

EARLY NATIVE LIFE / RAILROAD & MINING DAYS
FISH TALES / EARTHQUAKE / FIRE

OUT OF OUR TIME

The Storytellers

OONECHGUK

EDOWCHU



of people and places
of time and events
the likes of which
are to be found only
in memories of the past

compiled and edited
by
Discovery Program
with an Introduction
by
Roberta Crittenden

Illustrations
by
John Anderson

THEM DAYS WAS DIFFERENT

LIFE WAS BETTER IN THE OLD DAYS

IN THEM DAYS WE DIDN'T HAVE AIRPLANES

THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

WHEN I WAS GROWING UP WE LIVED OFF THE LAND

THAT'S THE WAY IT USED TO BE HERE

YES, IT IS A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIFE NOW

HE WAS A HUNTER, A BIG, GREAT HUNTER, AND HE WAS THE CHIEF

TWO CENTS A MAN FOR RED SALMON

YEAH, A ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

MONEY DIDN'T MAKE YOU HAPPIER. IT GIVES YOU A LOT OF WORRIES

I STARTED TO WORK WHEN I WAS EIGHT AND A HALF YEARS OLD. I WAS SO
LITTLE THE BOSS HAD TO MAKE STEPS TO THE GRINDER TO PUT THE CLAMS IN

THEY SENT US OUT IN BIDARKAS AND WE'D STAY OUT FOR WEEKS HUNTING SEA
OTTER

EVERYTHING WAS PUT UP IN OIL, LIKE SEAL OIL, BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE NO
FREEZER BOXES LIKE WE HAVE TODAY

IN OUR DAYS PEOPLE HELPED ONE ANOTHER

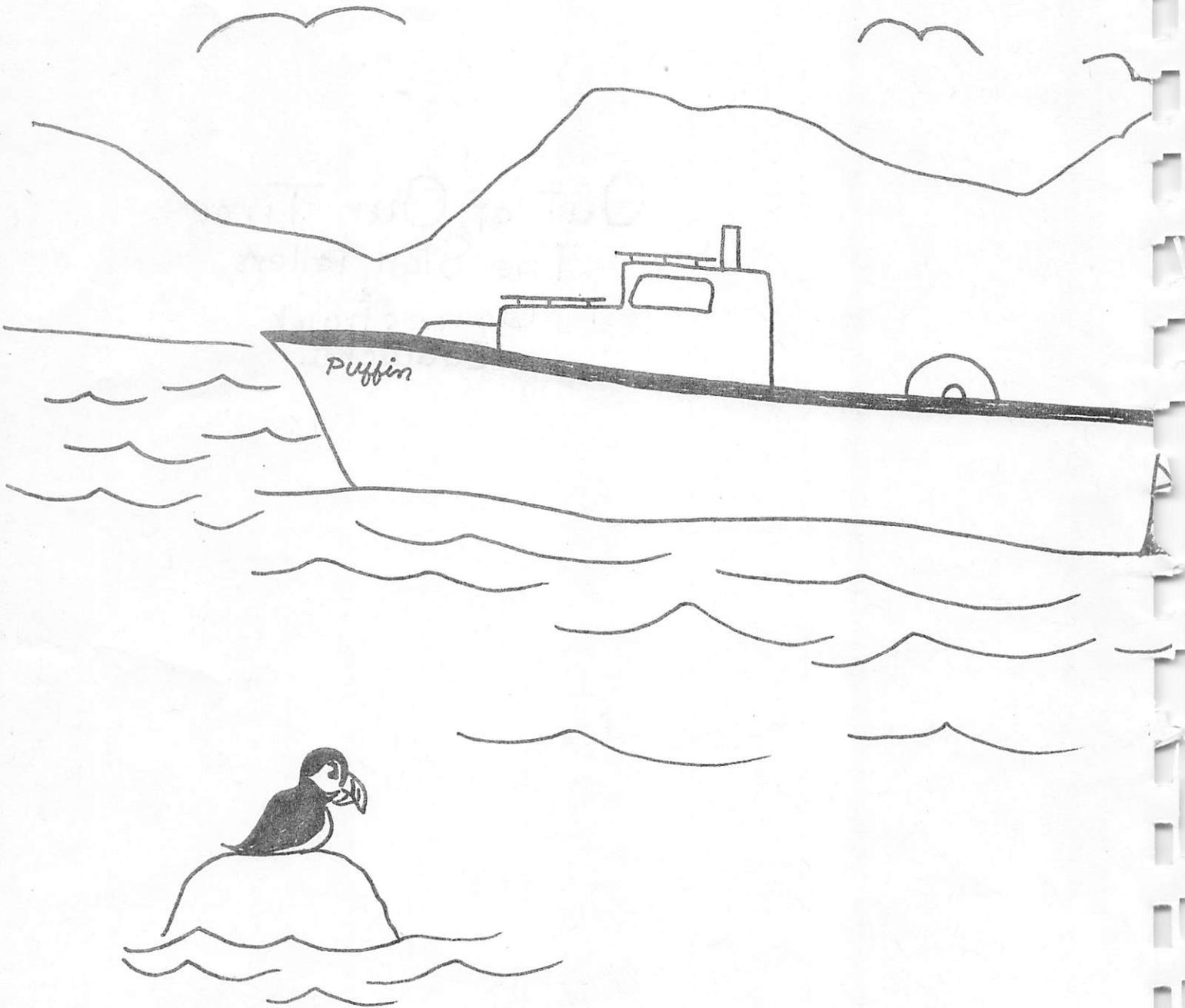
IT WAS THE BEST LIFE FOR US

THEY GET YOU A LITTLE BIT NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO

MEMORIES WILL NEVER GO AWAY-----THE HEART FEELING IS ALWAYS THERE

I WOULDN'T TRADE IT FOR ANY OTHER PLACE AROUND

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CORDOVA BAPTIST PRESS

CORDOVA, ALASKA

1980

DISCOVERY PROGRAM is a group of fifteen students, grades 10, 11, and 12 at Cordova High School, Cordova, Alaska, who, working with their teacher throughout the school year 1979-80, collected and prepared for publication the information contained in this book.

Photographs are by the students.

If any part of this book is used for any purpose by others, kindly give credit to its authors.

To those who believe today is because yesterday was, our book is respectfully dedicated. Yesterdays are significant to us to the extent that, through better understanding of them, we may become fuller, spiritually richer, and more humane beings by building on our forefather's worthy traits and avoiding those that result in failure for ourselves and others.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All literary efforts become a reality when many people work together to produce something they deem to be worthwhile. This book is no exception, and those who have made its production possible are greatly appreciated.

In the beginning, there were the Cordova High School students who ultimately became the writers of this book: Curtis, Linda, Art, Dean, Daryl, Karl, and Glenn, Helen, Phyllis, Janell, Nolan, Cliff, Debby, and Lloyd.

Superintendent of Schools, Mr. William Fairall, was responsible for securing the federal grant that made possible the implementation of a program to be called DISCOVERY. A teacher who came from Georgia worked with Principal Charles Taylor and Counselor Irene Fairall to develop a curriculum expressly for these students.

School Librarian, John Davis, was especially helpful in providing technical aid in operating the videotape recorder and making available photographic equipment and supplies. Mrs. Pat Jones' advisory assistance was accepted with gratitude, as well as the use of her typewriters. Special appreciation is due John Anderson whose sketches appear throughout the book and add immeasurably to its visual pleasure. And thanks be to Tom, a visitor from Georgia, who, fortunately for us, happened to be in the right place at the right time. His editorial assistance was indispensable.

Of course, ultimate appreciation is for those obliging and gifted individuals who so willingly answered the students' call and shared with them the stories contained in this book. We are grateful to them beyond all measure .

A treasury of recollections was collected by the students. In addition, and of equal importance, a number of significant correlative discoveries were made; namely, sharing with the storytellers their pleasure in telling their stories, listening, really listening, to elders as they recall places, and happenings, and times youth can never know, and establishing bases for one's beliefs, customs, and values.

And at last, as first, the students who worked so diligently transcribing their taped interviews, typing transcriptions, and editing first drafts, all the while growing in the belief that they were doing something significant and doing it in an extremely satisfactory manner.

Very special gratitude goes to Glennora Allen, grade ten student. The ultimate fruit of her labor, her willingness to work long hours to see a job done well, resulted in what is evident here. Glenn is a skilled typist and her proficiency is apparent. Phyllis Totemoff's help is also valued.

APPLAUSE AND BRAVO, DISCOVERERS AND LEARNERS!!

R.C.
Cordova, Alaska
May, 1980

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INTRODUCTION

THE challenge was not without magnitude. Fifteen senior high school students were in need of instructional service to provide assistance in two areas of school curriculum where help was especially needed, namely, English language and history. Conventional teaching methods had met with limited success. Attitudes concerning school and standard courses of study were of a less than positive nature. Success had been minimal. School success that is, for almost without exception these students were highly successful fisher people during summer fishing season, some of them referring to themselves with complete candor as professional fishermen. Considering their age, their earning power is likely without precedent elsewhere.

But it was September, and the salmon had run, and school had closed in on them. Some were in need of credits for May graduation, and all needed credits to show progress in school.

Knowing of the phenomenal success of Foxfire, product of students at Rabun Gap Nacoochee School in the southern Appalachian mountains region of Georgia, and believing in its intrinsic worth as a means of discovering, and therefore learning, I decided to try a similar approach with my students at Cordova High School. Not totally incidental to this decision is the fact that Mr. Eliot Wigginton, ingenious creator of Foxfire, and I occupy the same north-east rural corner of Georgia. Also, I hold a special affinity with the challenges he encountered and marvel at the success he and his students have achieved. All who know their work are enriched because of their chronicling.

An idea emerged and took shape. For my students, an approach to learning would take a new direction. It would involve their total participation in a way that would be significant to them and would result in a product worthy of sharing with others with pride.

We would call our program DISCOVERY and, under its aegis, research and produce an historical account of our community, its people, and events as related by those who helped it happen. Using cassette recorders and videotape recorders, interviews were arranged by the students either at school or at the home of the interviewees. They were asked to tell us how things used to be, how they remember them, value them, and how they compare with today's way of living.

The character or image of the storyteller filters through his story by his choice of words and the way he puts them together to recall events, people, other times and places, as well as beliefs, customs, values, and ideas. Therefore, when one is asked to tell us of the past, as he remembers it, it is important that we try to see the person who is speaking. This is our reason for presenting our collection of stories just as they were given to us. It is the image of the storytellers, or the image we perceive him to be through his use of language, that produces dramatic results. He stands out in front of his stories as on stage. Therefore, editing has been held to a minimum.

This collection of stories is significant, we believe, because it illustrates the richness and diversity of our heritage and how much we all stand to gain when we value and hold fast to treasured memories of the past.

R.M.C.

WE REMEMBER

The first time I saw him was in the summer of 1942. He was a young man, about 25 years old, with dark hair and a friendly smile. He was working in the office of the... I remember the day clearly because it was a hot one, and the air was thick with the smell of... We talked for hours, and I found out that he had a very interesting background. He had been in the military during the war, and he had seen some things that were not good. He was a very thoughtful person, and he had a lot of ideas about how to improve the world. I was impressed by his intelligence and his sense of purpose. We became friends, and he was always there for me when I needed him. He was a very loyal friend, and he always had my best interests at heart. I will never forget the time we spent together, and the lessons I learned from him. He was a true friend, and he will be missed.

We Remember

EYAK HISTORY



The linguistic ancestors of the Eyak people came originally from the Interior of Alaska. This is very clear because the Eyak language is closely related to the Athabaskan language family as a whole; that is, Eyak and Athabaskan are sister languages, descended from a common ancestor. The linguistic ancestors of the Eyaks split off from the linguistic ancestors of the Athabaskans a very long time ago, however -- 1,500 B.C. is a fair guess -- long before the Athabaskan peoples began to spread over such a large part of North America, where they now constitute a very large language family, ranging all the way from Alaska on to Navajo and Apache near Mexico. The fact that Eyak is not closer linguistically to its closest Athabaskan neighbor, Ahtna on the Copper River, in Alaska, than it is to Navajo, showed that the Eyaks split off well before the Athabaskans began to spread, and that they remained completely isolated from all the Athabaskans during all that time. This virtually proves that they must have been on the coast for all this time, because if they had remained in the Interior they would surely have remained in some kind of contact.

The stretch of coast that the Eyaks are known to have inhabited extends from Mt. Fairweather to Cordova. Their total population could probably never have been more than 1,000, maybe not more than five or six hundred, because that stretch of coast under the earlier worse glaciation conditions could not have supported a population larger than that with Native technology. The Tlingits began moving north into this part of the coast probably by the 1500's, and by 1800 had mostly taken over Yakutat. By 1800 Yakutat was bilingual or mostly Tlingit speaking. The Tlingits continued to move up the coast, assimilating the Eyaks. By 1900, Kaliakh River was predominantly Tlingit-speaking and Bering River (Katalla) was bilingual Eyak-Tlingit.

Meanwhile, as the Eyaks were losing ground on the southeastern end to the Tlingits, they were taking over the Copper River Delta and Eyak Lake areas from the Aleuts. In the 1700's the Delta and Lake were probably still Aleut. Names like Alaganik and Eyak, and still many names around Eyak Lake, are of Aleut origin, not Eyak. During the 1700's and 1800's, however, the Eyaks took over the Alaganik-Eyak area, and in fact that became the last Eyak stronghold.

The Eyaks were really little affected by the Russians. They got trade goods at Nuchek and some were baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church, but their population and culture did not decline seriously. It was only some years after American takeover that the Eyak people began to decline. The first Americans to come through the area were in the 1880's. During 1889-1893, suddenly four canneries were established in the Eyak area -- Orca, Odiak, Loquenhena, and Kayak Island.

At this point there were probably still at least 300 Eyak-speaking people between Bering River and Eyak. (The Yakutat-Kaliakh area was by now almost completely assimilated to Tlingit.) Within the next 20 years, the Eyak population had been decimated down to probably less than 60. The reasons for this are quite clear. In fact, under the conditions that befell the people it is a miracle that even that many survived. It is a sad thing to realize that the foundations of the city of Cordova are built on the totally irresponsible

destruction of a whole nation. The canneries each hired about 150 people, all males, about 75 white and 75 Orientals (cheap shanghai'd Chinese labor) and almost no natives. The Eyaks found no work but only destruction at the canneries. The only women in the area were Eyak, and the white cannery men had alcohol, the Orientals opium. The dreadful result of that interaction can be imagined. Aside from alcohol and violence, disorganization and demoralization, two other terrible things repeatedly happened. Disease and epidemics, for instance scarlet fever, which in 1893 wiped out most of Alaganik; and the other was forcible despersion -- children were taken away from their families and sent especially to Chimawa in Oregon, many of them never to return. This was also a pattern that went on for many years. The coming of the canneries in Cordova was also an economic disaster to the Eyaks. As stated before, while they found no work at the canneries, the canneries took most of their fish. The cannery practices at that time were uncontrolled waste, dynamiting, blocking whole channels, etc. During the canning season, the Eyak people therefore were disrupted socially and at the same time deprived of much of their food gathering. It is obvious then why during this period, 1890-1910, it may be considered a miracle that even 50 of 300 Eyaks survived such conditions. The rest of Eyak history can be pretty well remembered by some of the people of Cordova -- continued cultural oppression, poor health and social conditions, the continuing alcoholism conditions at Cordova, continuing dispersal and cultural oppression through the American school system. All of this brought the Eyak population down to what it is today.

In the meanwhile, the Aleut people of Prince William Sound had begun also to congregate more at Cordova, so that the native group in the Cordova area is once again mostly Aleut.

Michael Krauss
Head linguist at
University of Alaska--Fairbanks

An 1893 document concerning the origins of the Eyak people refers to the Ungalantz. The Eyak people were a marriage of Tlingits and Athabaskans. Their marriages were a result of the Russian fur trader's desire for a peaceful existence. Several seasonal camps were located at Mile 5 and 6, Ighiak, at Mile 22 Alaganik and Lookta-ek, and also Lake Village (Old Town, Cordova). The language spoken by people of the Eyak area is more closely related to the Eskimos in the Interior.

The population was quite large in number, maybe three hundred prior to the census (1890). Kaj Birket, Smith, and Fredrica De Laguna have written several books concerning the Chugach-Eskimo people.

Many Chugach regional villages were abandoned early in this century. Disease, harsh weather, and environmental changes have been influential in driving the population toward the non-native communities.

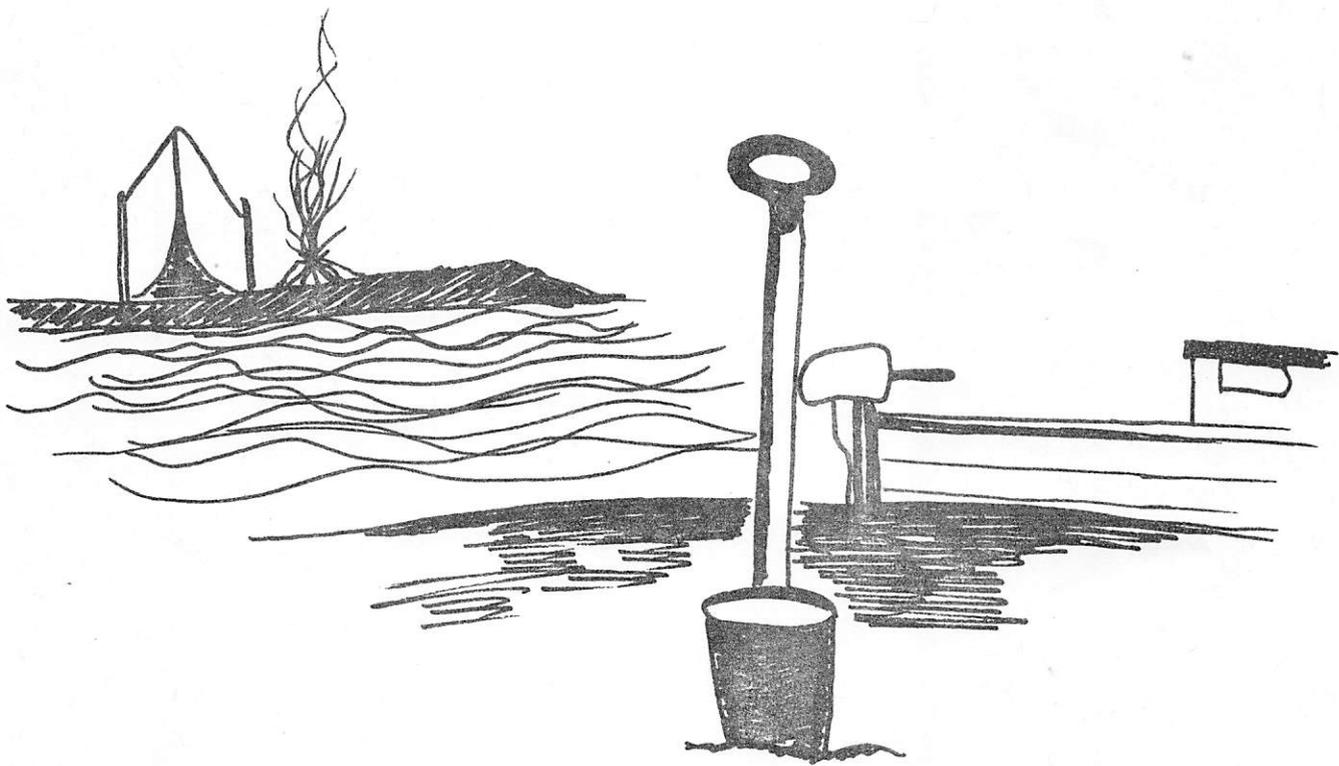
Some youth of Chugach decent were allowed to attend state schools while others were forced to attend BIA financed schools. These schools were substandard. This practice continued into the early fifties.

Citizenship was finally granted to Alaska Natives in the forties. This finally allowed more opportunities in education and employment.

It takes many years for a large group of people to attain the same educational levels that the non-native has. It will take many years more for the many other differences to become less of a divisional line.

Submitted by Patience Faulkner
Native Village of Eyak

SOPHIE BORODKIN



John Anderson 1990

WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR YOU WHEN YOU WERE OUR AGE?

I worked all the time. I started to work when I was eight and a half years old. I worked in a clam cannery and then I started to work at New England. As soon as you could pick a can up they put you to work in a cannery in those days. We didn't run around and lay around. I didn't know my childhood like you kids do. All I did was work. My father went trapping and I had to take care of the canoe. He cleaned the traps. We always had a lot of canneries and moved our camps from one place to another. When we would go out fishing we would set the tents up in the flats. Nobody came into town until the end of the season. We had to live in the tents. I fished a little. It helped. I would go clam digging. Then I would always work in the cannery. I was so little the boss had to make steps to the grinder to put the clams in. I worked all my life until I got asthma and the doctor made me quit working, otherwise I would still be working.

YOUR HOUSE SHOWS EVIDENCE OF A LOT OF WORK RIGHT HERE WITHOUT LEAVING IT. YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL PLACE HERE. IT MUST TAKE A LOT OF WORK TO KEEP IT IN THIS CONDITION.

Thank you. I can't do much now because I don't feel too good most of the time. I have had this house three years almost now, in June. Thank God for the BIA and Chugach. They helped to give me this house. I had an older house. I guess the kids remember the house. It was so old. It must have been over a hundred years old. It used to be a store down in Old Town here. That was before my time. My parents told me that. They destroyed it. The house was built when the railroad started, my mom and dad told me.

SOPHIE, DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL?

Just three days. I just went in the front door and went out the back. I taught myself mostly. I never talked English until I was thirteen years old. All I could say was "Hello", or "Bye-bye", or something.

WERE YOU HERE WHEN THE RAILROAD WAS HERE?

Yes.

DID YOU EVER GO TO KENNICOTT?

Yes. I went to Kennicott in 1925. I stayed there about a couple of weeks in McCarthy.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THAT TRIP?

