



Carol Omnik.



Sarah Kingik.

Elders record traditional plant wisdom

Several members of the Arctic Slope Elders Council and staff from the North Slope Borough Inupiat History, Language and Culture and the television studio came together on August 6th for a unique project. They were all involved with the on-site collection of traditional Native medicinal plants found on the tundra surrounding Tikigaq, traditional name for the village of Pt. Hope.

Five Elders, Delia Stone, Carol Omnik, Eunice Lane, Lily Oktolik and Sarah Kingik participated in the search for specific areas where these plants would be found. The women decided that the most likely area would be that of Itivlagruk, an old traditional camp site up-

Editor's Note: This story and photo essay were prepared by Point Hope photojournalist Leah Pearl Zelony, age 17. She says:

"The seasonal gathering of plants for medicine and food by the people of Tikigaq has been an age old tradition. Knowing where these plants and berries grow, what they are and how to use them is important knowledge which the Elders of our village are passing onto future generations by the use of modern technology.

"Helicopters, video camera and other sources of recording information are all used now to help gather not only the plants themselves, but the knowledge, which is most valuable. I am grateful to have been a part of this adventure and to record with my camera the discoveries and personal impressions of that day."

river from the village. The camera crew and coordinators of the project came in by helicopter and picked up the five women, most of whom had never ridden in a helicopter before. What would have

taken hours by four-wheeler or motor boat took about 10 minutes.

Most of the Elders had not been to Itivlagruk for years because of the rough ride up. When we arrived, as the women looked around

almost in a daze, I could tell they were remembering sweet moments of their past. Slowly they walked in the direction most familiar to them. Soon enough, they were recognizing the different plants and began gathering.

When the sun finally came out from behind the clouds, the women sat down for a rest and to eat while they looked over and discussed what they had found. The camera crew filmed as the women gave the names of the different plants and what they were used for.

By the end of the day, the women had bags of berries, saligrak, sura and wild onions. The Elders had a good day and were happy to have participated in the gathering project.



Delia Stone, Eunice Lane, and Jana Harcharek



Eunice Lane, Jana Harcharek, Delia Stone and Sarah Kingik