

ANS 401  
Knowledge of Native Elders  
Agnes & Paul Tony  
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#### IN WHAT WAYS WERE PEOPLE HEALED IN THE OLD DAYS?

The sick wouldn't eat much at first. They had to eat fish broth or any kind of broth as they stayed in bed. When they got an open wound, strong tea is made with black bull. It then is applied to the cut. When people got burned, worm wood is put on the wound, it is also applied to mosquito bites. From bumblebee bites, old alder wood from the ground (green stuff) is picked, and put in the oven to warm up, then it is put on the bumblebee bite and it is used for sore eyes. When someone got frostbite, snow is put on the affected area before going into the house, so the skin will not peel off, then you have to let yourself warm slowly. When people have stomach ache, they would drink one spoon of worm wood, they would also use burnt bread in tea. Alder buds were used to drink for tuberculosis. For headaches, cold water was put on the face.

#### WHAT HAPPENED LONG AGO WHEN SOMEONE HAD A MENTAL ILLNESS?

Only medicine people took care of them.

#### HOW DID WOMEN TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES WHEN THEY WERE PREGNANT, LONG TIME AGO?

They could only eat light foods, seal oil and frozen fish once in awhile. The women couldn't sleep much because it may cause trouble with the baby coming out. They had to talk to the baby to come out right when they got up early to take a walk. There were no special persons as midwife. Agnes's mother helped her deliver her baby. When the baby was born, they baby was slapped on the infant's bottom. Long ago, sinew was used to cut the cord of the infant. Agnes' mother had her eat fish broth after her babies birth. She also put a towel soaked with hot water on her stomach.

#### WHAT KIND OF PLANTS AND BERRIES WERE PICKED?

Tundra tea is picked and used for tea. Long green roots near the sand bar in the fall time is picked and could be eaten fresh. It could also be cooked with bird or fish

(English term is wild carrot). Cranberries and blackberries are picked in the spring time. Cranberries are cooked for jam and pudding.

#### HOW WAS THE VILLAGE STRUCTURED LONG AGO?

Two old men would gather, with other men and boys and discuss how things should be. The leaders would some time argue. We do not know how the leaders were chosen because Paul and Agnes were too young to understand. The men decided the punishment for the wrong or decided if they were innocent. The two leaders were more respected long ago now, the village government is not as strong as it used to be. The wrong is not punished like long ago. Now there is a V.P.S.O. in the village. The older people think they are not very good leaders because all they do is arrest the wrong and don't counsel them. Today, young people don't listen because they partly grew up outside the village.

#### IS ALAKNUK<sup>A</sup> A DRY VILLAGE?

Yes. It's been dry for about five or six years. When the law was broken by bringing in liquor, the person or persons who brought it in were put in jail. Both Eskimo and Non-Natives were bringing in the liquor to the village.

#### WHAT WAS THE STORAGE LIKE?

It was like a little house with no windows on top of the ground. Moss and mud was covered on the outside of the logs. Moss was also covered inside the storage house. This way, it is always cold inside. Heavy wood was used for the door. Each family owned one, they were about five feet high so a person could walk in.