Oh...We stopped at Chitina and when we were coming back from McCarthy the bridge went out. It washed out. They had to take us across in a great big skiff. There was a cable going across. Boy, was I scared. I was only fourteen years old. I never had an experience like that in a river.

WAS THE RIVER ROUGH AT THAT POINT?

It was swift. It had to be much men rowing across. There was no motor on the skiff.

DID THEY ALWAYS HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE RAILROAD?

Every spring. They had that trouble with the bridge washing out, the Chitina Bridge.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE EARTHQUAKE?

This last one? 1964? Yes, I was at the old house and I had Pauline Graham with me. You kids know her. She was with me. She was around eleven or twelve years old at the time, I guess. I didn't get scared. I'd just come back from town with my son and Pauline. I said, "It is funny. It is thawing so fast." The ground was getting warm and soft coming back from town. I used to walk all the time. A little after five, here comes the earthquake. My son said, "Look at the ground, Mom!" It was going just like big waves. I did get to see it. I said, "Oh my. It's an earthquake coming." It didn't scare me until it was over with. Then I couldn't walk.

HOW LONG DID IT LAST?

Oh, it couldn't have lasted more than two minutes. Well, I guess it lasted more than that in other places.

THERE WAS NO DAMAGE DONE TO THE HOUSES IN THIS AREA?

No. The next morning me and my son went down there at five o'clock in the morning. We saw herring, flounder, and whatnot on the dock. A tidal wave came in.

YOUR FATHER WAS A TRAPPER?

Yes. He did everything. He trapped out around the Sound all the way to Galena Bay and Cordova Bay.

WHAT DID HE USE TO GET OUT THERE?

A little boat. We didn't know what a kicker was. We just rowed

most of the time. Afterwards we had a little Imperial; that is a little tiny engine. Anybody could start that. I ran it myself. Most of the time we had a canoe to go around trapping.

HOW MUCH DID YOU GET FOR YOUR FURS?

I wouldn't know. Not very much anyway. Maybe a couple of dollars for a mink.

WAS YOUR CANOE A BIDARKA?

No, it was a dug-out tree.

DO YOU REMEMBER HOW YOUR FATHER MADE THAT BOAT?

I don't exactly know. I didn't pay attention. I always had something to do at home, carry water, or wood, or something. They had some kind of tool to chop it out. Sometimes they could burn it out and then smooth it down.

COULD YOU PADDLE THE CANOE?

Oh, yes. We had one paddle and you had to go this way and then go over this way. It was real good. It was fast.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD GENERELLY RIDE IN THE CANOE?

It depends on how big it is. Some had big ones, five or six people just sitting in it.

WHAT IS A BIDARKA?

They are made of skins. Aleuts make them. You should see them. They are beautiful. Women sewed them. I don't know how they could sew them. It's so fine. They don't leak. I saw a few of them when I was a kid.

WHAT KIND OF SKIN ARE THEY MADE FROM?

It is made of some kind of guts. You dry them out, seal skin. I am getting ahead of my story. The guts are used for parkas for rain stuff just like plastic you see nowadays. I can't tell you what kind of skin the bidarka is. You got to ask Mr. Tiedeman.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM YOUR MOTHER?

Oh, I could make moccasins and stuff, make bead work. I could clean the seal skin. We would scrape it after it was dried and make it real white. Then you make it soft by doing this. It is sure hard

on your hands too. (Here Sophie demonstrated a kneading process used to make the skins soft and pliable.)

THIS IS BEFORE YOU MAKE MOCCASINS?

Yes.

THE ESKIMO WOMEN CHEWED THE SKINS.

We did, too, after it was sewed, where the stitches are. That was my mother's job.

WAS THAT HARD ON THE TEETH?

I guess so. My mother always did that. I mostly did the beadwork.

DID YOU KEEP ANY OF THE WORK THAT YOU DID?

No.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THOSE SONGS MEAN AT THE RUSSIAN CHRISTMAS?

No, I don't know. I don't talk Russian. You have to ask Maggie Totemoff.

DO YOU SPEAK ALEUT?

Very little. I'm Eyak you know. I'm not Aleut.

THERE ISN'T ANY SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE TWO LANGUAGES?

No.

I worked first canning clams for the Cochrans. Charlie Cochran owned the cannery. That is Jerry Cochran's dad. I worked at Mountain Slough, too. They put up fish there, red salmon, and kings, and silvers, humpies, sometimes, but it's hard to haul humpies you know.

WHAT WOULD THEY DO, JUST CAN THEM DOWN THERE AND BRING THEM UPRIVER IN THE BOAT?

Yeah. Then they shipped them out. There used to be a cannery out at Mile 55 but that was before my time, you know. You have to go way up the river. You can't see it from the bridge.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OLD PICTURES OF THE OLD DAYS?

No, I don't. The water came in the house and spoiled my pictures. I had a lot of old pictures. There was too much snow and rain. It floods down here sometimes. You should see here sometimes; I can't even go to the road. Water gets so deep here. Water from the melting snow and rain too.

SOPHIE, DO YOU REMEMBER ANY STORIES YOUR PARENTS TOLD YOU WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD?

I don't remember too much. See, I didn't stay at home too much. I worked so much. At home I had to carry water. I had to wash clothes. I had to carry wood. I never had a chance to listen to any stories hardly. My mom and I would sew and the old ladies would get together. That is all we did. That was in the winter time when there was hardly anything to do.

WAS YOUR FAMILY A BIG ONE?

No. There was nine of us kids but my mom lost some of the kids. There was only three of us and now only two of us left. Me and my sister.

It seems like everything was so cheap in those days. Fifty dollars worth of groceries would fill this place. Now fifty dollars worth you can't even see it. There was no tax to pay. When the fishermen went out to the flats they didn't have to pay for the groceries. The canneries furnished them coal and groceries, gas. Now they won't even give you one gallon of gas. That's the way all the fishermen were. They furnished everything for them.

REMEMBERING THINGS THE WAY THEY USED TO BE AND THE WAY THEY ARE NOW, DO YOU THINK LIFE IS BETTER?

Life was better in the old days. You know why? Seems like you are being watched and you are kept now days. That's the way I feel. See, you are taxed and you no more get through with something that something else comes up that they tell you to do. You can't even live the way you want to in your house. I am getting Social Security now. Well, when did you put in for this? No sooner did I settle down than they tell me, well, your tax on the house is this much. It is \$ 585 a year now for this house. The state of Alaska paid it last time. Before, when I had the old house, it was a hundred and thirty dollars a year. That is quite a difference, isn't it? There is no freedom at all. There are very few people in this town that I know now. Before, you knew everybody. There's very few of us.

HERE SOPHIE PRODUCED TWO DOCUMENTS AND SHARED THEM WITH HER VISITORS: ONE, A CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION FROM THE ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES, AND A CONGRATULATORY LETTER FROM SENATOR MIKE GRAVEL.

Sophie Borodkin lives in Cordova, one of the last three Eyak speakers, has seven children, is in her sixty-sixth year, spends a great deal of time reading Eyak for the University and regional usage. The Alaska Federation of Natives, Incorporated, presents this award to Sophie Borodkin for being recognized as an outstanding Alaska Native Woman. November 11, 1977.

Dear Sophie,

I understand that you were recently presented with a certificate from the Alaska Federation of Natives recognizing you as an outstanding Alaskan Native Woman. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and commend you for your dedicated service. Recording the Eyak language and history for future preservation is indeed an accomplishment worth noting. I wish you the very best of all in your future endeavors. If there is ever anything of a federal nature I can do to assist you please don't hesitate to contact me. Warm regards.

Sincerely,

Mike Gravel

He wrote me a nice card when my mother passed away and when my husband passed away. They always write to me from the White House.

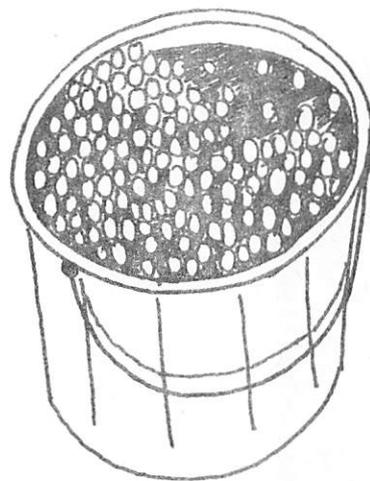
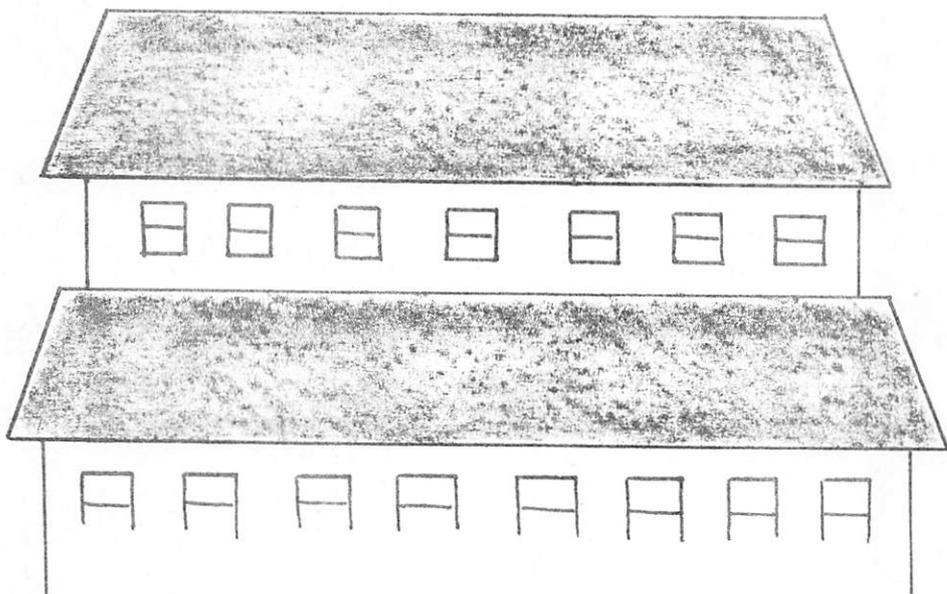
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY ANYTHING IN YOUR LANGUAGE FOR US?

What should I say?

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT US.

Sophie speaks in her Native language. Asking her to translate she said; "I thank you people for coming here. It makes me feel good that you people came here to see me."

Rosie Lankard



John Anderson 1980

We have a dictionary pertaining to the Eyak language, since there are so few of us left. That's something my mom never taught me, was the Eyak language. It is altogether different than the Aleut. There are so few of us left that they do have a book about the Eyak Tribe.

There are so many things that my mother taught me, like smoking fish, putting up berries, and how to keep our wild meat. I have to show you; I can't tell you how it is done, but anything you want to know I'll tell you about the Eyak Tribe.

WHERE WAS YOUR VILLAGE?

Down around the Eyak Lake. Our first village was up at Alaganik at 27 Mile. Then we ventured down from the interior around Sitka. I really don't know if we are related to the Athabaskans or the Aleut. They way I look at it is that we're one big family made up of different tribes. That's the way I brought my children up anyway. Maybe they don't ask questions because they don't know what kind of questions to ask.

JUST TALK AND TELL HOW YOU LIVED THEN.

How we lived? Well, I went away to a boarding school, Wrangell Institute. When I went into school I was a Freshman and I learned the white people's way of living. From then on I married a white fellow. When I came back to Cordova my mother taught me how to make bread, smoke fish, put up berries. But many years ago we didn't know what it was to go to the store and buy a dozen eggs. We went out and got sea gull eggs, duck eggs, and put them in water glass, and before that, when my mother was a little girl, they would render seal oil and put all their wild game, eggs, and whatever in there, since we didn't have a refrigerator or freezer, and it would keep forever as long as air didn't get to it.

My mother would cook deer meat up and put in kegs and then render goat fat then seal it off. Over the top she would put a hind leg and pour goat fat over the top and then that way when you used the meat you wouldn't break through the other layer because it hardens. It keeps the meat precooked. Seal oil is like Crisco oil.

When I was growing up we lived off the land. I can't remember sitting down and eating a T-bone steak or anything like that. Mom would put up 25 cases of berries. She would use washtubs then start from there. With the six of us kids we would clean them and prepare them.

HOW DID SHE PREPARE THE BERRIES?

Blueberries, salmonberries, nagoonberries, currants, and strawberries. You know Strawberry Point? We would go out there for around a week. We

would take a tent with all of us kids. We would pick the berries and my mother would make her syrup in town. It's plain boiled water and sugar and it would have to spin a thread. So we would pick the berries and she would clean them and put them in the syrup. Then she cooked them on a Coleman burner, so all our berries were prepared right out at Strawberry Point.

Then we went to smoke some fish. They would fix a little smoke-house out there by the river and they would live in a tent again. Then smoke their fish and then they would come to town and then that way there wasn't, well, then we didn't have the new equipment to travel back and forth, motors and whatever. We had to row from, you know where the Eyak Lake is, out to six mile. Then we would camp out there and put up our blueberries and all of us did this as a group, and I'm still trying to keep the family going berry-picking and putting up fish with me. It isn't that much fun anymore because money is so plentiful now. With all the kids going fishing and what not, they would rather go buy it than sit down and get all slimey and you know what I mean.

Dean's mother could tell you now that she puts up fish and fruit. There are few of us around. I do it mostly for my family because I got seven children and what I put up now is divided among the family now. I never have to sell any because it all goes to the family.

HOW WOULD YOUR MOTHER TAKE CARE OF HER BERRIES, YOU SAID SHE COOKED THEM IN SUGAR-WATER?

Well, no. She would put the fresh berries after cleaning in mason jars, then she had these, well, I would say, 20 gallons of syrupy oil. We had the five gallon can. Then she would pour the syrup over them. Then she had a big copper boiler, I haven't seen one of those for years, then she would put 15 quart jars in there, then boil them on the double Coleman stove, and then, when the berries raised so far, then she knew they were done. That's the way she would do it. Now we use timer, and the modern pressure cooker is what I use. Then she made jams. She didn't waste anything. She made jams to get the benefit of the flavor of the berries like blueberries, currants, and she called them nagoonberries, and I noticed in some of the Alaska cookbooks they're called nagoons. To me they are nagoons because that's what my mother said.

Now there's a real flavorful berry. They grow around six or seven inches off the ground depending on where you find them. She put a lot of them up whole, you know, with the syrup, but the jams were made just like, well you put it all in the pot, then add the sugar and syrup. I still don't know what she used for thickening her jams of jellies because it didn't, well, when I started, we had the Certo and all that. I'm sure she didn't, so I don't know how she thickened her jams and jellies, but they turned out better than mine.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN A NATURAL PLANT?

Well, I observed everything she did, but I just can't remember her using Certo or any kind of preservative to thicken. Maybe some of the other parents will fill you in on that.

MAYBE YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO COULD DO THAT?

Well, I could ask around and find out because when I am putting up my berries I often wonder what Mom did use, since there are so many things nowadays, you know, to put your jams and jellies, that they didn't have years ago.

WHERE WOULD YOUR MOTHER GET SUGAR AND THE JARS THAT SHE NEEDED?

Well, from what I remember, we had several stores and we would buy the sugar there.

IN CORDOVA?

Yes. Her jars, well you could buy them in the stores, too. It was just like what you would call a little farm store, you know, in the lower forty-eight now. You go into one of these hardware stores where they just have everything. That's the way it used to be here.

WERE THE PRICES HIGH?

No, because I can remember my mother sending me up for groceries with a five dollar bill and I could barely carry the bag home, and I would still have three dollars and something to bring home. It's just unbelievable.

WHAT WOULD YOU EAT BESIDES BERRIES AND FRUITS AND MEAT? WERE THERE ANY OTHER FOODS OR ANYTHING ELSE?

No, my mother would put dandelion leaves in her stew. You pick them in a certain time of the year and around the first two weeks that you see them growing, and you pick the leaves and you clean them, then put them in your stew. It was really good tasting. Then there was wild rice. It's about as big as a quarter and maybe bigger and it's right in the root there and you boil them up in your stew, too. I remember her using different plants. Those two were the main ones. Also, there was rhubarb. Now you have to pick them early or they will get rooty.

ROOTY?

Yes, they get hard, just like celery.

IS RHUBARB A PLANT?

Yes.

I KNOW WHAT IT IS, BUT DOES IT GROW IN THE WILD?

Yes, it does and that is more of a jelly or a preservative again.

THE ROOTS? THE WILD RICE IS THE ROOT OF THE PLANT?

There is a lot of things, I have even learned from different Filipino Women now that they are here. I would meet them out berry-picking and they would be picking mushrooms. Now they told me that we don't have a poisonous mushroom in Alaska.

YES, THERE ARE POISONOUS MUSHROOMS IN ALASKA. NOT IN CORDOVA AREA AREA THOUGH. YES, WE HAVE A BUNCH OUT BY OUR HOUSE.

Oh, that's something I figured, well, jes', I've never picked them myself because I've never seen Mom use them. Anyway, they were picking mushrooms and I thought, now that's something to keep in mind, but everything I do now I have to read and see. I would try to get an article on it and see what someone else thinks of it before I would cook it for my family.

TALK ABOUT WHEN YOU WENT AWAY TO THE BOARDING SCHOOL.

Well, this was in Wrangell, Alaska, and it was for children that had native blood of any kind, four hundred kids in there; two hundred girls and two hundred boys. When I was there I enjoyed having a housemother. What we called a housemother, which came around at 9:00 p.m. to see if we were in bed at 9:00. I enjoyed that because I didn't have that at home and there I had a clean bed to go to at 9:00. When they came to check, it made me feel good that someone cared enough that I was there in bed.

The schooling, we went to school from 9:00 to 4:00, and then the students did the cooking and the cleaning. We kept up the school and there was something like sixteen staff members. The teacher was there to see that we did our job, she was also there to teach us and that really did help. Knowing that, I worked at the health center, that was our hospital, and then we had chores that we had to do three times a day. Not once, like I had details in the bathroom and I had to make sure there had to be no dust anywhere in any of the corners. I had two bathrooms and I had to make sure that the tub was clean, the sink, toilet, floors, and made sure there was paper towels and tissue paper and I had to check that out three times a day. Otherwise, I would get a tardy. I think three tardies make one absent. Also you were on the chain gang. On a Saturday afternoon when you had free time,

then all the students could go to the matinee, or do whatever they wanted to do in that four hours. The ones on the chain gang had to scrub floors, pick up garbage and litter on the campus. I was on the chain gang once. That taught me. I had tears in my eyes when the kids went to the matinee. That was five miles to town, that was really something to do.

When you get out of school and get on the bus at least you are on your own, but if you mess up and you get on the wrong bus, then you are in trouble again; but it taught me that if someone tells you to do something, you do it, and you won't get in trouble, and then you can participate in everything the other students are doing.

I think it is nice to know, all of you are children now, and whoever or whatever you do now, you take and stop and think now, this is my life, and if someone tells you, well--your parents, for instance, they tell you a certain time to be home, well, if you stop and think about it, they must care or they wouldn't care when you go home, and that is the way I took it when I went to the boarding school.

We had to be down at the dining room at 7:30 to eat, then do our chores, then go to school, then at lunch time we had an hour break, half-hour to eat and half-hour to get our chores done and get back to school by 1:00.

Every morning they had a bell that went off at 7:00 and we had to be dressed and have our beds made. We couldn't have anything lying around. We had to have square corners on the bed because we had officers for every group that would go around checking. If you had a book on the bed or a little wrinkle in the bed that was a tardy mark against you. Every week there was a locker check. In your locker you couldn't have any dirty clothes or any food, but it taught us how to be neat and to care for what was ours. That was the way I looked at it, I didn't think they were being nosey just checking to see what kind of a housekeeper I was. That's the same as a housekeeper, everything had to be in order.

DID THE BOYS HAVE TO DO THAT?

Yes.

EVEN CLEAN THE BATHROOMS?

Yes.

WOW, WHAT A DRAG.

Well, now and then, in order to keep the school working and not too much overhead. It didn't cost us anything to go to school there; but every week now, like I was a Freshman, we would take a week off from school and we would keep the maintenance work, the cooking and everything. It was all done by the students and there was an advisor

there to teach us what to do. They would switch us around. We had to do everything and that way I learned how to make bread, but they did have a big machine like I've got at home now. In the old days you didn't make bread like that, we punched it and let it rise. Since there was all these students now, they did have some machinery. Instead of making two or three loaves of bread, they would be making fifty, and then we had to set the tables and have everything in order. There was always someone to guide us when we were in doubt.

I would like to send my kids to a boarding school because it will teach them how to care for themselves and others. I enjoyed it, it was the happiest time in my young life, knowing some stranger would come in and take care of us and knowing we were well cared for.

DID THE GUYS GO OUT AND PARTY?

No, there was no partying. The girls had two dorms on the other side of the campus and the boys had two dorms. We had dances and ball games and social room, where our boyfriends would come and visit. We had a stereo in there, not like the kind you boys have now, where it blows the roof off your house. We would sit there and dance and I thought it was enjoyable to know that some boy had the nerve to come over to the girls' dorm where there was about fifty girls and sit around and visit. You know it takes a lot of courage. You know, we weren't allowed to go over to the boys' dorm, but the boys could come over and visit us. We had our restrictions, though, but to me that meant a lot, knowing that they were not my parents. I know now that it was quite an experience, I just wish my kids would go to a boarding school even for a year to see because everything is done by time on a schedule that you have to follow.

DO YOU THINK WHAT YOU LEARNED THERE IS BETTER PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE, FOR BRINGING UP YOUR FAMILY IN A WAY THAT PLEASURES YOU?

Yes, it is a different way of life now. I think it taught me and I think the more education you get is going to help you when you get married; it is going to help you understand your children better. My mother went to school three days. My father died when I was five and I barely remember him. My mother taught me that if you can tell the truth and don't steal the other things will fall into place. I have done that with my life now. If you can tell the truth and you are honest, and if my mother could teach me that when she only had three days of schooling, just think what I could teach my children if I took the time and effort of understanding; there wouldn't be any generation gap. It is just understanding another person even though there is seven children and my husband and I in our way of life.

