiat]. He likes misigaq [seal oil] that has lots of salt. Right after eating [unclear] he eats rice with raisins in it, followed by some tea. Most of the time he likes to eat caribou soup.

The interviewer asks if he likes things such as hamburgers, but he says not really unless they are medium-rare. He doesn't care for chicken.

Dr. Dwight Boller says that on a diet that's relatively high in refined carbohydrates, the older segment from age 30 onwards, starts developing periodontal disease. The interviewer [Karen?] asks if imported foods are a factor in dental problems. Boller says that one store in town sells 300 cases of Coca-Cola per week and it's mainly the children who drink it. Also, many of the adults drink Coca-Cola. It's very high consumption.

Dr. Boller suspects the Coca-Cola consumption is high due to inadequate water supply. There's no communal water supply and water is trucked in or melted from the ice in the ocean. "Coke is a beautiful substitute for water." The children like it, but they don't place value on their teeth or get constant reminders from their parents to brush their teeth so the teeth problems progress.

The interviewer asks him to comment on what little kids eat. Dr. Boller says they eat lots of candy and drink soda pop due to lack of water. Children eat dried meats like beef jerky and little cupcakes, cookies and little snacks like that.

25:07 The narrator says that many older village residents prefer traditional foods from the sea and tundra. It makes some people feel better while others don't have the money to pay for prohibitively highly priced white man's food.

An older man says they eat foods frozen and sometimes they cook them by boiling. His wife cooks that way, boiling all kinds of meat they want to eat. The interviewer [Karen?] asks if they like seal oil and the man says they use seal oil and whale blubber "on every eat."

The interviewer asks a lady what foods she likes and she says she likes any kind of food but her favorite is fish because it makes her feel good. She eats it frozen.

A man says he likes to eat: ducks, fish and bearded seal. They like white people's food, too, but it's priced too high.

Another man says he can't live by caribou alone and not by seafood alone either. He is adapted to the other way of living. His children are adapted to Native way of living, more or less. They could eat just about anything. When the speaker grew up, he had only caribou and seal and he didn't know about steaks. He learned about steaks and chicken when he "went down" to high school.

At 28:13 Dr. Boller says that the improvement in health will happen through education and through placing a value on health. It isn't a matter of importance whether they learn "our" [Western] methods of dealing with problems but they could develop their own and eventually finding methods to educate one another.

[Theme music is playing.] The announcer says this was the second program on health in Barrow. Barrow Today –series that is produced by Roger and Karen McPherson with the support of Alaska Rural School Project, Department of Education and KUAC FM of University of Alaska. The voices heard were the ones of teenagers, Dr. Dwight Boller, Al Shontz, Willie Silas, Catherine Touchfield [sp?], and Nelson Ahvakana. The music was performed by Pete Sovalik's Dance Group and the announcer was Jeff Kennedy.

[End of the recording.]