

Can't just sit doing nothing—

108-Year-Old Grandma Nataruck Breaks Hip Bone Shovelling Snow

Minnie Tucker, "Alaska's oldest living grandmother" and beloved Grandma Nataruck to many Alaskans, is doing just fine at Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage.

The tiny Eskimo lady with the sweet face is thought to be at least 108 years old and things she remembers from days of her childhood and as a young woman would seem to substantiate that.

She recalls, for example, hearing people say that the Russians planned to sell Alaska to the United States.

Minnie was brought to the Center because her hip kept hurting her and she had trouble getting around to do her work after falling recently outside her home in Fairbanks.

Medical examination showed she had good reason to feel pain—her hip was broken. Now the indomitable old lady has undergone surgery to have the bones "pinned" together.

This in itself is rather remarkable for seldom is general anesthesia given to elderly patients. The U. S. Public Health Service anesthetist is quite sure he has never before administered anesthesia to a centenarian!

The hip-breaking fall occurred when Minnie was shovelling snow and dirt around her little home to keep the winter out, she says.

"I should have waited for those boys," Minnie says ruefully, "but I couldn't just sit around doing nothing could I?"

Thursday (December 14) Minnie said she "felt lighter" and demonstrated



Grandma Nataruck

—PHS Alaska Native Health Service Photo

this sense of well-being by a motion suggesting a lift off for flying.

Except for her hip, which doesn't pain so much now, she says she "has no sickness on my body. I have only old age feel."

Meanwhile get-well cards are pouring in to Minnie, not only from Alaskans but from church associates in Atlanta, Georgia. She never tires of hearing the verses and loving inscriptions from these many

friends.

And she can recount many a story of how it was in the old days at Rocky Point on Golovin Bay where she was born and other communities where she lived after marrying her miner husband Arthur.

He never struck it rich, says Minnie, but she relates with quiet pride "I'm glad we never owed anybody; we were never short of food." Arthur died 25 years ago.

Their surviving children and families live in the Fairbanks area now.

Nurses who help this littlest grandmother into her wheelchair for her daily "ride" have to caution Minnie to be less energetic. She gives them a sweet and apologetic smile, and then forgets immediately.

After all, it's hard to just sit around doing nothing, isn't it? Especially if you've been active for more than a hundred years.