Each think different and we are trying to stay there and make things work just like you kids are here in school. The more education, the better off you will be when you will have your own family like I

have found out just from past experience, now the ones that drop out instead of trying to figure out why they are getting mad, they just blow up and they don't even know why they are mad at themselves. You are going to have to help yourself just like I did when I was going to school, and anything is possible once you put your mind to it. That's the way I think of it.

WHAT ABOUT THE EARTHQUAKES?

Well, there was not that much that happened here in Cordova. We did have some buildings that washed down in the slough and then we had a row of cabins out at the Clambeach. I think that tidal wave just took away everything. We had a little cabin there, but the only thing that was amazing now was my husband was out clam-digging, alone, and the sand started shifting and big cone dunes shot up all around him and he thought there was something going on. He went and put the oars under his skiff because when anything starts shifting on a bar you start sticking or going down, and the tide came in around five or six times within two or three hours, and he could hear this big roaring, and he thought that something was going on so he would shoot across Egg Island and here comes this tidal wave and he could just see it. It looked enormous to him. He was behind Egg Island and then he thought he should get out of there because he heard the roaring again so he went behind another island that didn't cover and then, just when he came from where he had just left, he was out there something like fourteen hours just wondering what to do. Then, when it seemed like the water settled, he started for town and then comes all these cabins floating by him and he heard someone hollering for help. Then it got where he thought he was imagining it, but then he thought maybe one of the cabins did have someone in it so he went back trying to see. Then there was one of the guys hanging onto one of the cabins and they found him later. He was on one of the sandbars, and he really did hear someone yell for help, but it was already dark so he couldn't help them, but he did save a gold watch for an old-time clam digger and I think that watch was given to him from his grandfather or someone because he did thank Glen. That was the only thing he had seen. He saw it hanging there when he crawled through the window of this building floating by. When he got to Whitshed there, all the cabins were gone. It was something like fourteen hours before I knew he was safe. That is the only experience I know of that was interesting to me. To be out there, all alone, and not have a radio to see if everyone in town was okay.

EGG ISLAND, WHERE IS THAT?

Egg Island is out towards the flats, I would say about eight mile. That is where they would dig clams and fish salmon.

WHAT ABOUT THE STORY YOU USED TO TELL ME ABOUT GRANDMA WORKING IN THE CANNERY RIGHT OUTSIDE OF HERE?

There was several different ones that don't exist anymore. Crystal Falls now, she worked there, now that's out at the mouth of the river, Eyak River. At that time you could work as a family. Even my brothers and sister worked there; they could case up. There was no age limit, and you worked for 15 cents an hour. We thought that was a lot of money then. There was New England, that was out at the mouth of the river, then Shepard Point. In those days fifteen cents would go a long way. I knew when I went to a movie, if I had fifteen cents for the movie and ten cents for my ice cream cone and candy bar I thought I was rich. Because a quarter in those days took me to the show and bought me an ice cream cone and a candy bar. I would baby-sit for three hours so I could go to the movie once a month or maybe twice if I'm lucky.

YOU SAID YOUR FATHER DIED WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG?

Yes, I was five.

HOW MANY CHILDREN IN YOUR FAMILY?

Twelve.

HOW DID YOUR MOTHER PROVIDE FOR THAT BIG FAMILY?

Just by canning and then she would work in the shrimp cannery, and I was the oldest girl so I did the babysitting and washed the clothes. It wasn't automatic, we had a scrub-board and we had to carry our own water, then we chopped our wood and then we would heat the water. We had coal and wood and I got quite a bit of experience baby sitting when I was nine years old, till I went away to high school.

I was just like my mother to the younger children but I never heard my mother really complain. Then she remarried right before I went away to high school. I think it was after I came back from high school that I saw refrigerators. She never did have an electric stove. I still don't even have a dishwasher and I don't know how to use one either, but I figure God presented me with three automatic dishwashers and it works really good!

DO YOU KNOW THE OLD CORDOVA?

Yes, not the old, old, Cordova, see they had the old Cordova was down by the Eyak Lake that was Old Cordova, that's why they call it "Old Town". Is that what you were referring to?

YES.

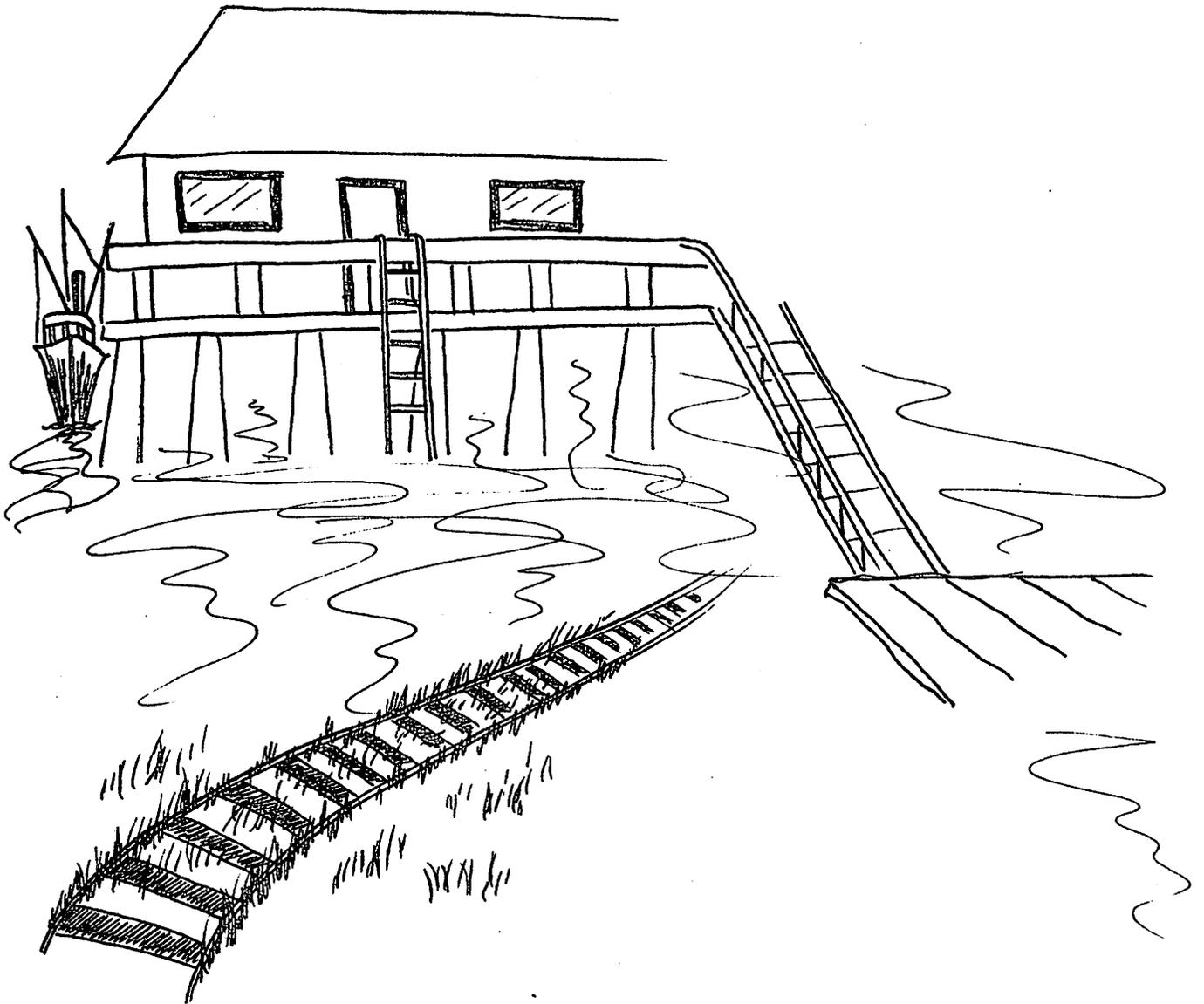
My dad worked on the railroad now, and he was from Kodiak and he got hurt and he was in his middle 20's when he passed away. Out of twelve children only two my mother went to the hospital to have and the rest of us were born by mid-wives and neighbors coming over to help my mother.

At that time, when my mother would always say that the doctor would bring the baby in the little black case. When I went away to high school I believed that. So, I wanted a sister and why couldn't the doctor bring me a little sister; I had a brother so why not a sister? At that time, I thought sisters were more fun to have.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE THE RAILROAD WAS?

Well, it was where the highway is now and the Eyak Trailer Court was where the round house was. It went all the way down to the ferry slip where they parked those coal trucks down there and where they would ship out on the Alaska Steam. It went up to Kennicott and up in the interior. I never rode a train and when I went away to school they were digging and putting in the highway but I can remember when there would be piles of coal and ore. Then these speeder cars, you know, with the T in the middle, that you pushed on each end? Now that was interesting for my brother and I.

JOHN KLASHINOFF



John Anderson 1980

My name is John Klashinoff. I was born in Nuchek in 1906, raised in Makaka Point in Hawkins Island. I moved to Makaka Point about 1919 after the big flu epidemic they had killed off all the people and some of my people moved away from Nuchek and I was one of them. We built up little houses out at Curve Point but before I went to Makaka Point I was in Cordova when I was about 8 or 10 years old.

Cordova was just, like I said, a little mud hole. There was a town starting up on the hill here where the town is now, but it was just a bunch of mud, a little gravel hole.

They had houses here and very few buildings, but no roads, just little gravel roads. Going to Old Town there was just a little trail where you see the Eyak Highway is now, just a small little trail going up there towards the railroad, and when you get up to the lake there are high banks all over. When you look over there, there was a village there, an Eyak village. The whole half of the lake was surrounded by smoke houses, little houses and more houses further back towards the railroad. Those are all Eyak people. They are not my people.

When you come down and there was a little cannery, a pretty big cannery right down here where the trestle is, you see now where that pond is. That used to be open all the way up. There was a cannery in there and stern-wheelers bringing in fish from out in the flats.

And then, every time I came in, of course the town was building up a little more, and all the main part of the town was right in Old Town. That's where the main street was when they were building a new one here. There was a street there, of course, nothing but gravel, but they laid ties down on top of the mud and put a little gravel and made it meet, see, because I was here on one of their Fourth of July celebrations when I was a kid and that's where they had that celebration, and that's where I met old Dr. Chase. He used to be a nurse for the railroad before he became a doctor. He was a nurse for the Copper River and Northwestern railroad. They had their hospital right there, right up here where one of the Olsens had that house for a while. It's not there now.

They kept on building the new town up here and they built what they called the Orca Cannery. It was a big cannery. They had stern-wheelers in there to haul fish. There was a lot of fish then. So they built more canneries down here. The first crab cannery was down on the city dock down here. It's way up right below where the city hall is now; used to be a big city dock there. Went dry and they built the first clam cannery there. It was Healy-Scott. That's the first place I ever went to work on clams and I got ten cents and hour for ten hours a day on clams. That was my first job in Cordova. That's wages.

Of course, things were cheap. I could buy a suit of clothes for ten dollars. That's a boy's suit you know. Buy a pair of tennis shoes for fifty cents so I can get in the races on the Fourth of July. That's all we did.

So as I was growing up about 1921, I decided. . . No, first, I worked in the sawmill. They had a sawmill there. I worked in and out of the sawmill, worked in the cannery. At the sawmill they were furnishing all the lumber for the railroad, ties and timber, made all the railroad bridges. I went to work for them for a year or two, then I decided I'm going to go up the railroad. You had to be eighteen to get on the railroad and I was fifteen. I knew I was underaged so I went to the

railroad office anyway and applied for a job. Pretty soon they asked my age and I said, "Well I'm stuck now," so I says, "Well, I'm eighteen," I told them. I was about sixteen. So I got a job and I went up the railroad on the section gang, and I put in a couple of years around there and finally came back in. That was the Copper River and Northwestern railroad, was hauling a lot of ore. This yard, from down here as far as you could see, was piled with great big piles of ore, the high grade ore just dumped while they were waiting for the freighters to come in and pack it away. They had to dump it on the yard there, and then, when they were going to load, they picked it up again. They had a lot of sacks. Lots of ore was coming down. So, after I worked a couple of years on the railroad off and on there was a fire, a big fire in Kennicott around 1923. After they rebuilt that place they started hiring people again so I went to the railroad office to get a job at Kennicott. Well, then I was of age already, you know. That was in 1924. So I went to Kennicott, got work in the mines.

Up there they had four or five mines, the same company but it was a lot of mines. I worked in all of them. I stayed two years up there, came down, then I went back again.

There was a big town in McCarthy, an awful big town, a lot of people. Of course that was the town there for the mines. It was only about four miles out below Kennicott. You could walk down there, only four miles to walk, but they had one taxi running forth and back, and he was doing a great business. I think his name was Tom Greene. You could get a ride from Kennicott to McCarthy for four bits, or back up for four bits.

THAT WOULD BE A DOLLAR, FOUR BITS?

Four bits is fifty cents. So we used to ride forth and back. There was a lot of people in McCarthy. And then when we came down back from there of course I started fishing. Did a lot of fishing here. They don't fish in them days like you do now. You fished nothing but beach seine. There weren't no purse seining, all beach seining, but there was a lot of fish here.

When I first started fishing we got one-half cent a piece for a humpback and that's all we got. Now you take a humpback now, what is it? A dollar and a half, but then we got one-half cent. There are so many of them.

We didn't have a big boat. We had a bunch of skiffs. Only the biggest boat we had was the one we loaded our beach seine in, and we had a smaller skiff to carry our fish in and one to haul and fill everything up, and the stern-wheeler would come up and pick up our fish, and they would count one skiff load and just give us an average for the rest of our skiff loads, they wouldn't count them again, just one-half cent a piece.

In them years if you made \$700 in a season, you just made big money. You got a lot of fish, I mean, if you got \$700 crew share. But we got along on it. Everything was cheap. We could come in town here after the season and take the boats you see now, what they use for crabbing, a 30 foot boat or something like that. We'd buy a couple a hundred dollars worth of grub. We could load that boat three or four times and take it out to Makaka Point. So it wasn't too bad. Nowadays you take ten thousand dollars couldn't buy nothing, but them years you could. For a couple of hundred dollars you could live a couple of years and live real good and you were happy all the time. Everybody was happy in the

town. Everybody helped each other. On the Fourth of July they had a great time. People threw money on the street for the plays. I used to get rich picking money up from the street. It was really what you call a friendly town and it kept growing and pretty soon there were stores. There were quite a few business here. Hardly anybody here now but a couple or three stores. Of course there was beer parlors and saloons but we didn't care for them then. We weren't interested in them. They had flasks, you know. They carried whiskey in them. They'd throw them away and buy them back for fifteen a piece for those empty flasks. Pick them up, and wash 'em up, and bring them back into the saloon, and sell them back, because they had bought whickey and any flasks they could find, they just let us go out and look for them, and sell them back to the saloon. Us kids used to make money and after that we'd start fishing again every year. That was my life, fishing. Fished every year since I was a kid. Worked in the cannery, worked in the railroad, the mines, worked in four or five of the mines up there. Right after the big fire. I worked two years once. Next time I worked a year. Then I was up there for six or seven months at the time and I went down to McCarthy and worked down there. There was all kinds of labor up and down the railroad there until I got tired of it and started fishing. I come down here fishing. That was the best life for me.

WHAT DID YOU WORK AS IN THE MINES?

Oh, up there I wasn't a miner but they had underground trains there like electric trains and I was conductor on them or brakeman on the electric trains. Then I'd be a mucker. Oh there were all kinds of jobs. You'd just shift around. After you stayed in the mines a while, you'd learn things and they'd shift you around on what you were best for. I was a cage tender up there for about a year, I guess, like those cages they got, elevators. They had them in the mines the same way. Course you didn't press buttons there. They had bells you'd ring and just follow that and run your elevator up and down. I tended them for quite a while.

WERE THERE EVER ANY ACCIDENTS IN THE MINES?

All the time, all the time. There was a lot of people. They had four shifts around the clock, see. On certain shifts you'd get ready to go down, and pretty soon you'd see a basket coming up and wonder that they did, and they'd tell you about it. "well, he went down there when they blasted, or he went in the mine too early before the gas came out." And lots of times you didn't feel like going back down there. You'd see this guy coming out and what happened to him? He was either blasted, or got caught in the gas, or fell down the shute, or something. Those mines are just down. Where I worked up there in one of the mines, Bonanza, I think, was twenty-two hundred feet down, deep.

WAS THIS A COPPER MINE?

This was a copper mine. There's a level on every hundred foot and

then there's what they call arms going all over. They go for miles, those tunnels. And they have trains down there, and horses to haul the freight, and electric trains and accidents. Can't help it.

HOW DID THEY GENERATE ELECTRICITY?

Oh, they had a big generator. They had electricity all over there. Big motors, and they had big, oh, say about two feet around, hoses pumping fresh air down there all the time. Had to have that fresh air. You take twenty-two hundred feet was down and all of them tunnels, you had to have air. But it's awful hot inside of that mine up there. It's just like here. There wasn't a loose rock, all solid rock.

And then I went to LaTouche Island and worked in a mine down there, too, across the Sound. But that was a wet mine. Under the sea, that's where it was. I didn't like that very much. Still, I worked six months. I got out of there before it caved in anytime because it was dripping in that mine just like a leaky house, all over there. They had to keep the pumps going all the time to pump it out.

WAS THAT A COPPER MINE?

Yes, it was a copper mine.

DID YOU EVER WORK IN A GOLD MINE?

No, I never worked in a gold mine. I never hung around Valdez very much. I worked in the mines in Ellamar. That's underwater, too, and that was a wet mine and so I got out of there and worked outside. I didn't like them wet mines. You don't know when they're gonna cave in. There's too much water. Sometimes you go in there there's maybe two inches of water all over and rocks and its no place for me. I wanted to get a job outside of the mines so they let me work on timber or something, cutting timber for braces inside the mines. You get a job cutting timber or cutting logs. So that's what I did. Those leaky mines are no good.

WHAT YEAR DID YOU SAY YOU MOVED HERE? TO CORDOVA?

When I moved in I was around 15 years old.

Let's see... about 1921 or 22, that's from Makaka Point. We had a school out there at Makaka Point. There was about half a dozen kids. There was a couple of teachers. One teacher was Mrs. May. She died quite a few years ago. And when I came in town I went to school here, but I couldn't go to shcool very much. I had to work because things were so hard then, you know. Nobody got nothing free but everything was cheap so I had to keep on working. But I made 3th grade. That's all as far as I got. I had to quit school and continue working.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT LIFE AT MAKAKA POINT BEFORE YOU MOVED TO TOWN?

My life out at Makaka Point was a life which I really enjoyed. There was work. We had to put up our stuff from nature. We got meat, goat meat, and seal meat, sea lion, and fish. We had to put up enough for the winter. That was the main thing. We had to keep steady. All summer, picking up the stuff. Picking berries and picking eggs, sea gull eggs and whatnot. The people, I don't know how they put them up now, but they put them up. Everything was put up in oil, like seal oil, because we didn't have no freezer boxes like we have now. So we put everything up in oil. Even the sea gull eggs and berries and stuff, and smoked the meat, like jerky meat, and some of them, they'd cook it and preserve that in oil. It'd never spoil and they'd have enough for all winter because those years I remember it used to snow. We had houses out there, not two or three story houses like we have here now, but we'd have one story houses, and the snow used to come clear over the house and all that was sticking out was the stove pipe. Every year used to be lots of snow around here, so we used to have to get all of the stuff in before the snow came in.

WHAT WERE YOUR HOUSES MADE OF?

Oh, we had about six houses, like one community.

DID YOU BUILD YOUR OWN HOUSES?

Yes, log houses, all log houses. And we did our trapping, that was our livelihood. Trapping and fishing, hand lining and halibut, codfish, and we'd bring them into town here and sell them to the people in town and they just bought them. Bought fur. So we had a real good life out there. I moved to Cordova and I had to start working. Couldn't live the life we had there so we had to start working.

YOU SPOKE OF CORDOVA BEING A FRIENDLY PLACE BACK IN OLDER DAYS. DO YOU THINK IT IS LESS FRIENDLY TODAY? THIS TOWN HAS A REPUTATION OF BEING CORDOVA THE FRIENDLY CITY.

Well, it's still got the name, but it isn't the same town. We never changed the name but you don't have the same town.

WHAT DIFFERENCES DO YOU SEE?

There's a whole lot of differences in the time that I was here. You didn't have to know anybody. Everybody was willing to help you. Everybody did everything for each other. Now you got to do it for yourself. You don't depend on anybody no more. Of course, like us

oldtimers now, we are getting pretty good treatment. Once they know you, you didn't have any more problems. If you got hungry there was those that would help you until you got a job. They'd know if you weren't working and it was friendly. You don't see that anymore. Of course, I still like the place. I wouldn't trade it for any other place around. I've been all over up in Alaska and Cordova is still a friendly city.

WHAT DO YOU THINK MADE THE CHANGE THAT YOU SEE IN PEOPLE?

They're supposed to be a little smarter, I guess. They operate a little different. Your homes or grounds are getting crowded out and people still want to crowd you some more out. You used to be able to have a place here and nobody would bother you. There was not many people here. But the people moving in now, it's getting crowded out.

DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE 1964 EARTHQUAKE? WHAT DAMAGE WAS DONE TO THIS TOWN, CORDOVA?

Well, Cordova, I don't think it had too much damage. I know when the tide came in it went over the float and the dock was under water about 4 feet. Of course, it shook up the town quite a bit, cracked up the highway here quite a bit. The road was damaged but I don't think we had much damage in Cordova. Chenega was wiped out and a few places around the sound. Valdez was hit pretty hard. Chenega was wiped out completely, I think, except a few that got away that went up the hill. But there was about 35 or 40 people that got killed. One house and the school house is all that was left, but Cordova didn't suffer too much. A big tidal wave came in. It wasn't a swell, it was the tide.

THE RAILROAD WAS GONE AT THAT TIME, WASN'T IT?

The railroad was no longer in operation.

DID THEY JUST MOVE IT, JUST TEAR IT UP?

Yeah. When the railroad closed down they started pulling the tracks up. Started putting gravel over it and made a highway.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE RAILS?

They picked most of them up and started shipping them out. A lot of those trains they took out of here, too. They loaded them on ships and took them out. They had quite a few trains here. It was busy all the time, night and day, the trains moving around. We got used to it and after the railroad pulled out it kind of quietened up. You missed that railroad, you know. Now the road's all over. I used to like the railroad.

THEY TELL US THAT ONE OF THE MAIN BUSINESSES IN THE EARLY DAYS WAS WHISKEY BUSINESS, THAT THERE WERE MANY SALOONS.

Oh yeah, around 28 saloons. It did not cause any problems. I'd be around there selling flasks at the back door of the saloon and sell my flasks for 15¢ apiece. You'd be selling crabs, cooked crabs. I never seen no big trouble. Everybody seemed to be happy, no matter how many saloons there was. They did a lot of singing sometimes. I never seen no big fighting, accidents or wrecks. Of course, there was no cars then. Everybody walked. If the horse didn't walk over you, you were alright.

WAS THERE A CERTAIN AGE BEFORE YOU COULD GO IN THE SALOON?

Oh, yeah. I don't know what the age was but we never went in the saloon.

TODAY WOMEN GO IN THE BARS. WAS THAT THE CUSTOM IN THE PAST?

Come to think of it, I never seen a woman go in the bars, but they used to buy beer and take it out in the containers.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY STORIES THAT YOUR FATHER OR GRANDFATHER OR GRANDMOTHER TOLD YOU ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED OUT ON THE LAND BEFORE THERE WERE TOWNS HERE AS WE KNOW THEM TODAY?

I guess, before the town got here or probably before America bought Alaska, people used to tell me that the Prince William Sound was all ice. And you come to ask them how did they happen to find names for these places? First you ask them, "How did you happen to get so far out to Hinchinbrook?" Way out on the Gulf, you know, 90 miles from Valdez. "What was you doing way out there?" "We didn't have no choice, the rest of it was ice!"

Then I says, "How come you have names such as Chenega?" Chenega means "way on the side" in my language. "Well," he said, "that was all ice and when Chenega started coming out people started moving. Another time I asked, "How come we're supposed to be Aleuts, but we're not Aleuts?" The Aleuts came from the Aleution Islands, but we're called Chugach. Chugach means Eskimo. That's another thing. The ice started melting down, and the Chugach range started coming up, and we started walking. Everybody said "Chugach" that means "hurry up." "Let's get to that mountain. They became Chugach mountains and they came down to Prince William Sound. Everybody was in a hurry and they said, "Let's get to that thing that's coming out." That's land coming out.

They made a living after the Russians came. The main fur the Russians wanted was sea otter. He said, "They sent us out in bidarkas and we'd stay out for weeks hunting sea otter." I says, "How could you stay out for weeks without going out to sea?" He says, "Them days was different. When you had good weather you had it for weeks and we'd

sleep in our bidarkas out there in the ocean. We'd all get together and tie the bidarkas with our paddles across, just like a float, and we'd sleep on it. Wake up early in the morning and go hunting." And he said, "We'd use nothing but a bow and arrow!" The sea animal is a pretty fast animal. He said, "When we spotted a sea otter, or a herd of sea otters, there's about 10 or 12 bidarkas and three men in each bidarka, we just circle around the sea otter and shoot them with a bow and arrow. We don't hit them but we just scare them and keep them underwater and keep them winded. And pretty soon when he's out of wind and comes up more often, one of us hits him. We kill the whole herd like that sometimes. When we bring them in the Russians buy these things. We started getting rifles. The Russians had rifles. We had to stack our furs up like this until they came to the top of that rifle so we can buy the rifle with a stack of fur. That's how much they were cheating."

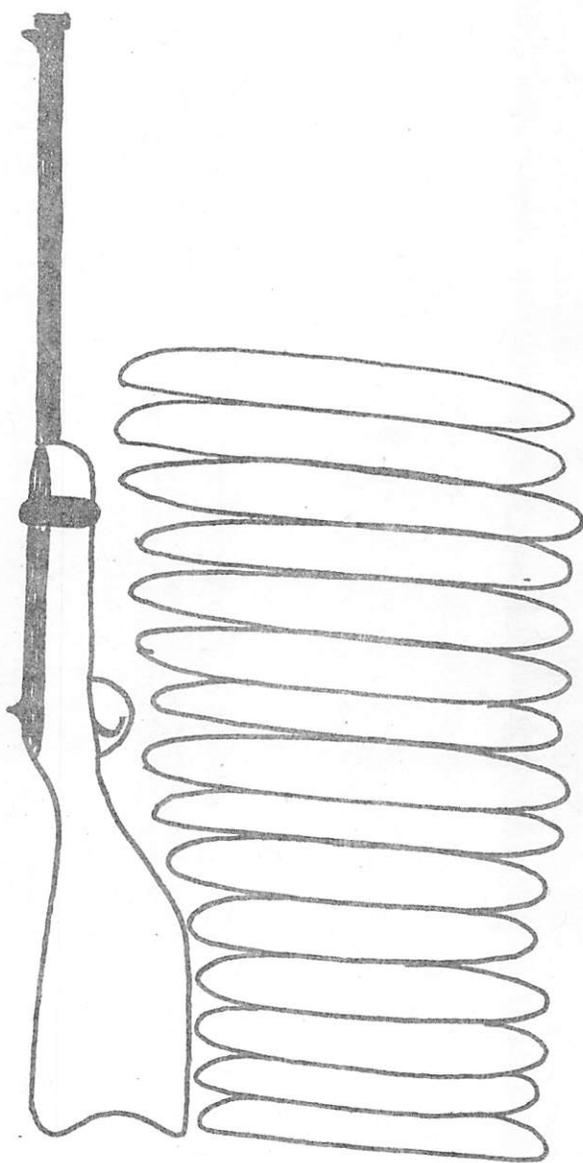
HOW MANY PELTS WOULD IT TAKE TO MAKE A STACK AS HIGH AS A GUN?

Well, it would take quite a few sea otters. Of course, I don't know if they pressed them down. You can count ten-fifteen sea otters anyway before you get a short barreled gun.

WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR SHELLS?

Probably have to trade skins for shells again. They traded for everything. They didn't get no cash. They traded groceries and what little there was in the stores, what the Russians had.

ØBT TIEBEMAN



John Anderson 1980

REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN YOU WERE THE AGE OF THESE PEOPLE. HOW DID YOU LIVE? YOU DIDN'T LIVE IN A PUSH-BUTTON SOCIETY.

No, I didn't live in a push-button society. That's true. We lived like the native people did live. Of course, not quite, because my dad, he was German, see, so it was a little bit more, little bit different. My grandmother, my granddad, why they were, they lived just as the Natives did live, you know, Aleuts. And of course he had a little Russian in him, too. That's quite a while ago 'cause he was almost a hundred when he died. All on my granddad's side they lived to be just about one hundred.

WHAT WAS YOUR AGE WHEN YOUR GRANDDAD DIED?

Ah, my age when my granddad died? I must have been thirty. I was around thirty years old then. My granddad, when he died, he didn't die just so long ago, almost forty-five years ago.

WHERE DID YOU LIVE AT THAT TIME?

We lived here in Cordova. My granddad, also step-grandmother and all my uncles and aunts they all lived here at that time. That is, from my twenties on they lived here. But before that they lived out at Hinchinbrook, Port Etches, and it just got down to one family. That's the one you should interview. He's Sunshine, Teddy Chimovisky. He's the last relative on my grandfather's side. He's the only one left, Teddy Chimovisky. He's between sixty-five and seventy now, but he's been here, lived out there all by himself. He and his mother are the last people that lived out at Port Etches.

DOES ANYONE LIVE THERE NOW?

Well, the only ones out there now is that lodge, that bear trap lodge is the only thing out there now, right there on the same spot where the church used to be and how they got it I just don't know because it's really an old site, you know, Port Etches site.

WERE YOU HERE IN THE DAYS OF THE RAILROAD?

Oh, I wasn't here when it was built but I was here just shortly after.

DID YOU WORK ON THE RAILROAD?

I did work on the railroad. I worked for them in 1923. I went to McCarthy and from Kennicott worked up in the mines, the Bonanza mines.

OH? WOULD YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT?

I left here in 1922. I was nineteen years old. In 1923 I was twenty and that's when I went up there. I only worked in the mines, the Bonanza mines, a week and worked with a Greek, blasting. I worked one week and sat down for our three o'clock lunch on blasting time and a big bunch of ore came down from the stoke and almost killed him and smashed his leg and so when they were carrying him out, of course, I went with him, and he calls me a boy, you know. He was a Greek. He couldn't speak English much. He says, "Son, you quit now." He said, "If you don't quit this today the same thing will happen to you, to kill you."

Now the mines were always dropping down the big stoke a thousand feet high. So I quit. I quit then. I went to work down McCarthy. Down there I worked with a mail carrier, the fellow by the name of Bill Barry. He was an old friend of mine and I used to work on motors you know. I kept his motors going, cars. He had a couple of old Model T Fords. I kept them going and every month we used to go on a mail run. We used to go from McCarthy to Chisana and that trip took about two weeks, sometimes three. A dog team and I went on that trip every month.

YOU WERE A RURAL MAIL CARRIER?

Yes. I was young and tough in my teens and twenties though. Nothing bothered me. Sometimes we stayed overnight. We always stayed overnight. On the middle trip we made, we had thirteen dogs and it took us three weeks. We lost three of them. Well, storms you know, and cold, and run out of food for the dogs, so we just quit.

WHAT WAS THE DISTANCE?

It was only seventy miles. Seventy miles, that's all, but it was rough country, you know, the interior. You had to go over a glacier. That's called the 40 Mile. Yes, we had to camp in the middle of the glacier.

WERE THERE CREVASSES?

Oh, yes it was, but the dogs were pretty good, you know, and sometimes we had a good trip and all I got was five dollars a day. That's all. That was a lot of money them days, but when I worked for Bonanza I only got four dollars a day.

YOU WORKED FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?

No, for the Guggenheim.

NO, WHEN YOU CARRIED THE MAIL.

Well, I worked for this friend of mine. He had the contract and he had to have one man with him all the time.

I THOUGHT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PAID A LITTLE MORE THAN PRIVATE INDUSTRY.

Well, no. This private guy paid me one dollar more. He probably got a hundred dollars a month, maybe a little bit more. It didn't pay much. The government never did pay much. That's one thing about Uncle Sam, he didn't pay much.

HOW MANY MONTHS OUT OF THE YEAR WOULD YOU HAVE TO USE DOGS INSTEAD OF THE MODEL T FORD?

They used the dogs in the winter and then horses in the summer, or mules. There were mules them days. We had four mules them days. The same guy, Bill Barry, he got to be a real friend of mine from then on, 1923 on. 1930 when the railroad shut down, it shut down here in 1930, he came down. He took a liking to me and I had a big boat, a big eighty-footer. You know, one of them big barges. Well, he thought about me, and being a friend of his he made a special trip down here. He walked all the way from McCarthy. That's a hundred miles he walked down. You couldn't come on the railroad. There was no way. He walked two hundred miles from there down here just to see me as a partner. He had about a five hundred, a thousand dollar contract to pick up the rails and bring them down the coast. So he came down here to see me and get that contract. We kind of talked things over and I didn't agree with him. I didn't see how we could do it.

WAS THIS AFTER THE RAILROAD SHUT DOWN?

Yes, that was in 1930. It closed in 1930. Then the next year he came down here and it was in thirty-one when he contacted me, come down to see me, and I couldn't get up the Copper with my big boat, far enough, only down the Copper River. And then we'd have to barge them down with big dories and stuff, all the way down the Copper River and I couldn't see how it could be done. I couldn't see it would pay. So I said no, I wouldn't go in with him, so he dropped the contract, turned it over to somebody else. Nobody else ever did it. There's still rails laying along there, along the railroad here and there. I helped him quite a bit, and I also worked for the movie company, that's in 1924. I think that's when the Iron Train movie was made. I worked two weeks for them, in the Copper River, another friend of mine and I, a guy by the name of Oscar Donaldson. We were good boatmen so we had to row them across the river, forth and back all the time. So we helped them with that movie, making that movie.

DO YOU REMEMBER STORIES THAT YOUR GRANDFATHER TOLD YOU?

Oh, some of them. I haven't got the memory I used to have. At times I can remember all of them and then there's times that I'm not interested. He's told us a lot of different stories. My grandfather, he was the best shot in Nuchek and there was about eleven hundred people.

He was a great hunter, the big great hunter and he was the chief, also. And there was bow and arrows, no guns, bow and arrows and he was the best Bowman. He had the most furs and he also got the first gun that was ever there. In order to get that, the only way they could get that, was they had to pile fur. They stand the gun up like that and they had the furs. They laid the furs down, no matter what it was, sea otter, mink, land otter, anything, they just piled them up like that on top of them. When it got to the top, you press them down, then he got the gun. Man, that must have cost about, well I would say, in them days fur were high, I would say a million dollars. For that's what he paid for it. Because he got his count probably a hundred and thirty sea otters. Each sea otter in them days run around all the way from thirteen hundred to two thousand dollars. That's in the old days when the money was worth something too, because when I was fourteen years old I went out with my dad and the old man after we built the boat, and, heck, they got \$2000 for a sea otter then. That's poaching.

ARE THEY HARD TO GET?

No, not now. This country has loads of them. They're overrunning the country now. They should open the season up. They ain't worth much now, but them days they was worth a lot. We were poaching, you know. And man, they brought in a lot of money. Well, anyhow that's how he got his gun.

YOU CAN BE VERY PROUD OF YOUR HERITAGE. YOU CAME FROM A FAMILY OF CHIEFS. MOST OF US CAN'T SAY THAT. WHERE IS HE BURIED?

He's buried on Makaka Point. Oh, wait a minute, grandfather? No, my grandmother is buried there and my grandfather is buried here. I think. I'm pretty sure I know my mother is buried here, and I think my granddad is buried by my mother. My real grandmother is buried out at Makaka Point.

HER FATHER WAS RUSSIAN?

My grandmother's father was about half Russian. My grandmother and my grandfather, too, they had Russian blood in them, but my grandfather was more Russian than my grandmother. The Russians were the first foreigners to hit here.

AND THEN WHO FOLLOWED THEM? ENGLISH?

All nationalities. Once in a while a surveyor or something come in here, even the Navy. That's how my dad got here. He joined the Navy in San Francisco. He was on a cutter. That's how he come to Port Etches. He come there in 1900 and then he married my mother there, I think it was in 1901.

WHEN HE FINISHED HIS TERM IN THE NAVY?

Well, he jumped ship there, I think in 1901. Then he married my mother. I was born in 1903.

WHAT KIND OF WORK DID HE DO?

Well, in them days he wasn't very fussy about what kind of work. You just had to do anything that was available. He worked in a mine and after that he married my mother and we went over to Ellamar. We went over there about 1904. I was born in 1903 and I was just a year old when we went over to Ellamar. There he worked in the mines six years. Gold and copper. He never got ahead. You never got ahead working in a mine. You get three or four dollars a day or something like that. We had a house there. Then we moved away from there one year and then we moved from there over to Alice Cove in 1916. Of course we were in town here pretty much all the time. This was our home port. That's when the canneries were working here. He worked in the cannery and then he started fishing.

YOUR FATHER WAS A FISHERMAN?

Well, he started fishing there. First he was a sailor, then a miner from then he started fishing. From then on he fished in the summer and he also had a fox ranch after that. He had Observation Island and North Island, those two islands and he raised foxes on those islands. We had a home on each one of them. And we also had a home out there on Alice Cove.

YOU WOULD SPEND THE SUMMER OUT THERE?

Well, the kids did, we did, I did. Dad, he stayed on the island.

TELL US ABOUT THE FOX RANCH. THAT WAS INTERESTING.

You couldn't tell much about him because he was so big-hearted. He only killed foxes once. After that he never killed anymore because they all got to be pets. He'd feed them, get all kinds of food, put up food in the summertime. Then he'd feed them every week and when killing time come he wouldn't kill them. He was no fox rancher. Too big-hearted. He wouldn't kill them, he couldn't kill them.

ARE YOU A HUNTER?

Pretty much, yeah. You can tell by looking around here. I got lots of guns. I hunt all my life. They take hunting away from me, then I might as well quit. Hunt and fished all my life.

YOU HAVE A BOAT?

Oh yeah.

DO YOU FISH JUST FOR YOUR OWN BENEFIT OR DO YOU FISH COMMERCIALY?

No, for a living. I have been fishing for a living all my life. Even now I have to do a little fishing to make both ends meet. You can't do it with these prices nowadays. You just couldn't do it.

DO YOU WORK THE CRAB BOATS?

Not anymore, no. It's time to quit, you know, when you get to be 76.

IT'S NICE TO REST A WHILE, ISN'T IT?

Yeah, I don't feel like it. If I was able, boy I'd sure be there. I've had a few ailments in the last twelve years. From the time I was sixty-two, well, I haven't been healthy all the way through. Course, I'd go to the hospital and manage to come out of it. You're still not the same. Not the same. I just spent a month in the hospital, here now, about a month ago, a little better than a month ago, about a month and a week maybe. Boy, I didn't know, I just barely made it. It was a rough one. I just worked too hard last summer. Got a cold, pneumonia, and almost didn't come out of it.

YOU WORKED ON YOUR FISHING BOAT?

Yeah, on my own boat.

DOES ART WORK WITH YOU?

Yeah, he was with us.

WERE THE MINES REALLY DANGEROUS?

Some of them are. You take mines, coal mines for instance. They are soft. You blast and then you've got to put up posts inside to keep them from sloughing off. Then you gotta do that all the time. Otherwise if you don't... They all call them stokes. That's one of the jobs that the people used to do a lot, is cut a lot of poles. They cut those poles and they sold them for maybe twenty cents apiece. In them days, say an eight inch pole, twelve, fourteen feet long, you get twenty-five cents for it, that's all. Then you cut it in two and you put them up in the mines. Then you put one crossways like that, and it would kind of hold that slack-stuff, the stuff that's falling out of the mine all the time. That's the only protection you got when you're working in the mines. You got to put up those timbers as you go.

Of course, when you get into a copper mine, then it's different again. It's the same in the tunnel but when you're working in the stoke you start at the top and you keep on working down. This one in McCarthy, it was four thousand feet up. They had worked that much in thirty years from between 1906 and the thirties. All that rich copper, that was the richest copper in the world, supposed to be.

AND MUCH OF IT IS STILL THERE?

Yeah. The richest copper in the world. It would run about 55% copper.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE OLD ENGINES THAT THEY USED TO RUN UP AND DOWN THE RAILROAD?

Oh, let me see now. I think they took them out of here, I think they got one in Anchorage. Well, it's just a show. They took one over there. There's none here. There's one from the Alaska railroad and one from Gugi's Copper River Railroad. The old-time real engines. And I think they also got a couple of them down at Haines too, above Juneau. There's a railroad going up from there. No, I can remember it used to take about eight hours from here to Kennicott on the train. It's sure a nice grade. It's only a four per cent grade all the way to Kennicott. Nice and level. It's not like that Valdez highway. You've got to go up twenty-seven hundred feet, you know, the pass. All the way from here to Kennicott, that's two hundred miles its only four and one-half per cent all the way. It was that level. You go through the mountains. It was really good surveying.

DID YOU EVER KNOW THE MAN WHO BUILT THE RAILROAD? DID YOU EVER MEET HIM?

Knew him? No. I used to know a lot of people in them days but I forgot all their names. There's one guy I never will forget from the time I was seven years old, Dr. Council. He was the doctor here for the railroad. I was only seven years old and I was out on the Copper River Flats, come in on the stern-wheeler. Come in and he cut my tonsils out. I was only seven years old and the old dump right down here now, that's where the hospital used to be, the railroad hospital right where that dump is now. It was torn down here about three years ago. And that old stern-wheeler you could see down at Hippieville. Remember the remains of the sternwheeler there? That's the one I come in on. There were four of them. The Klam and Ames, the Eyak. And there was one more I can't think of the name. They were eighty-footers.

WHERE DID THOSE STERN-WHEELERS GO?

They went up to the Copper River Flats. Around Whitshed and then up on the flats. Of course, there was water then, more water than there is now. On a small run-off you could go just about anytime, but now you gotta wait till high water because the earthquake has receded. It went down so much, about eight or nine feet, but before, there was a lot more water.

THEY COULDN'T RUN WHEN THE WATER WAS ROUGH, COULD THEY?

Oh yeah, they could run regardless. They were big boats. They were eighty foot in length. They were big boats. They were double deckers. Yeah, they were big boats.

AND THEY WERE TO SERVE THE WORKERS ON THE RAILROAD?

The fishermen. There weren't many fishermen. I'd say thirty fishermen altogether. Now there are about 700. That's quite a difference. We used to go out there and there was only about three independents out there. We were the only ones for a couple of years. Then there was two Andersons. There was only half a dozen independents after that. Together, there was only about forty fishermen out there.

MR. TIEDEMAN, ARE TIMES BETTER TODAY?

Well, they're better in a way. It's not free as it used to be. You can't do things like you used to. Now everybody got to know what you are doing. And you have to have a license for everything which you didn't have to before. You can't get away with nothing, even the last couple of years. You can't get away with anything here in Cordova. You got one tail light missing now, you get pinched. I remember here the other day, the first time in all the years I been driving, I been driving for almost sixty years, and the first time I ever got stopped because one of my tail lights, the red glass, was broken and the white light was showing. I had to get that fixed.

PART TWO

MR. TIEDEMAN, TELL US ABOUT WHEN YOU CARRIED MAIL BY DOG SLED.

In the winter of 1922 I was at McCarthy. Then I got a job with a fellow by the name of Bill Barry, a friend of mine. I was young and tough and husky then. Just nineteen. I used to work for him. Then he took me on his mail run. We had to go seventy miles to Chisana. We had thirteen dogs. We used to take a dog team. Sometimes it would take two weeks. Most times we would make it in about three or four days. There has been months though where it took us about three weeks. Bad weather and we had to camp there, we called it Mile 40, there in the middle of a lake. It was Fifty Mile Lake. Boy, we never lost any time when we got to Chisana getting back.

HOW FAR WAS THAT?

Seventy miles. This is from McCarthy. Seventy miles from McCarthy.

IS THAT SETTLEMENT STILL THERE?

Oh, yeah. Well it's roads there now but very few people. There's people all over the interior now. All hunting for gold, minerals. Prospectors. There's a few people that live at McCarthy too. Not many though. It is just a ghost town now.

IS THERE GOLD THERE STILL?

No. Is is copper. Chisana, that's gold. They prospected for gold there. All over the interior now is where they prospect for gold.

DID YOU EVER DO ANY PROSPECTING?

I didn't know much about it. A little bit, yeah. I don't know any too much about it. I'm going out again. Look at me. I'm going out, but it's gonna be close.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Just out in the Sound.

GOING FISHING?

No. Gold. Look for some gold.

WILL YOU TELL US ABOUT WHAT YOUR PLANS ARE?

I'm just going out to see if I can find any. I know where there used to be some so I am going out and see if I can dig it up. See if it's still there. But you know, you don't know till you get to do it. I can't use a number two anymore so I gotta get somebody with a strong back. I gotta get a machine. A little backhoe or something.

IS THIS OUT CLOSE TO THE RIVER?

Oh, yeah. It is close to the water.

GOLD IS BRINGING A GOOD PRICE NOW.

Yeah. You can get a good price for it now. You could almost get a thousand dollars an ounce now from the jewelers. Between eight hundred and a thousand dollars an ounce. Depends on what grade, you know, if it's coarse, fairly coarse, fine. I got quite a bit myself. Quite a lot of gold.

HOW MUCH DID YOU GET FOR IT IN THE OLD DAYS?

Sixteen dollars an ounce. That's what it was worth. Sixteen dollars an ounce but roughly most of them got fifteen. You know how they are. They gotta say, "That's dirt, dirty." So they give you fifteen instead of sixteen. They got you a little bit no matter what you do.

HAVE YOU FOUND GOLD AT THIS SITE YOU ARE GOING TO?

Oh, yeah. There is gold there. I have taken a party out there and they's come back with gold. I know exactly where they got it and all that and that is why I'm going out. And then when I was a kid you know, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years old I watched a guy for three years and he got gold. He made his living there. He worked there during the summer. He got enough to pull him through the next winter. So I know there's some gold there. With a little bit of equipment you can do alright. I'm gonna see what I can find. Fishing is just about done for this coming year. There isn't gonna be much. Maybe a little seining. That's about all. Not much gillnetting.

WHY?

Well, they claim it isn't justified. Won't be enough going up. Of course, you don't know. But then that's what the Fish and Wildlife claim. So, when they say no, you can't fish whether they are right or wrong.

HOW ABOUT SUBSISTENCE FISHING?

Maybe we get subsistence. We are supposed to be alright. But not

very much. You are only supposed to get ten and, boy, that gives you a taste. That's all. No. I seen quite a piece in the paper about that now. Both Anchorage and Cordova about subsistence. Those people inside, that's one thing I don't agree with them. They can go ahead and get all the fish they want, and waste it, and everything else. Why can't they come out here and do like we do? Get them out in the mouth. We are here and we can't. We don't do the harm that they do. They are the ones that do more harm than we do, by getting them in the frontier. I can't see it.

DO YOU THINK THERE ARE TOO MANY REGULATIONS?

It's absolutely too many. Did you see that show the other night about Attla? Did you? Wasn't that something. You know when his dad was telling the kid? It was George Attla. That was something, you know. He was telling him what he knew and what they did, the things that the kid done wrong. You know stuff like that? Well, it's true. The old man was telling him the truth. The kid was more or less stubborn. He thought he knew it all, but he found out later that he didn't. You know like when you are trapping, you go ahead, you get gassy hands and stuff like that, you think the animals gonna come to it. No, they get the scent of it. They can't. They won't. That's what the old man told him, you know. He said, "Ah. What do you know about it?" But it's the truth. You go and handle stuff, you know, then you go and use your traps and set them. You get that scent and animals can smell it. They are not going to come near it. But if you use one pair of gloves for handling traps, another to do other stuff, it's alright. You got a chance.

HAVE YOU DONE A LOT OF TRAPPING?

Oh. Yeah. I've done quite a bit of trapping. I've done a lot of hunting and trapping.

DO YOU THINK THE REGULATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN IMPOSED ON THE HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS BY THE GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN A HELP?

Oh, yeah. I think they have done okay. As far as I'm concerned. If it wasn't for them there would be a lot less game.

BUT IT'S THE FISHING REGULATIONS THAT YOU FIND FAULT WITH?

Well, not exactly. Only the subsistence. That's the only thing I can see where they have fouled up on. People inside, they can catch fish up there and we can't. You know, we can't get them here. They can get them up there and get them by the hundreds. All we can get is ten. A family like us, we probably need about seventy-five. We are satisfied. We get all we want about out of seventy-five fish. We can smoke 'em and salt 'em, put a few in the freezer fresh. That's all we need, seventy-five or a hundred for the whole year for a family of five or six. But in there they are feeding dogs and stuff like that.

They put them up by the hundreds. I don't see that. What I can't see is that they can do it and we can't.

WHY IS THAT? DO YOU KNOW?

That's it! That's what I can't see. It don't cost them much to get theirs. Only a fish wheel, for they make theirs. But it costs us money to go out there with the net we gotta buy everything. It costs five or six hundred for one net, fifty fathom. It don't cost them nothing hardly. Still we can't do it. I think for subsistence fishing we could go up the river where we could use one net and get all the fish we want in one tide. But no! We gotta go way out. That isn't right. Now this coming year we can get subsistence fish, maybe, according to the regulations they are going to put out. We can use just king gear and not even low water. We gotta use them when it's hard to catch a fish. They can fish them up there where the fish come into a funnel. Here we can't do it on low water. We gotta fish on high water, on high tide when you can hardly get a fish. We have to work for ours. Really work for them.

WHEN YOU WERE A YOUNG BOY, HOW DID YOU CATCH SALMON?

We fished with nets. We had nets then. When I was ten years old or younger I used to go out with my Dad. We set our nets and before we would get it all set out there would be some. We would have to hurry up and pull it up. There would be three thousand fish. More than we could pack, you know. We used to go on the beach and stay there, for maybe they'd stop us. They wouldn't let us catch anymore because we were independent. They had to pay us eight cents a fish. So they'd shut off and we would stay as long as two weeks. The company fishermen, they were only getting four cents. Two cents a man for red salmon. That's all, two cents apiece, four cents for one red. But a boat load run three thousand a day. So when they quit, start getting a boat load, why then they tell us to go ahead. But there was fish there in them days.

YOU WOULD SELL TO THE CANNERIES?

We sold to the canneries. Nobody else. We got eight cents, the independent people, but the company they got four.

WHAT CANNERIES WERE AROUND?

Well, there was Orca cannery here. Carlisle Packing Company, you know, down here. Eyak at the slough here. I guess that was in 1898 this one was put in. Down at the slough here for stern wheelers. Of course, when I started going out to the flats, at the earliest, I was

about five years old. That was seventy-one years ago though. When I was five years old.

YOU REMEMBER SEEING THE STERN-WHEELERS?

Oh. I rode in them. Oh yeah, they were here until I was fourteen years old. They would go out to the flats and up the river, not very far. Just up to the mouth of the river. That's all. To take supplies and take fish. Those canneries had a house on every point of every slough. There was always a house with three or four fishermen and a couple of boats. Up to five boats. There was only about thirty boats at the most on the Copper River Flats. Ten for each cannery. That's all.

DID YOU GUYS HAVE KICKERS IN THOSE DAYS?

Oh. No. We had oars and sails. No kickers. No, no. The first time we had any power on the flats I was about fourteen years old. Then we had a little horse-and-a-half Evinrude. One cylinder. It would barely move an eighteen foot skiff. About the same as rowing. We thought nothing of it to row. Now days the kids are lazy. They don't know how to do nothing. That's right. The kids now days, they just don't want to do nothing. We had to work.

THEY DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO WALK DOWN HERE TO YOUR HOUSE THIS MORNING, MR. TIEDEMAN.

You are not kidding. They wanted to ride. I know. They can't go up town. "Dad, take me up town." "Why don't you walk?" "Oh, it's too far to walk." If we had to walk, why, we didn't care. Forty below. That's alright. When I went to school I was six years old. From the time I was six to eight. It was two years I went to school. I had to walk a good mile every morning. More than a mile, a mile and a half. Every morning. Way from one end of the town. I had to walk clean around the bay, half way out to that Powder Point. You know the point that sticks out. Half way out there. Snow? It didn't make no difference. You go to school. Unless it happened to be a hurricane or something. There was another family beside us so I had somebody to walk with. You had to walk that far every morning.

WAS IT A ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE?

Yeah. A one-room schoolhouse.

HOW MANY CHILDREN?

Oh, there must have been about thirty or thirty-five.

WAS THAT A BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS SCHOOL?

No, it was not. This was in Ellamar. The Bureau of Indian Affairs had one over in Tatitlek. Yeah, I was in school two years. After that we moved to Makaka Point. Then we started fishing. You got mining there but my dad never got no place. You know what I mean. Well, we existed but we never got ahead. Well, he was just like everybody else. We worked. He was a sailor. Then he started working in the mines. Then he took up fishing. He fished all his life. Then he started fox farming. He tried that too. But there wasn't no money in none of it. I make more money now in one year than my dad made in twenty years. Yeah. No kidding.

BUT AT THE END OF THE YEAR DO YOU HAVE VERY MUCH MORE LEFT?

A lot more junk, yeah. I am sure he was a lot happier than I was, than I have been a lot of times. He had nothing to worry about like we have today. Income tax. All that stuff. You got so much more paper work now days than them days.

DOES IT TELL US THAT MONEY AND THINGS DON'T NECESSARILY MAKE FOR HAPPINESS?

No, they don't. I think it is the way you live and the way you get by. Nothing to worry about that's in you. Money don't make you happy. It gives you a lot more worries. That's all. It makes you greedier. That's all. A lot of people it does. And it spoils them. They don't want to do nothing. Now days the kids make so much money that you ask them to do something for you, even a little favor, they want to know what they are going to get for it. A little favor. They wouldn't even do you a favor. Not unless they get paid for it. A lot of kids are that way. You find one once in a while that is glad to help you.

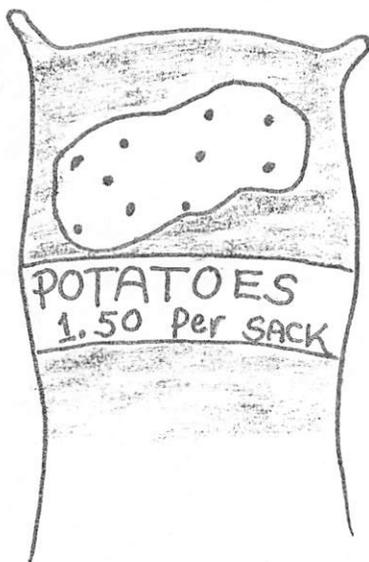
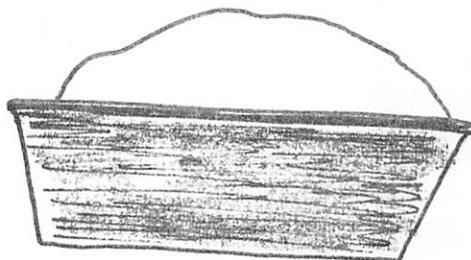
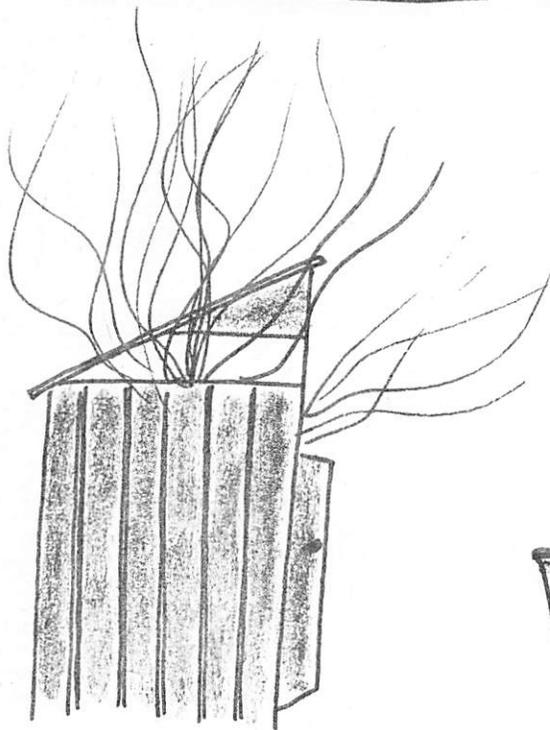
WHAT DO YOU KIDS SAY ABOUT THAT?

It is true.

THEY AGREE WITH YOU, MR. TIEDEMAN?

Oh that's the truth. I have always kind of liked those Buehrle kids. They have been real nice. If I ask them they'll do something for me. I shouldn't have told them that, but that's the truth. They are always willing to help me if I need it. A hand or something. But by golly, a lot of them they just look at you and that's it. How much are you gonna give me? Oh, you find one once in a while that is glad to help you.

Fessie Tiedeman



John Anderson 1980

My mother is from Tatitlek. In the mean time we lived here. I lived here for eleven years. We migrated to Nakaka Point. That was named after my father. We lived there for about five years and in that time I was living with my grandparents, my father's father. In them days food was hard to get. We had to live off the land. He went seal hunting, duck hunting, and when the tide went out, he would go get octopus and cockles and dry them. He had a big smokehouse. I don't see anybody with that kind of smokehouse today that I can recall. They would just take the three of us and go down and pick up these fish for the winter. There were different ways to put them up. We salted the seal and the salt water ducks. He would smoke cockles, boil the octopus and smoke that, get some cod fish and dry it in the sun. After three days he would take them into the smokehouse and smoke them. I don't see anybody doing that now, you know. For the winter, he'd just put them away. He would get seal oil. We would use a lot of seal oil for our lights in a wooden, well, it's like a stone, he had, a stone and a cloth for a wick in the seal oil. That was the light that he had.

We had a mailboat but not often. It was the Poppy II. I remember it very well. At Christmas time he would bring us some oranges and it was a big treat, but when Christmas came around we never had turkey. We had a goose and it was good. It was a good dinner for us then.

We lived there for eight years and then my parents decided they were going to come into Cordova again. It was time for us to go to school. We went to school down here in the government school at Eyak. A bunch of us went to school there. In that length of time it was a tough time to survive. We went to school for three or four years, but then my parents decided they were going to take us over to Tatitlek to my mother's folks. Things were getting a little better then. We moved into Tatitlek and my parents were living there. There was no water. We would get up in the morning and in order to wash our faces we had to chop a hole in the bucket. It was cold. My father would chop kindling to make heat for us. The kids are lucky today. They get up, it's all electricity, and they have heat. Then later on my husband and I married. We still lived in Tatitlek. I lived in Tatitlek for 28 years. We still had to go out in different area to put up our winter's supply of food. I went with my father into Lanklocked Bay. He had a little smokehouse and he used to take some children with him in a bidarka. There was no outboards, very few, maybe two or three. So they would get in the bidarka, put a bear skin under them, and he would take them over a place to where you put your fish, a camp smokehouse. It's in Lanklocked Bay. It's a little cabin there. It belonged to his great grand-father, Dean's great grandfather. We would stay there for two or three weeks, maybe a month, putting up fish and everything for the winter. We would go back and he would haul all that stuff back in the bidarka in just two or three trips. We got an inboard-outboard later on. Things were getting more modern then. We would stay longer and go in farther in Fidalgo and go get our goat, go goat hunting up in the mountains. We would get whatever we were allowed, one at that time, I think. We hiked for two or three hours, brought it back, and processed that for our food. It was meat we hardly got. When you get it you try to share it with the other people you know. It was hard to get food. Then we would go home. On Christmas time you were wishing you had a

nice meal. My husband would go around the point or my brother-in-law's in the wintertime to try and get some salt water ducks. Shells were scarce, too. They'd go hunting and if they got one duck with no dogs to retrieve it, they would throw rocks at it, wishing that the duck would come to the beach where they were. We would have a nice dinner that way out of ducks. We would go clam digging.

Later on, from Tatitlek I moved on in to Cordova. I came back and I got married. After I got married to Paul Vlasoff, we married in Cordova here. We stayed here a while, then went back to Tatitlek. Things were getting better then. We were getting washing machines then. Years ago you never had a washing machine. When you got a gasoline-powered washing machine that was something. You would rub on a washboard. I had three children, washing two or three, maybe ten dozen diapers two or three times a day and hanging them out on a clothes line. There was no dryers. After I had the three children why, they grew up, and, like I said, things were getting better. Then we got a power plant, a gasoline power plant. Like I say, it's just lucky that these children are living the way they are today. Everything is more like pushbutton. If they had to survive like the way we did, I don't know... Maybe a lot of you children would make it. The way they are now, the heat isn't good enough. In my days a dollar was like a twenty dollar bill. In fact, a quarter was a lot of money to me in those days. I would work for a quarter an hour babysitting or housework. Whatever I got I would try to help my folks and go buy some potatoes. With a dollar you could buy potatoes, and lard, and sugar. Now you can't do that for less than twenty or forty you know. That's how the prices have come up. We had to survive on what little we could get. In order to make our sugar last, my grandmother would make a sugar candy, just boil it and make it hard. She would allow each of us just a little piece. It was more like a candy. We were just rationed a little piece when we had a meal. She would store it and it would last a long time.

Later on, as time went by, we got the TV in Tatitlek. We got telephones. You got airplanes coming in. In them days we didn't have airplanes. We had a mailboat coming in if the weather permitted. We would get into town maybe once every two months to get our supplies or whatever we needed. If we didn't, we just had to do without.

Later on, we worked in a cannery in Pidalgo. It was a little hand-packing cannery. Wages were very cheap. They were packing fish. I don't know what the wages were, maybe fifty cents an hour. It was very cheap anyway. We would work late hours.

I recall when my father first took us out to this camp. Blankets were very few. He had an Army blanket but I can remember the bearskin mattress. He had got a bear and he tanned it and it was a mattress at that time. He had a little drun stove in a little house. The smokehouse was on the other end. We were comfortable and we never complained about anything. It was really nice. In fact, these children here now are lucky that they have parents that can get them whatever they want. If they had to go back to my years and had to live off of the land, that's what we were doing then, living off the land. In fact, I would prefer going back out in the sticks and homestead somewhere. I think I would enjoy it much better than I do today. I think I could still do it.

WAS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY THE FAMILY WORKED TOGETHER AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER? LIFE IS EASIER, MUCH EASIER, BUT BECAUSE OF IT WE HAVE A LOT OF TIME ON OUR HANDS. THERE IS NOT ALWAYS SOMETHING TO TAKE UP THAT TIME THAT IS OF A POSITIVE NATURE, CONSEQUENTLY THERE ARE PROBLEMS TODAY THEY DIDN'T HAVE IN THE PAST.

That's true. In our days people helped one another. In the community or the villages you would have somebody down on the beach and he would catch something. They cut up bear, or seal, or something, and he would share it with the whole village. If he brought in two or three logs from the beach to be cut up for the winter fuel everybody would pitch in and the boys and the grandparents would be sawing those ten or twenty logs and packing them up. Yeah, everybody was helping one another in them days, there was no grudge between anybody. Today it is different. You don't see it like that anymore. In my days we had to respect our elders, our parents. I think it was good for us today. I have raised three children and I have seen them raising their children. Today you see a child come in and their mother says, "Will you please take the garbage out?" The child says, "Oh. Do it yourself." There is no respect for the elders. I see that today. We were taught to respect the elders and help one another and we were taught to go to our Russian Orthodox Church which we still have. We do today. Even relatives don't help one another today. It has just changed that much I have seen. Years ago they treated their relatives like relatives. Now you come and say "Hi" to your relative and he says, "I don't know you." That's how much things have changed, really.

HOW HAS THAT COME ABOUT? WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR THAT?

Well, I think it's the place where they moved from different cities. The way they live in towns now, in the big cities. I think that's got a lot to do with it. The older people have passed away, and there's nobody to tell the younger people how to keep up the traditions, or how to run a community, or a village. They figure, "Well, I'm the only one here and I'm gonna live the way I think I've gotta live." Maybe they think they are doing the right thing. What few there is left of us, we try to pass it on. I try to tell my grandchildren. I even told Carl the other day. He was really interested. I was telling him how things have changed and I was telling him what I did in my days. I think I could sit all day with my grandchildren and they would just listen and listen, on and on, because they just couldn't believe I did what I did in my days, how I've lived, and how things have changed. In fact I see myself today changing, too. I'm getting where I figure that I don't have to go out hunting. I put up fish. I smoke fish. I do all that stuff I used to do when I was younger. I haven't given that up yet. I put up smoked salmon every year. I put up crab and seal meat. I smoke that in my smokehouse and I just put it away in a ziploc bag and put it in the freezer. Like anything off the land, if anybody gave it to me today, I would be more than glad to take it because I would enjoy that much more than if somebody came up and gave me a T-bone steak, to tell the truth. I try to

keep that up today. I know Agnes does the same thing I do. She puts up. I say a lot of food off of the land.

I am wishing one day I could move out on the Sound and could go back to my old ways of living. I may just have to take potatoes, sugar and flour. I think I would enjoy it again. I think I would go across the bay and I would dig clams. Maybe I am getting a little too old for that, and I would get tired, and ache and pain when I'm through, but I think I would still enjoy it.

DO YOU TAKE YOUR GRANDSONS WITH YOU WHEN YOU GO OUT?

Well, this is the first grandson. My first husband and I had him for about six years. We took him out all over. I have a picture of when he was holding the first little fish he caught, and when he went up and got his first little sea gull. He seen his grandfather shoot a sea lion. He remembers when I took him over and we caught fish out of the creek. We had a little dog named Snuffy and he would bring fish up. Dean would be down there, bring the fish the dog got. Fish were hard to even get. I would tell my grandchildren all about it. I have taken them. In fact, I went with them gill netting. I think they are interested in all that. I took them up the beach and I barbecued a seal they got. I was surprised that they really went for it; I didn't think that they would eat a barbecued seal. They were watching me clean it on the beach. By the time I got through and put it on a stick and put it on this open fire, the best part was the liver, and I put a chunk of liver and seal blubber, then the kidney, like a delicacy, you would call it in our days, the choice part of the seal, I barbecued that.

We had fried bread. I make a lot of fried bread. Fried bread today is really good. In our days the fried bread was different. Our bread was just plain flour. When my grandfather made us some, it was just flour and water and he patted it like a hotcake. Then he put it on the open fire with a rock and just made that hard bread on the rock. We thought it was really neat. I can see how it has changed. It improved fried bread. In other words, in our days it was more like baked bread on that rock. It is just like pilot bread, nothing in it. We would have that with maybe some sugar on the top of it. Now you have the fried bread that is fried in Crisco and it has got all the sugar, salt and yeast. When you take it out of the pan you take and put sugar on it or frosting.

DID YOU DO YOUR COOKING DIRECTLY OVER THE FIRE OR DID YOU HAVE SOMETHING LIKE A SKILLET, OR A PAN, OR POT?

In my young days, when I lived with my grandfather, he had an old black pot. That pot was used for everything that I can remember. He would just wipe it out and cook whatever he wanted, fry whatever he wanted, or boil in it. Everything was cooked in that pot. In my days, the Aleuts called that a crow. One reason is because it is black, I think. I can picture a great big pot hanging over this open fire. They had frying pans. Seal oil was used a lot in my days and bear oil.

You would render that down and have it more like butter.

WITH THE OIL SUPPLY THAT YOU HAD DID THEY KNOW ABOUT MAKING SOAP?

No, but I remember the soap they had was real hard soap. It was hard on your hands.

DO YOU THINK IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR US, AS A GROUP HERE, TO HAVE THE EXPERIENCE OF BARBECUING A SEAL OR SOME WAY OF EXPERIENCING THE OLD WAYS OF COOKING?

Yes, but I'm planning on moving, provided one day Eyak let's us move to our homestead. I don't know, it could be any day, or whatever. You are all welcome to come out. It is a nice place where I'm planning on moving. It is a center of all the sea foods. I am sure these boys could get a seal. I could show them how to barbecue seal. You could get some ducks. In my days a loon was a good duck. It was hard to pluck. I don't know if we are allowed to get them or not, but we had to survive. We had to eat anything, you know. It was good, and I told these boys if grandmother cooked it they would eat it, I am quite sure. They said "Oh no. We wouldn't eat that yucky looking duck." A lot of children I see are kind of finicky eaters. My grandchildren say they will never eat anything but when I fix it they eat it. I am really pleased. I think that if they had to come out and live with me I would have no problem. I think they would enjoy it. I think they are looking forward to it. I told them I am going back to my old ways. They already have more plans than I have. They are thinking their grandmother is going to live forever, but I am hoping that I can show them the way that I have lived, and what was caught in them days, and how to cook it, and what to do with it in case they are stranded on a beach someday. I am quite sure that if I got stranded any place I could survive, if a bear didn't come and chew me up.

When I was younger, say about thirteen, I had to live with my grandmother. She had a house right back of this high school, in fact. She didn't understand English. There was just my sister and I and we didn't understand our language, Aleut. This was hard for her to communicate. Gradually we worked with our grandmother and we taught her English and she picked up right away. In fact, she picked up counting money quicker than she did speaking English. Later on, she would send us up to the store with a five dollar bill and she would know just how much she was going to spent and how much was going to come back. She knew if she was a nickel short. It was surprising how she picked up the change of money before she could talk English. That's where I have learned my Aleut language, from my grandmother.

They didn't want to teach us our language in those days. I don't know if they were ashamed of it. A lot of us would just learn by ourselves and we would talk to one another. Today, I'm not really that good but I can understand anyone talking in my language. They can't talk about me because I know everything. If I had to answer them I think I could stutter, through if somebody came up, an old Aleut, an oldtimer. One fellow from English Bay came up and he started talking Aleut and I answered him. He said, "Where are you from?" I said,

"Prince William Sound." He says, "You're talking the same language as I do but you're kind of making it fancy." I didn't think I was making it fancy but to him it was just a little bit different. He understood me. So far I've found out from English Bay and Port Graham and Prince William Sound Aleuts talk similar. In fact, I went over there two or three times and they live like I did years ago. The old people are living like that. It was really nice. That's over on the other side of Seldovia.

ARE THERE OTHERS HERE WHO SPEAK THE ALEUT LANGUAGE?

Oh, yes. There are a lot of people I could name. In fact, my sister is really good at it. I sit and listen to my second in-laws' stories that were way before my time. I really enjoy it. They talk about the railroad. I remember when the railroad was built here. I lived out on Mile 7. Her dad would take us out picking berries at the Million Dollar Bridge.

Like I say, there's a change in everything, people are changing. The dollar has no value. A twenty dollar bill would be to me in my days like a million dollars. I could go up with a nickel and get maybe two suckers for a penny. You can't buy a sucker now for what? I don't know. I don't buy any candy. What is a sucker now, maybe fifteen cents? A candy bar you could get for five cents. You could get fifty pounds of potatoes for a dollar and a half. I can see where the prices have changed. It is very expensive today. That is one reason why I want to move back out. If I move back to my homestead I think I'll go back to a wood stove for heat. The only thing I would like is an oil cook stove. I have kind of changed, myself, here, but if I couldn't make it, if times got so tough, I could go back to cooking on wood.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR THE KINDS OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS THAT YOU BUY IN THE GROCERY? WOULD THERE BE SOMETHING ON LAND THAT YOU COULD USE?

In Tatitlek there was a wild rice that the oldtimers used to get. It has a brown flower but there is a cluster of rice underneath. Then there was like a dandelion leaf. They used it like spinach. People still do. You could grow your own potatoes. A lot of that we didn't have in our days. We had seaweed. My grandfather used to get seaweed. My son bought me some in Anchorage. He said a Jap had sold it to him and it was very expensive. He got that and it was just a big thin sheet. I had seen my grandfather out at Makaka Point. He would pick it out of the water and drape it over the fence and let the sun dry it out. He would get a little smoke and smoke it. Then he would roll it up and chop it real fine. He would pack it in kegs with seal oil and he would put the cooked cockles on top. He would preserve it for the winter. In the winter time you would take that seaweed with the cockles and maybe get your smoked salmon. It was really a treat, you know, to eat smoked salmon. You would get the kelp too.

WOULD IT BE COOKED OR WOULD YOU EAT IT JUST AS IT CAME FROM THE BARREL?

You could eat it right from the ocean. We preferred just dipping it in boiling water and eating it, or dipping it in seal oil. In fact, they do that today. They eat herring spawned on the kelp if they dip it in seal oil. My grandchildren won't eat the seal oil. They go for the butter instead.

WHEN DO YOU HARVEST THE KELP AND THE SEAWEED? IT'S DIFFERENT ISN'T IT?

April is when they start spawning on the kelp. You have to grab it before the divers go out for it now. You could put it in brine, too, and keep it all year.

YOU DON'T GET IT IN THE FALL OF THE YEAR?

No. In the spring. I don't think by grandchildren would eat the fermented fish eggs, or any Aleut child. Today they say it's similar to caviar which I have never eaten. It is more like an Aleut cheese. It is fish eggs fermented. You squish the eggs first out of the fish. They prefer silver slamon. You take the eggs out and squish them with a wooden mallet. My grandfather had one. We would sit all day and squish those eggs. Then my grandmother would take the egg sac and pour water in that, like a dough. It would look like dough really, only its orange. Then she would squeeze all the water out, put it in a barrel, and put it in the smokehouse and let it ferment for about a month until it starts boiling. It stinks like heck, really, just a yucky smell. The shell of the eggs are on top of that barrel. Then my grandmother would take that off. That is when it is ready for the regular salmon eggs to be boiled. Then they put it in with the other ones that have been fermenting, then just mix it up like hard boiled fish eggs. Then they would put it away in the smokehouse, and it would get a crust on it, and it would start getting moldy in about two or three months. I remember when the children's grandmother made it they would go sneak in the smokehouse. We caught them one time wondering what they were doing. They were getting into this cheese and they had a sugar bowl. We never thought of that. They had a sugar bowl and they were taking that crust and dipping it in sugar and eating it, but they didn't get down to where the really fermented eggs were. After that, when you wanted to, you would go scoop up some of that, and you would have your blueberries, and you mixed that in with that. The old-timers would mix their blueberries and that would be a dessert. They would even make it as a lunch, the oldtimers. You could use any kind of berries. They usually used them fresh in the summer. I have tried it with strawberries and it tasted real good. I couldn't get blueberries. Very few people make that, too, now. I tried it once and it didn't work out for me very good, but I am determined and I am going to try it again. I like it but grandchildren don't, in fact my children don't.

SOMEBODY GAVE ME SOME SALMON EGGS AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THEM. COULD YOU SHOW ME?

I wouldn't advise you to use them after they have been frozen. I tried that. I tried freezing salmon eggs and I tried cooking them. They just got mushy and they were just yucky. They are just no good for anything. If they were fresh you could boil them. If you got the eggs out of a salmon and put them in a bowl for two or three hours they would get hard. You could bounce them on a table like ping-pong balls. After that you just put salt on them. I have seen people eat them raw with just salt. I do too. I eat them. My grandchildren tried that. I don't know if they liked it but they ate it. They like the boiled salmon eggs. You take the heart of the salmon and put it in with the fish eggs and boil them.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WAY OF EATING SALMON?

I don't really have a favorite way. I eat them any way, every way. I eat a lot of salmon and I process it every way. I boil it, fry it, bake it, kipper it, smoke it. I noticed this morning these two grandchildren's mother must have had salmon from fishing the flats. I noticed they are smoking. They got a little smoker. I am glad that when I pass away they will know what to do. I showed Daryl. I said "You are doing it wrong. Your smokehouse is altogether wrong. It doesn't have a draft and he's not putting the wood the way it is supposed to be. The fish are alright. They are all hung nice. I am really pleased the way they put the fish in there. In fact, in a couple of days, if they keep it up, they will be ready to bake in the oven. Two or three days of smoking and they will be ready to bake in the oven. I told him if they don't put any heat in that now, it's cold, the fish are going to sour. You gotta have heat with your fish now. It's getting cold. It's a lot of work to put up fish. You gotta have heat, smoke. They have new smokehouses now. You have a pipe with the smoke on it. I prefer the old way where I just had an old fifty gallon drum, out fourth-ways, and had two-layer fish hanging up, and have alders to smoke the salmon.

WHAT ABOUT GUMBOOTS? HOW DO YOU FIX THEM?

Your dad asked me that. He said he had gotten some and forgotten how to cook them. I was taught to take cold water and put your gumboots in and let them come to a boil. As soon as they come to a boil, you got to have a mallet or a stick to squish and stir them around. When the black skin starts falling off that is a sign you gotta take them out. If you boil them too long they get tough. Your dad used boiling water and he said they were tough. It just takes a few minutes.

Agnes Nichols

THE EARTHQUAKE
CORDOVA-CHENEGA

NUCHEK

Eyak River

washington D.C.

RUSSIANS

John Anderson 1980

I was graduated from Cordova High School in 1944 and was salutatorian of my class of four people. It was the smallest class in the history of Cordova High School graduation. I am also the mother of ten children. I've had children in the Cordova school for 27 years and I am thoroughly interested in education. I'm also involved in many Native affairs, as well as employed as a health outreach worker for the North Pacific Rim. I don't know what else you might want to know. Is that sufficient?

NO. JUST GO BACK IN YOUR MEMORIES AND FULL OUT THE THINGS THAT YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD, PERHAPS STORIES THAT YOUR PARENTS TOLD YOU ABOUT THE TIME BEFORE YOU WERE BORN. ARE THERE STORIES THAT HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN IN YOUR FAMILY?

Well, some of the stories are more or less forgotten but there are stories that I remember as an historian for the Chugach region. Under the Land Claims Settlement Act we had to go back and identify all the old villages that we had in our area as well as the history of our area to prove that we were here before the white people were here. Maybe later on this year I have some tapes that you might want to listen to of some of the old people like Linda's grandmother, and old Steve Vlasoff from the village of Chenega, George Vlasoff from the village of Tatitlek, and we have Exenia Barnes from this area. They are really interesting as well as funny. There was always a feud going on between Steve Vlasoff and Linda's grandmother and it's comical the way they relate to each other in the tape. We knew them, so we knew that there was this internal feud between the two of them. Her grandmother is from the Eyak tribe which is a very extinct tribe nowadays and its a very interesting tribe. Some of the stories go back to the definition of Chugach. It is mispronounced as far as the language goes, because it is really pronounced "Chuguch" with the guttural "ch" at the end of it, "Chuguk". It means to hurry. Hurry up! Or when you tell somebody in our language to hurry up you say "Chugun na te." I suppose some of these kids' mothers have told them to hurry up sometimes when they get mad at them they use that language a lot and some of the language isn't nice but we use it anyhow. But they understand that it is something that they better do right away or else... but "Chugach" means "Chuguch", means "in a hurry".

Well, it came during the old days when the people lived out on Middleton Island. Now that's an island out in the middle of nowhere and they went out there and did their sea otter hunting. Now they didn't have fast boats or jets, jet boats or fast sails, they used bidarkas and kayaks and they many times went with those boats out to that area. At that time, during the early ages, or the early stories, this area that we're sitting in right now was full of ice. It was a glacier. And, fortunately, one of the native men has a book on the glacier formations of Prince William Sound and it specifically states that this area was at one time a glacier. For some reason or other, of course, it receded just like some of our glaciers are doing now. It went with such speed that the people were always talking about "Chuguch."

It was fast, very fast, and of course they inhabited the land that was left which is what we have now. They settled mostly in Nuchek which at that time was the Russian outpost, the Russian fort.

When the Russian explorers came they went all over the coast of Alaska, into Cook Inlet, down into the Aleutian Islands, into this area. One of the first areas they stopped wasn't this area but down in the Kayak Islands and the Wingham Island areas. There is proof, too, that they did stop down there. It's recorded in history, in Bancroft's history and in the history of deLaguna. I don't know if any of you have studied any of that but you know history is real important. I'm going to bring it to your attention that history in this area is real important and for the native students. You really should study it. Some of it is dry reading, but it is interesting to find out all the different people that were involved in the settling of this area. One thing that is particularly interesting is the fact that we were here when the explorers came. The story from one of the villages was that the people were scared and in these tapes that I have it says that the people were absolutely terrified when they saw the white sails of the schooners coming toward the villages and they went and hid. That was the first time they had seen tea. They had never seen tea before. They had tea from the natural growth that they had round about them, but they had never really seen tea or sugar or anything like that. They were meat eaters with the vegetables like the wild celery, natural spinach, some of these leaves that they have, but more than anything, they were fish and meat eaters. They were absolutely terrified when they saw these white sails. They didn't quite know what they were all about. Of course, then the people got off the boats and they talked a foreign language.

According to history, they weren't very good to the native people. Not only that, they brought disease; they brought the flu, they brought the measles, they brought VD and many of those other diseases so that where there was an outpost at Nuchek that had three thousand people, within a few years it was extinct and they had to move. They moved to Kinniklik, They moved to where Makaka Point is now. Some of you fisherman know where Makaka Point is, and to Tatitlek, and some to Palugvik. Palugvik is an historic site within our area. They all moved away from Nuchek. The last people that lived in Nuchek were Teddy Chimowitski and his mother. They were really frightened.

The Russians at that time wanted the furs. They wanted furs more than anything else and when they bought the furs or traded the furs with the natives from this area for a tin of tea, they stood the tin up to the highest point, they didn't use the lowest point of that tin can (the tea came in tin cans). They laid the furs out and as many furs came to the top of that tin can is the amount of fur they traded for that tin can of tea. It was a rip off, but just think what it was when they wanted a gun. Those muzzle loaders were big and tall. Some of them were over four feet tall and when they wanted a gun, they took those sea otter furs and laid them out to the top of that gun and it was a rip off. I admit it was a rip off but that's the way they traded and that's why I say your history is very interesting. Many of the

Russian people that lived there quite a while married native women and they are called Creoles. If you see in Alaska history the word Creole, it's a native person that married a Russian man. During the Land Claims we had quite a few people that came in and registered as Creoles. Of course, they were accepted into the Land Claims Settlement Act.

During the Land Claims time I attended, we found out that from this area the Russians had taken two or three families and dropped them off at English Bay. When we were having a big convention at the AFN conference and we saw these people that looked like us and they came and talked and we never even know that they existed. As we were talking, and we talked way until three o'clock in the morning because of the interest that we had, one for another, their stories were exactly tied in with ours, and we found out that those people were descendants of those three families that the Russians took from Nuchek and dropped off over in English Bay and Port Graham. They found out that they had relatives down here when they traced their ancestry. During the Land Claims we traced family trees way back, at least three or four generations. It was really an interesting time to find out that those people were the very ones that we had read in the history book about, these families that had been taken and dumped some place without any food. They existed and they survived.

IS IT KNOWN WHY THEY WERE TAKEN AWAY?

No. I've never found out why they were taken away. I just know that the Russians took them. Maybe they wanted to see if they survived. Maybe they wanted to see how hearty they were. I have never found out why they were taken and put there.

My mother grew up in Nuchek. She went to the Russian school there. She could write Russian as well as speak it. Of course, I was unfortunate not to have learned that. My father was Danish. He came directly from Denmark. In fact, he ran away from home at the age of fourteen. So I was brought up in two cultures; the Native culture is a matriarchal culture. Matriarchal means that it comes from the mother. You'll find that most Indian tribes do have matriarchal government where the mother is the head of the household. We talk about the ERA, the women's movement. In the Indian and Native culture the woman did most of the work. The husband did the hunting and the fishing and the trapping. The woman did most of the work around the house, taking care of the furs and everything else. Gathered wood. ERA was here long before the people went to Washington D.C.

I grew up on the Eyak River. I spent most of my life there. My father fished during the summer time and it wasn't fishing now with the fancy boats and the big boats and the new kind of nets. It was a very simple operation. My dad had an open skiff, 18 foot, and he had a 9 horse Johnson and I had the 9 horse Johnson up till several years ago. We loaned it out and nobody ever gave it back. It was a slower

pace. I don't think the wages were as high, of course. I remember the days my Mother sent up to the C.T. Davis. It wasn't C.T. Davis then, it was Davis and Phillips. She gave me a quarter and I could buy a loaf of bread and a pound of hamburger. In fact, I think you need about five dollars now.

We lived on the homestead. There was 320 acres. My father had one of the first ones in Cordova. He also had the first pre-fab house that came to Cordova. He fished during the summer and trapped during the winter time. I had my own trap line also. I didn't trap for mink. Mine was weasel. I used to get my quota of weasel every year so I was able to sent to Sears Roebuck and buy Christmas presents for my parents.

I have two brothers, also, and a sister who is still living; she is in her eighties. It was good time. We didn't have to run to the store all the time. We had ducks salted and venison salted and everything all taken care of. We had a stew pot on all the time.

TELL THEM ABOUT YOUR BROTHER.

We'll have to go back to my childhood as far as my brother is concerned. Out on the homestead across from the river we had a bluff. In that bluff was a little cleft. It went all the way to the top of the hill and came down in front of our house, in front of the river by our house. My brother used to go to the top of that and ski down that all the time. Well, one time he built himself a jump, right in the middle of that thing. We didn't have TV so we had to manufacture things to do during the winter. He went to school at what was then the Naval Station at Mile 7, where the children from the Naval Station went. There was quite a place there. He told me there was about eight homes and a big headquarters. He used to ski to school every morning or else take the speeder. When we had the railroad they had a little car for the tracks and they would come down and pick him up and take him to school or else he went to school with one of the pull carts, like you see in the comics, or on TV in some of the cartoons, a litte hand cart. We used to have one of those by our path going right down to our house. Anyhow, he used to ski back and forth to school, and not only that but he built this jump. I skied a lot in those days and my father used to buy me some skis every Christmas or every year and my brother invariably broke every pair of skis I had.

About two or three years ago I was walking up town and somebody hollered to me from one of the stores and said, "Did you see the new Sports Illustrated?" I said, "No." "Well, I just want to show it to you." And there in the Sports Illustrated was my brother's picture and he was voted one of the top ten skiers of the United States. He had tuberculosis and moved to New Mexico, Albuquerque, and was put into an Indian hospital there. During the nineteen thirties there was a huge TB epidemic here in the state of Alaska and he went and spent some eight years in the hospital. After that he couldn't do any inside work; he had to do outside work so he's been working for the Forest Service for twenty years. In that time he was called a Ski Ranger. He would check all the ski trails and took care of all that. So he had plenty of time to ski. In 1938 he was the ski champion for the state of Alaska. I still have all the clippings from that. When he got out of the hospital he did some more skiing.

He was able to go back and ski again, he became the first person in the state of New Mexico to win the Silver Arrow for giant slalom. That's coming down between all the little flags. He also won the Gold Arrow at that same time. It was surprising to me to find out that he had become one of the top ten skiers in the United States. My brother isn't young. He just turned sixty-one years old. I went to Albuquerque twice now in the last year and he's a safety officer for one of the longest and largest trams for skiers in the Sandia mountains. I wrote him for breaking all my skis, that it was well worth it, and that it was a real proud time for our family to see that our brother was voted one of the top ten skiers of the United States.

HE HADN'T TOLD YOU ABOUT IT?

No, he hadn't even written. I think maybe he just wanted me to be surprised. He's been in quite a few documentaries for the Forest Service on skiing and skiing safety.

You hear people calling Natives names sometimes. When I was growing up I lived not too far from the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. I lived down in Old Town, right on the lake. It was just two seconds to run to school every morning. Being that my father was a white man, I wasn't allowed to go to the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. Therefore, I had to come all the way uptown and go to where they have the big apartment building. I had to go to school there. It was a real challenge and maybe that started my life of challenging everything and everybody. I had to earn my way in going to school, Maybe there's at least two of us out of the whole school that were Native, being called names the minute you would go into school. It wasn't an easy thing. You learned to ignore it. Just to absolutely ignore it and do the very best you could. So it was my challenge throughout the whole school year that I could be just as good and I could do just as much as any white person could and proved it because I became salutatorian of my class. I was editor of the Northern Lights, too.

The reason I'm intersted in school is because I had to work hard for it. It really annoys me when kids just don't work hard for it. Education is something you really need. In this time and age of technology and everything else, even as fisherman, you need to know how to compute your income tax and all your other things because it takes money to go to a tax person and get it done. It's real important. That was the discrimination I had when I was growing up. You are able to overcome it. Just be youself more than anything. It was an interesting time. I enjoyed my childhood. I enjoyed my teenage years. I had to work hard but it can be done.

I was here during World War II when we had to put black curtains on the windows and we had fire drills in school where we went down to the basement and huddled in the basement. We heard planes going over. It was scary. This is something you kids haven't experienced. When we had a fire drill for the whole city we had to grab two or three kids that were going our way and make sure that they were taken to their

homes, and we had to notify the school that we had gotten them home. Then we had to go to our own place. We had air raid wardens. It wasn't playing at war. It was the real thing. At the time it wasn't great. It was really scary.

NOW THE JAPANESE ACTUALLY ATTACKED OUT ON THE ALEUTIANS?

Yes, the Japanese actually attacked the Aleutians. There was planes going all over all the time. It was a fear and we had air raid drills all the time. I was just a teenager and to me it was something scary. I lived in a children's home at the time. I worked in the children's home. After my mother died I had to make my own way, so that was the easiest thing for me to do, work in the children's home for by board and room while I went to school. We had to go around in the evenings and make sure all the windows were closed. Then somebody went around the house to make sure you couldn't see any light coming through any of those windows or else there was a penalty for anybody that had any light because, according to the radio at that time, the planes from so many miles up could even see a match that was down on the ground. Another scary part was that I went to school down in Seattle at Pacific College and we had to go on the steamship boat. There was no plane then. No jets, no planes going to Seattle, so we had to go on the steamship boat. We had a convoy and if you don't think that was scary...it was reality. It was real. It wasn't something you just heard about. They didn't stay too close to us but they were there. You could see them all around off in the distance as we went across the Gulf of Alaska.

I've lived a long time and I've seen a lot. Okay, somebody wanted to know about the earthquake. I'll tell you what happened in our own house that day. It was Good Friday. I had seven girls, two boys then. I was finishing up some Easter dresses for my family because it was soon to be Easter and we all went to church on Easter. In fact, every Sunday. I was sitting at the sewing machine and I felt this little jolt and I hollered to the kids upstairs, "Hey you guys, calm down. You're shaking the whole house." And you know it just kept continuing and then I said, "Earthquake!" Well, in our house, whenever there was an earthquake we always opened the door. It was just a thing that my mother told me about. When you had an earthquake you opened the door to equalize the pressure or else your house might explode. So, automatically, I opened all the doors to the house. I said "Okay, come down here, let's get out of the house." Well, it kept going and going and one of my girls, the little one, panicked upstairs and had to be carried. She was stiff as a board. She just froze. So they got her outside. They had no shoes on. There was snow on the ground. It wasn't the kids making all the clatter and noise anyhow. Clifford was just a baby and I ran in and got him out

of his bed and wrapped a blanket around him and just as I got him out of the bed here came stuff from off the shelf into his little baby bed. We had gone out the door. The kids weren't really that scared, but the mountains sounded like a locomotive going by. It was a real tough time. They had no shoes. So I told them I was going to get some coats. So I ran into the house and the radio says, "Hey, anybody out there? Hey you guys, where'd you all go?" It was really funny, but the radio station stayed on the whole time. It reassured people and played happy music and gave bulletins.

Of course, my husband wasn't home; he was in town and he had a scarier experience 'cause all the shelves in the store went all over the place and he said he never saw so many broken jars of pickles, all over the floor. He said it was really horrible. As he was coming he said the road was like a snake. He ran home real fast.

The warning came on that we had to evacuate. We didn't know how long we were going to be gone or the condition of our house because we lived right on the water front. So we had to pack some bags of stuff, put together each of the girls something and they had a baby to take care of. We took off in the car and went up the hill by the old high school. The Kritchens had open house; they invited everybody into their home together.

We got worried about our poor little dogs. We had little Chihuahuas and she had just had puppies. My husband went home and got the puppies and put them in the car. There was nothing we could do so we just left everything. It was really scary; it just seemed like it would never stop. But it did stop; anyhow, though it was a real terrible time.

One of my daughters had epilepsy and I had to make sure that she didn't have a seizure in front of all those little children that were at the place and so we medicated her and put her to bed. The Kritchen's had wall to wall people. There were kids all over the house and we just put them to bed and stayed up all night to see what damage was going to be done.

All the men of course had to go down to the waterfront so that when the tide or tidal wave came they could cut all the boats loose, so they wouldn't swamp or anything. When they came back they told us it was too bad we couldn't go and watch because there was not a drop of water in the bay. It was just shiny mud and the Coast Guard didn't get out soon enough and it just stuck high and dry there. There was nothing but mud. They said it was just like somebody had siphoned the whole bay out. There was not a drop of water. Of course, when it came in, it really came in deep. It stopped fifty feet from our house, fortunately. There was a lot of snow and a lot of ice down on the waterfront so that stopped it but it went up, way up our creek.

Fortunately, by our house there was the creek, or else it probably would have come into our yard. Of course, our neighbors down at the

sawmill suffered a bit of damage. It took a huge flatbed truck of theirs and put it way up into the woods. It was amazing the force of the tidal wave.

We heard then that Chenega was completely devastated. There were many of my friends and relatives there at Chenega that died and so, of course, Easter Sunday became a day of mourning rather than a day of happiness. There was twenty something people killed at Chenega. There are a few left now, but tidal waves and earthquakes become a real, terrific trauma to them. They get frightened real easy because so many of them were crippled from the earthquake. One woman was floating in the bay and they found her.

The amazing thing that came out of the earthquake from Chenega was the fact that the Bible from the church was found floating in the water and the passage that it was opened to was: "There shall be tribulations and earthquakes, such as you have never seen." Call it what you may, but it was open and that Bible now, of course, is in the Russian Orthodox Church here, and it was a sad time at the time of the earthquake, that Chenega was obliterated. There were only a few pieces of houses left and the school house. It was a real sad bunch of people that they brought from Chenega to Cordova by plane. They housed them in the Christian center.

HAS THE VILLAGE BEEN RE-ESTABLISHED?

The village is certified with the Land Claims Settlement Act, but it seems there are too many memories for the people to want to go back. There is an old custom that when people die off in an area, like the Indians, not only from Alaska, but the Indians in the South forty-eight, that when people die in one area they very seldom go back to that area. So the village of Chenega has established a village in Crab Bay, which is around the corner from the old village of Chenega. Monday, I attend a Chenega Village Corporation meeting. I was their guest, the election committee, to fold all the ballots and everything else. They are still hoping that they will be able to go back and establish a village. They have been given housing as soon as they can establish the fact that they want to go back to Chenega.

DO YOU THINK IN TIME THAT THE MEMORIES WILL FADE AWAY?

No, memories will never go away. They'll fade, but they are always there. It's something about you, what you were saying, what his mouth speaks didn't come from the heart. Well, you found that the Native people, the Indian people, feel from the heart. Their feelings come from the heart, and I think that's what distinguishes them from the Caucasians, the white people, is the fact that the heart-feeling is always there.

THE REAL SELF IS INTERNAL?

Right. The real self is inside. If you're talking about that, I'll tell you about my trip to Washington D.C. It was a feeling I don't think I have experienced before. When we got into Washington, of course, it was a long plane ride, and when we got into Washington D.C., we were met by a man with the Republican party. He became our host. He had cars for us and took us to dinner, took us to a neat little restaurant, called the Fish House, and it smelled like fish too. It was an authentic little fish house and they used to bring fish off the Potomac River into this little fish house. It was delicious food, delicious seafood and everything.

After that he said, "Okay, we're going to take a little tour around." By the way, I saw Watergate and all the good things that you hear about but never know where they are. And then he said, "Now we're going to the Capitol." I never saw anything so beautiful in all my life. Regardless of what they say about whether the communists are coming in or whatever is coming in, I think sometime in every person's life they ought to visit the Capitol. They ought to go and just know they have the best country in the whole world. As we walked up, we got permission from the guard, there was about twenty of us, to walk up the steps of the Capitol and it was so wonderful. Like one person said, "You don't know if you should cross yourself." It was like being in church. It was a reverent time. Nobody hardly spoke except this one girl behind me. She said, "Don't you dare cry. She whispered it because it's the type of place you wouldn't go and holler and scream. You whisper. That's how beautiful it was. I said, "Why?" She said, "Cause, if you cry, we are all going to cry." We got up there and it was beautiful, it was lovely, and it was nice. You can see the Capitol from almost everywhere in D.C. When I came back from D.C. I felt just like I had been in a dream, but it was hard too, because we learned the legislative process, everything as far as BIA, health, education, and welfare and everything concerning health. I had to give a speech in Senate 207 in D.C. and it was a humbling time for me because here I was, a little old lady, and that's what I am, just a little old lady, but inside there's all these other things that are part of me.

WHAT DID YOU TELL THEM?

I had to give a history of our Native Alaska Health Board. We were making history. I was part of making history. We, as the Alaska Native Health Board, a health board of the whole state of Alaska for natives, to make sure that you get proper health care, as well as the dependents of Native people. It was history making time where we made a memorandum of agreement between the Indian Health Service and our Alaska Native Health Board and our Alaska Native people that

they would give the best possible health care and that we were to monitor and go through all these different services they give us to see whether they are giving their best to the Native people.

Under a law, way back in the 1800's, the government was, because of the lands they had taken away from the Native people and the Indian people, they had given a trust responsibility that they would take care of all the health of the Indian people. I guess until the law is abolished, and we made sure that we would continue to get this service for the Native people. We sat down and made a memorandum of agreement and the lawyers for both parties agreed upon it. So we had to sign it. I should have brought my picture but I didn't. I have a picture Senator Stevens sent us. We each got a copy of this picture in the Capitol in the Senate chambers. I had to give a speech on the history of the Alaska Native Health Board and what Alaska Native Health Board means to the people of Alaska. It was hard to do, it had to do with our history. I'm historian for different organizations and I have lots of pictures.

IS THE HEALTH BOARD FUNCTIONING AS YOU HOPED IT WOULD?

Yes. We have a representative from each of the regions in Alaska and the Alaska Settlement Act. I'm the Chugach representative for the Health Board. Are there any questions that you would like to ask? Don't be afraid now.

YOU EVER GO TO THE KENNICOTT ON THE TRAIN?

Yes. I don't think I made it all the way to Kennicott. I got as far as the Kuskalina bridge and the bridge was washed out. I've been to Chitina. I spent some time in Chitina when I was a youngster on the train. We went on the train. In fact, I went back and forth from home to town on the train almost all the time and the little train depot was just right down there. I have such lovely memories of that little train depot.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE ROUND HOUSE THERE?

Yes. I remember the round house. My father worked for the railroad. In fact, he helped build the Million Dollar Bridge. He was part of the crew that helped build the Million Dollar Bridge.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OLD PICTURES?

Gilbert Olsen



John Anderson 1990

We'd go out to Whitshed and fish. We'd get out there just as school got out. Then we'd spend all summer out there. We'd fish and dig clams and play. We'd burn wood, and use coal and gas lamps. We didn't need the Eyak Youth Center, so to speak, although it is good. We made our own fun. We didn't run around town; we very seldom stuck around town. We always had something to do. If we didn't, we always had some kind of games to play. We didn't of course, have all the, what they call goodies, nowadays that the kids can't do without. If you don't have a car now, you don't have anything. We didn't even know what cars were, hardly to speak of.

HOW DID YOU GET OUT TO WHITSHED?

The road wasn't there at the time. When I was a small kid, my dad used to row out there. We didn't have an outboard motor at the time. Then, in later years, we got outboard motors, and we'd leave from the dock here and go on out to Whitshed. Which is where we stayed all summer and dug clams. There were, in one particular spot, two log cabins that we lived in all summer long.

DID YOU BUILD THEM BY YOURSELF?

No, they had been there for quite a while. They'd been there long before I was even born. I don't even know who built them.

ARE THEY STILL THERE?

No, they're not. They've all fallen down now.

Well, some of my brothers would go fishing there on the flats. I would, ah, we would, my mother and some of the smaller kids would stay at Whitshed all summer long and dig clams.

IS THAT WHAT YOU ATE FOR DINNER AND STUFF?

Oh, we ate a lot of clams, bear meat, deer meat.

BEAR MEAT?

Black bear meat; as far as I know, I've never eaten brown bear meat. Everybody I've ever talked to that said they have eaten it was, ah, it wasn't that good. It's mostly stringy and strong.

MORE WILD TASTING?

Like I say, I don't know. I've never eaten it. Not the brown bear meat, but black bear, I have.

YOU GO SEAL HUNTING?

Yeah, we used to hunt seal.

WHERE AT?

Just anyplace out in the Sound. Not only that, even at that, years ago, they used to dynamite the seals out there on the Copper River Flats, to help get rid of the seals from fish. I never done it, but they used to.

HOW ABOUT WHALE, HAVE YOU EVER EATEN WHALE?

I've eaten some pickled muktuk once, but that's not something that they eat around here.

WHAT ABOUT PORPOISE MEAT?

I've eaten porpoise once, and just a little piece of it. They say it is good. I never eaten that much to even remember. I was pretty small last time I ate it. Then they, around here, they had, what they called gum boots. As a matter of fact, we got some in the freezer right now.

WHAT IS IT?

They're just a muscle-like thing. They don't get very big. They probably get maybe about three or four inches at the biggest.

DO THEY JUST GROW?

Yesh, they grow on rocks below water. It takes a big minus tide to get them. They grow on the rocks, and they are hard to pry off of 'em.

ARE THEY BARNACLES?

No, it's not barnacles, it's different.

IS IT SOMETHING LIKE AN OYSTER?

I guess it is, yeah, kind of.

SOMETHING IN A SHELL?

Yeah, it's not even really a shell. It's more of a hard coating.

WHY DON'T YOU SHOW US ONE?

Because I'd have to clean everything off the freezer. (He does.)
These are rather small ones. They do get quite a bit bigger
than these.

THEY JUST STICK TO THE ROCK?

Yeah, you gotta pry them off.

YOU GET THOSE WHEN THE TIDE IS OUT?

Yeah, on low tide.

HOW DO YOU COOK THOSE?

Most people boil them. I don't know of anyone who fries them.
Of course, I haven't eaten any for years.

THESE LOWCOST HOUSES, THEY WEREN'T HERE WHEN THE OLD TOWN WAS
HERE WERE THEY?

No, these are only fifteen years old. Incidentally, right
around here, right over there, just behind the old trailer court is
where the railroad used to have their roundhouse and their machine shop,
and everything else. One book, if you're looking for history on
Cordova, is the Copper Spike. It's very informational. Have any of
you ever seen it?

We've got some in school.

DID YOU EVER RIDE THE RAILROAD?

When I was a kid, yeah.

WHERE DID YOU RIDE IT TO?

Oh, we used to go up there. Well, this was many years ago, I
didn't ride it very often. Sometimes my dad would, ah, go on it, and
he'd take me with him. One of the things we used to do was, we would

steal handpump cars, and ride on that. Go on the tracks with handpump cars.

YOU MEAN THAT THE RAILROAD JUST CAME RIGHT THROUGH HERE?

Well, that Mile 13 road, which is Copper River Highway now, was the main railroad. They had a branch down here, that came here, and then all the yard was right over here just a little ways. Part of that burned in 1942, I think it was, the majority of it. The biggest part of that storage area and warehouse. Later years, I forgot what, the rest of it burnt down to. There was only one other building there.

DID YOU GROW UP IN CORDOVA?

Yes, I've lived here all my life.

WHERE DID YOUR PARENTS LIVE?

My mother was born at Nuchek, on Hinchinbrook Island, she was a Native Alaska. My dad was a Dane; he came from Denmark. I don't know what year he came here. He was full-blooded Dane, and my mother was Aleut. She was born and raised on Nuchek Island. Either three or four of my brothers were born on that Makaka Point, on Hawkins Island, where at one time, there was a Native village also.

IT'S NO LONGER THERE?

No, it's not.

DID YOU EVER LIVE IN AN IGLOO?

I don't even know how to build one. That's the house of the Eskimos who live in the north country uh...where there is no building materials of any kind, just snow and ice.

I might point out something to you folks, that us, a lot of people don't believe me, but the Natives of this area, the Prince William Sound area, are the southernmost Eskimos in Alaska. This is a proven fact, and a lot of people don't believe it.

THE ALEUTS?

They're not Aleuts, they're Eskimos.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE IN THE ESKIMOS AND ALEUTS?

In which way?

IN ANY WAY THAT WOULD SAY THAT THEY'RE NOT THE SAME. THERE SEEMS TO BE NOT TO MUCH PROOF OF THEIR ORIGIN, OR THEIR DIFFERENCE, EXCEPT THAT IT'S BELIEVED THAT THEY'RE DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE. WHAT HAVE YOU KNOWN?

All I can do is state my own opinion, and to be honest with you, I can't really see that much difference, other than their total complete lifestyle. It's not all that much different either, no matter where you live. If you don't have a grocery store, you live on what you can get. So ah, this is just normal that, ah, any nationality, no matter where you are, but I don't know, there's a lot of theories on how the Eskimo came to Alaska. On the other hand, you wonder if talk about the Aleuts, which are basically on the Alaskan Peninsula and the Aleutian Chain. Where do they come from? I couldn't tell you that either. I'd have some of my own opinions of them.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE THEM WITH US?

Well, I'm not sure that we really have the time. It would be quite a discussion on. I know one time, I discussed it with a friend for four hours. On where people came from, in Alaska and such. There's one other thing I might mention, too. The Eskimos up north and the Navaho Indians, their language is pretty much the same. They can understand each other.

IS THAT TRUE OF ESKIMOS AND ALEUTS? DO THEY SPEAK BASICALLY THE SAME LANGUAGE? CAN THEY UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER?

Well, now uh, in Kodiak, which is supposed to be an Aleut community, those people and the people here do sound quite a bit the same but they, they are a different dialect. Some of the words are different but the majority of them are the same. I don't speak any native language but I've heard both people talking, and listening. This is what I've done also, just by knowing a few words, I do know they are said different, but they're just a different dialect.

DID YOUR MOTHER MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO TEACH YOU HER LANGUAGE?

No, it wasn't that she didn't teach us, it's just that they will, it's mostly the individual's fault, like my own. The white man thought they were doing us a favor by putting us in school. So basically, to speak, they took our heritage away. Now some of my older sisters and brothers don't know how to speak it but they understand it. Now this, of course, but they're quite a bit older, of course. I'm second to the youngest in a family of ten. Most of them were, the older ones were raised around the older native people. By the time I came around, we were pretty well integrated with the white people. So, when I

was younger, my mother spoke most of her language to visiting friends and stuff. The kids were always out playing and we just didn't pay that much attention or anything. The older boys were raised with it. They all spoke their native language.

ARE ANY OF THEM HERE?

I've got two brothers here. The older one, he understands it, not totally, completely. Then the other one, he just knows the words he picked up, like me. For all practical purposes you can't really say that he understands it.

HAVING HAD A FOOT IN BOTH CAMPS, SO TO SPEAK, YOUR MOTHER WAS ALEUT AND YOUR FATHER WAS DANISH, YOU GREW UP IN A CULTURE THAT WAS NOT OF YOUR MOTHER'S. DO YOU HAVE ANY REGRETS ABOUT THAT? DO YOU SOMETIMES WISH THAT YOU COULD HAVE GROWN UP IN YOUR MOTHER'S CULTURE?

No, I wouldn't say that I didn't grow up in her culture. I grew up in my mother's culture, more than I did my father's. Yes. At the time I was growing up they had a government school here in Cordova, that Natives went to, being that my father was white, and my mother was Native. We lived halfway between what's Cordova now and what was Old Town. I went to the public school, I didn't go to the Native school. I don't know how they ever justified that, either.

WHAT ABOUT SOME OF THE STORIES YOUR MOM AND DAD TOLD YOU?

Well, my mother used to tell me stories years ago. I used to listen to a lot of stories between my mom and older women that used to be around here. Like I say, they talked in the Native language and I couldn't understand it. I always knew enough to understand what they were talking about, like if they were talking about me, or who they were talking about, or what they were talking about. I automatically picked it up myself and listened. They always told stories of the old times. Like I said, I'm just sorry that I wasn't smart enough at the time to realize that I wished I'd learned the Native language enough to understand it so that I could remember some of the stories. My mother has told me stories of where she used to live out there at Mutchek where they used to pick berries, hunt, and have bidarka contests, and get their winter groceries and go back out. They'd fill their bidarkas up and, of course, in those days it didn't take much money to buy a lot. They didn't have much transportation either. Other than the bidarkas, of course. Maybe some of you are familiar with that one up in the museum room.

A CANOE-LIKE THING MADE OF SKIN?

Yes, uh huh.

WHAT KIND OF SKIN?

I don't know. I think mostly they use seal skin.

WHO MADE THE ONE IN THE MUSEUM?

I don't know. As far as I know, that one came from Chenega. To the best of my knowledge, the last person that did make them was Steve Vlasoff and he died many years ago. As far as I know, that is the last remaining complete one, closest complete one, in the Prince William Sound. Although I have heard that there were skeletons of them around some place, but I don't know where they are.

HOW LONG IS IT IN A ROW BOAT?

Do you mean the milage from Nuchek to Cordova? About fifty or sixty miles.

THEY WOULD ROW ALL THE WAY FROM OUT THERE TO HERE?

Bidarkas, paddle.

DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE THEM?

I don't have any idea. Well, there used to be two ways. There was one way they used to go up to the head of Port Etches, then they would portage across. Which is a portage about ten miles across. It comes out just right out here about fifteen miles from here. They would paddle up the head of Port Etches, and then portage across to Dan Bay and then paddle.

WHAT DOES PORTAGE MEAN?

What!!!! See what I mean about education nowadays. Portage means uh....

DRIFT?

No, you take a boat, go from one area, and you portage across, you carry your boat across a strip of land to another body of water.

THEY HAVE JUST RECENTLY LEARNED WHAT PORT AND STARBOARD MEAN. AND THESE PEOPLE DEAL WITH BOATS.

THOSE WORDS ARE WHITE MAN WORDS. AIN'T MY KINDA WORDS.

THEY'RE THE WORDS OF ANYBODY WHO DEALS WITH BOATS.

YEAH, BUT THEY'RE EITHER LEFT OR RIGHT, NOT PORT OR STARBOARD.

I am kind of amazed that she didn't know what portage meant.

I HEARD OF PORTAGE GLACIER, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW IT HAD ANY MEANING TO IT.

I think you know what I mean about education now. Most of that stuff is just plain, ordinary, common sense, but a lot of people just don't have any use for it anymore. So they don't even use it. Most of the things you do now a days, it's just simple to go up town to buy it, rather than try to make it.

EVERYTHING YOU DO, YOU GOTTA HAVE MONEY.

No, you don't. That's what everybody thinks.

THAT'S HOW IT'S ALL DONE.

If you don't have the money, you just do without, or make something to do. I mean it's just the basic, normal, everyday, human-being thing. What human beings started from, it brought us to this day and age now.

IS IT COMPROMISED?

No, it's not compromised, just somebody had a better idea and they showed somebody else how to do it, and so on, and it brought us to where we are today. That's my opinion, very simple.

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW WE MIGHT LIVE WITH THE PROGRESS THAT WE HAVE, TAKE FROM IT THE THINGS THAT ARE GOOD, AND LEAVE OUT THE ONES THAT ARE NOT GOOD? HOW CAN WE DO THAT? HOW CAN WE DO A BETTER JOB OF THAT? WHERE DOES THE RESPONSIBILITY LIE FOR MAKING PEOPLE MORE.....

The shape we're in now?

YES.

You want really true answers, too, don't ya?

WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF THERE ARE ANY BUT WE CAN TALK ABOUT IF YOU WANT TO.

Politicians.

NO, I'M A PARENT OF SEVEN CHILDREN. I'M A TEACHER OF KIDS AND I'M CONCERNED ABOUT THINGS I SEE THAT I THINK.....

I know what you mean.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT? AS PARENTS, AS SCHOOL PEOPLE.

Get involved. You have to get involved. You're one out of how many?

I AM INVOLVED.

How many teachers take the interest that you do? As a parent, how many take an interest as a teacher like you do? I couldn't say how interested you are. I couldn't tell ya because I don't know you that well. I'm just assuming that you're very interested, just by this interview, but how many out of the systems are? Any system, not only this one, any of them.

NOT VERY MANY, YOU'RE JUST IN A SCHOOL, YOU'RE THERE, BIG DEAL, YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER SCHOOL KID. THEY DON'T GIVE YOU VERY MANY OPPORTUNITIES LIKE THIS. (STUDENT SPEAKING)

That's politicians and money. Money is the root of all evil. That's what politicians are going after.

WHAT PART DO PARENTS PLAY? WHAT ARE THE PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY?

Parents should know where their kids are all the time. They should pretty well have an idea of what they're doing. There should be certain guidelines that they should abide by. They don't have to be completely or totally strict, you gotta give a little and take a little. After all, the kids nowadays are much more grown up. Supposedly, than I was at their age, basically, I wouldn't say actually grown up. I'll put it this way, they just think they are smarter. Well, they have more. I mean they have more material things.

YES, THEY DO.

The trouble is most of the parents are giving it to them, they didn't earn it. They have the sense of responsibility. I think where you have privileges, you have responsibilities to their privileges. Otherwise they do foolish things with them. Do people have the responsibilities to their privileges and these extra things?

SOMETIMES I HAVE TO ASK THAT QUESTION.

That depends. I always have been a firm believer that when a kid wants something and he earns it and works for it, he's gonna take better care of it than if it was given to him. A lot of the parents nowadays give their kids new stuff. "Oh you want a new car, sure you can have one." If you go out and wreck it, "Oh I will go buy you another one." That's not the way to do it, but they want something, they work for it, they got a better sense of responsibility. Just like myself when I was fourteen years old, I bought my first skiff and outboard to go clam digging with. Sure I goofed off with it a lot, but I paid for the gas and anything went wrong with it, I fixed it or had it fixed. It came out of my pocket, so consequently I took better care of it. Not only that was my money, I had earned it. I had to take care of it in order to keep earning money with it. Eventually once the kids start realizing a little better sense of responsibility that would be alright.

DO YOU HAVE A WORD IN GENERAL FOR THESE FOLKS, THEY'RE ALL FINE KIDS?

Well, there's no such thing as a bad kid, they're just misguided. That's right, there's no such thing as a bad kid. They're just misguided. Where does the guide come from? Their home life, their parents. Their parents are the ones who should guide them. I'm stating some pretty strong opinions, but, that's how I feel.

TEACHERS AND PARENTS NEED TO WORK TOGETHER. THEY NEED TO COMMUNICATE.

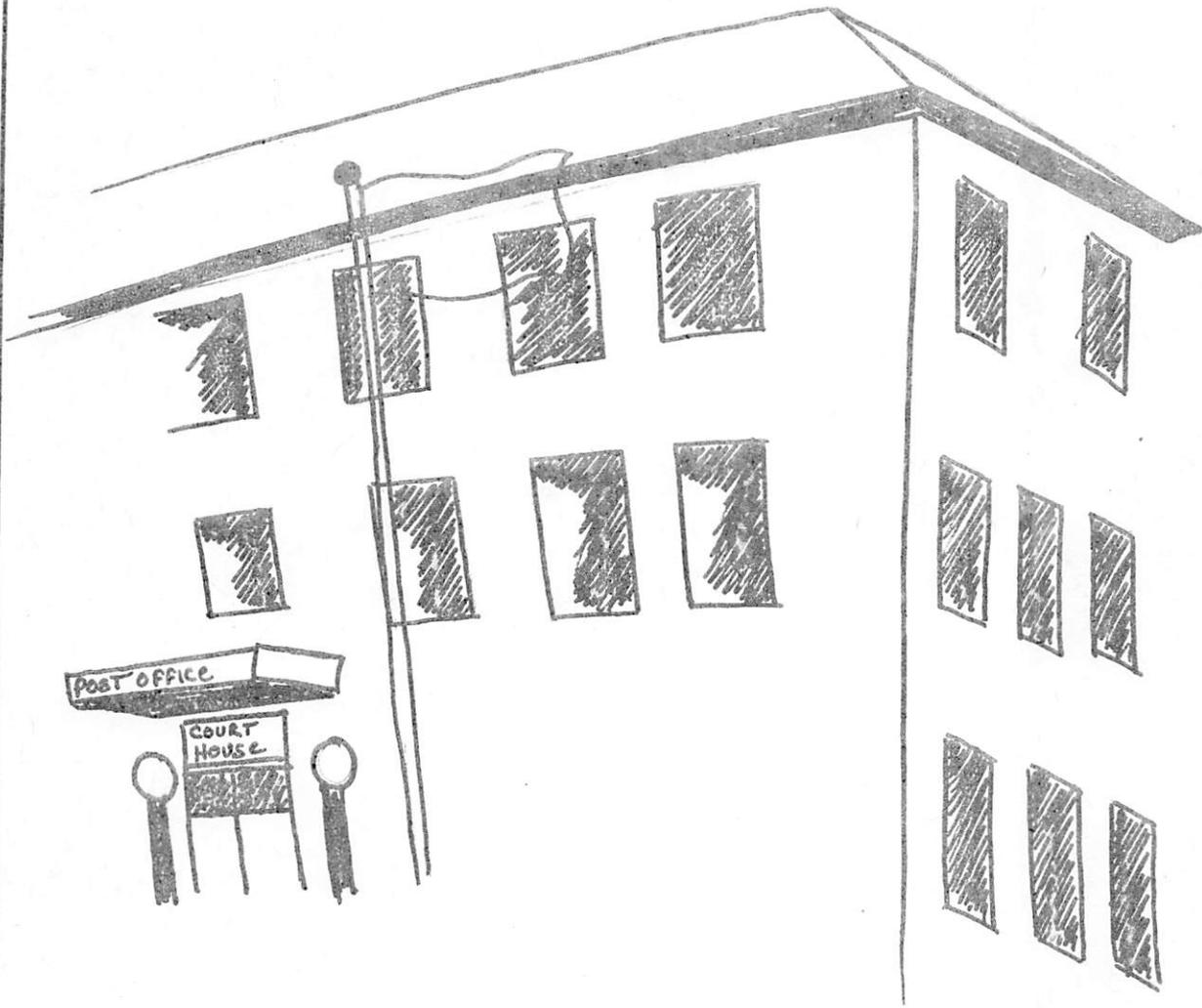
I agree with you wholeheartedly.

IT'S VERY HARD.

Yes, it's very hard considering the odds you're fighting.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THIS INTERVIEW.

HOLLIS HENRICHS



John Anderson 1980

To open our discussion, we might touch a little bit on what I was told when I first arrived in Alaska in 1935. People told me there's three sides to Alaska, not two sides like there are to most things. There's inside, then there's outside, referring to the lower forty-eight, and then there's Morningside, which was a mental health center down in Oregon that Alaska used. So that was the three sides that I was told about when I came here. However, I would like to feel that there are four sides. There's a light side also, so if I could open by just reading a little bit on the light side that I put together to entertain myself. I hope I brought it along.

Most of you, of course, know me as an old character around town who operates the mortuary. Some years back I had a problem collecting for a funeral. The money was in escrow over in the court system in Anchorage. I went, for maybe a year, and I couldn't collect. I will read to you my collection letter. Sometime when you get in business it may be of interest to you to know this form of collection letter.

He was a familiar figure as he made his slow and patient way along the waterfront and harbor in Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, in Resurrection Bay. "Cordova Slim" he was known as, wherever he wielded his caulking maul, ready to lend a hand whenever he heard you call. I knew him well for twenty years or more. He was a man to the core. On pension check days he joined the boys and the girls at the bar. Then, after a few, in soft apologetic tones, with a gentle smile he would say, "Call me a car, because after three or four, my legs don't work no more." I remember well what he had to say on that stormy day when we hauled him to the hospital for his final stay. "My friend," he said, "I am glad it's you that's a mortician here because if you're taking care of me I'll leave here for the morgue with no fear." Then he said, "When you let me down at last don't drop me like a rock." "Slim", I responded. Then he interrupted me. He says, "For you I've tucked away a little something in my sock." "Slim", I said, "No matter whether or not you had a dime, everything will be just like uptown when it comes your time."

Now we understood each other real well. So I said, "Slim, how tall are you?" But his eyes clouded with anguish. He struggled to remember. "For sure I can't tell 'cause I never had but a five foot rule, so just mark me down for five foot twenty-two." Now, since Slim breathed his last it has been over a year and out of that sock he mentioned I've yet to get the price of a beer. Now, I'll admit it was after the break-up when I put Slim away. He waited patiently through the long winter night for Spring's lengthened day. Why should he complain though? After a lifetime spent in beds too short, he rested in a casket that measures a full five foot twenty-two because, after getting over his initial shock when I ordered a casket for a friend that measured a full five foot twenty-two, the casket maker down Puget Sound way came through. Now, just one more little thing remains before we close the book on Slim. Just how long are you going to leave me out on the limb?

In about two weeks I got my check. I thought we would introduce a little bit of the light side. There is more but we will go into that later.

You mentioned the railroad, but, first of all, have we had a real good geographic study on the names of the city, the area, and all of that type of thing? Have you dug into that at all? May we refer to that? I think it would be of interest. We will start with Cordova. I know it was a great deal of interest to me when I started digging into this. Come the many misconceptions I had about why places were named. I learned a great deal, too.

Cordova, the town. This was compiled about 1965. The population was one thousand, one hundred, twenty-eight on the southeast shore of Orca Inlet opposite Hawkin's Island in the Chugach Mountains. It was named by Michael J. Heney, builder of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway, in 1906. The town had its origin as a railroad terminal and an ocean shipping port for the copper ore shipped from the Kennecott Mine in the upper Copper River. On April 8th, 1911, Cordova celebrated "Copper Day" when the first train load of copper ore, approximately twelve hundred tons of it, arrived from the mine and was poured into the hold of the steamship Northwestern, bound for the smelter at Tacoma. The name of the town was derived from the original name "Peurto Cordova" given to what is now known as Orca Bay, by Senor Don Calvador Fidalgo who visited this region in 1790. So that ~~takes us back quite a while in our history.~~

Prior to 1906 they did have a post office in Cordova, or in Orca Bay. That was at Orca which is now known as the Chugach Native Cannery. Prior to that, it was New England, prior to that, it was Western Fisheries. Well, I won't go any further back because that's as far back as I am sure of.

Orca was located on the southeast shore of Orca Inlet northeast of Cordova. It was named for a fishing vessel of the Pacific Steam Whaling Company which opened a cannery here in the end of the nineteenth century. The post office was established here in July, 1904, but discontinued in 1909. For a while they had the post office at Orca and, also, in Cordova. That was for a period of about three years. They had both post offices.

Perhaps you might be interested in, or most of you know about, Eyak Lake and Eyak Mountain, Eyak River, and from whence the names came. Eyak was a locality along the Copper River Highway five and one-half miles southeast of Cordova. That would be out at the bridge on the Eyak River. That was the original Eyak village. It was an Eskimo village recorded in 1869 by Major General W.E. Halleck. It was listed by Ivan Petroff in the 1880 census as "E-i-ac." The population was ninety-four in 1890. There were two hundred twenty-two in 1900, and in 1899 Lt. Commander Molser of the United States Navy recorded a cannery called Odiak. It floated, the population, more or less, from the Eyak River crossing on the highway down to the Odiak Slough which you are all familiar with.

Now we will get back to the post office. I will go back just a few years when the Copper River and Northwestern Railway was in operation. It was one of the major ports of entry to the interior of Alaska. A vast amount of mail, freight, and general commerce went up the Copper River road to Chitina and was trans-shipped by sled, or later on, by

trucks and that type of thing. Even during my time of working at the Post Office here, we loaded box cars full of mail to go to Chitina. The railroad closed shortly after 1938. The interesting thing about the railroad was the fact that it was never completed for economic reasons. During its entire thirty years of life it was always under construction. The reason for that was, it kept the Interstate Commerce Commission from having any control over it because it was under construction. "If we haven't got a finished railroad you can't tell us what rates to pay and how you are going to tax us. We are still building." It was under construction when they closed it. That is an interesting fact about it.

Now, maybe you have some questions.

YOU SAID YOU WORKED FOR THE POST OFFICE?

Well, I'll tell you a little bit about myself. The depression pushed me westward in the thirties. I got to Puget Sound. I couldn't walk on water. I couldn't go any further, so I shipped into the Coast Guard, and came to Cordova, and paid off the Coast Guard here in 1935. Then I worked on the railroad for a while. I was on the bridge crew, mostly seasonal work. In fact, that bit that I mentioned to you before about it being a temporary road was part of the bridge crew's work. We would redrive the Chitina River crossing each spring. They would let it wash out when the ice would go out. They would take the rails, the ties, the caps, and the stringers, and stock pile them on the beach. Then, after the ice went along, it would take some pilings. We would go back and drive some pilings, put the track down again, and it was ready to operate for the summer. That was one reason it was always under construction. They never built a permanent bridge. You now have a bridge, the highway bridge up there that goes on up to McCarthy. That is where the mine was. And, I might add, on the mine, that it is alledged that the gold and silver that was taken out of the copper ore probably paid the total expense of operating the mine and the railroad. The copper was a pure bonus to the operators of the Kennecott Corporation.

HOW LONG DID YOU WORK AT THE POST OFFICE?

Since 1938 until, thirty-five years. They decided that the post office might become a historic site because it was over fifty years old. I felt that I had better get out of there for fear that they would put me in there as an antiquity. And, I might say, that during the thirty-five years in the post office, I enjoyed it all. The only thing that I didn't miss when I retired was the work. I did miss the people I worked with and the people I served. That's why I'm so happy to be here among people again.

DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE 1964 EARTHQUAKE?

Oh, yes. May I read on the '64 earthquake? I wrote this at the request of the publisher of the Mortuary Journal.

What would we do if that happened here? is the comment that my wife and I have often made after reading of great loss of life in plane crashes, explosions, etc., throughout the nation.

Now, in a small way, we know. It did happen to us. Probably the most fateful hour in the history of Alaska since the purchase from Russia nearly a hundred years ago occurred at 5:33 p.m., March 27, 1964. (At least that is when the pendulum clock in our home stopped.) Throughout my twenty-nine years in the state we have had many earthquakes with slight loss of life and most property damage by tidal wave action afterwards. Those were the preliminaries. This was THE MAIN EVENT. (I hope.)

Cordova is just about centrally located in South Central Alaska on the north shore of Prince William Sound. It is the principal trade center and the largest town on the Sound. Access is by air or water. No highway connection presently exists, although progress has been made since statehood in achieving access via the abandoned Copper River and Northwestern Railway roadbed. This would connect with the Alaska arterial highway system at Chitina, about 100 miles north.

By 6:00 p.m. on the tragic Good Friday we had evaluated property damage, checked utility facilities, been assured of the safety of our own local loved ones, and I had completed a cursory survey of the federal office building in my custody as postmaster. This latter building was then made available as emergency shelter, as needed, throughout the long night following with its threat of tidal waves and further tremors and quakes. At this time there was no serious injury or loss of life locally.

Then followed the harrowing hours of trying to learn what had happened in the rest of the world. All communication with the outside world was cut off; no land lines exist and radio phone facilities were temporarily out. The only communication was through one ham station which was used almost entirely for urgent Civil Defense messages that were relayed through fantastic routings. Our local Civil Defense plan which was set up to incorporate and consolidate Civil Defense and Copper Delta Mortuary resources and facilities was made ready. Evacuation of all that could be reached who were in danger of tidal wave action was accomplished since the real magnitude of the upheaval was more fully realized when the water in our bay and harbor receded about 30 feet below the lowest recorded level within an hour after the quake.

Throughout the night messages trickled in indicating that Cordova was probably the only relatively whole town in the area. Valdez, our nearest neighbor, was wiped out; Seward, Kodiak and Anchorage

suffered major damage. Loss of life was not know. Then came word that the native village of Chenega was swept to sea. Half the population was lost. Evacuation of the survivors would be our local mission. Reports of injured at that village were fragmentary and unverified. Likewise, the recovery of bodies was vague and sketchy.

Chief bush pilot, Jim Osborne, of Cordova Airlines accomplished this evacuation almost single handed. Our local transport system was limited because Pilot Osborne was operating a Widgeon from our principal airport about 13 miles from Cordova and surface access to that airport was not possible because of collapse of bridges and great fissures in the road. The waters of our local harbor were still cluttered with debris to the extent that landings there by this amphibious plane were real hazardous.

A narrow strip was plowed partially free of snow on our local airstrip near Cordova and evacuation proceeded by pilot Osborne flying stretcher cases in with as many other passengers as possible to our Mile 13 airport. All but stretcher cases were off-loaded at the Mile 13 airport and shuttled to Cordova by smaller aircraft. Osborne would then come on into the local field with the stretcher case where I could meet him with ambulance facilities. This went on throughout Saturday with the debris finally clearing out in our harbor so that the Widgeon was able to land there with full loads. Excellent modern hospital facilities were available in Cordova with two doctors, so no problem existed after landings were made.

The Native peoples of this area are largely of Russian-Aleut stock with the admixture of Eskimo, Athabaskan and Caucasian strains. Practically all of the 200-odd local Native population were related in some degree to the residents of decimated Chenega. Serving all of Prince William Sound for many years as Postmaster and Funeral Director has resulted in a high degree of mutual respect and many close friendships between us. This places us in an almost untenable position of attempting to assure the safety of known survivors, offer hope to the relatives of the injured, and offer comfort to survivors of those known to be lost. This Saturday, March 28, 1964 was a full and trying day.

Late that Saturday evening we attempted to size up the problems still facing us; principally the burial of recovered dead. It would have been simple to invoke Civil Defense authority and have immediate mass burial as body recovery expeditions arrived. We could have pleaded inadequacy of personnel and inventory to take care of the situation. Certainly we would not have been criticized for following this course, However, when we engaged in the local mortuary service many years ago, We pledged that the principles of upholding human dignity and decency would be paramount so long as we continued to serve in this capacity. We chose to continue with our pledge.

The first problem, of course, was a supply of caskets. Local lumber and craftsmen were being fully utilized in emergency repairs. We

had been advised that trunk line air service would be re-established to our Mile 13 airport and that the temporary repair of the road to that airport would be accomplished by Monday or Tuesday. We were able to get an emergency message through to our supplier, Sound Casket Co. of Everett, Washington, late Saturday night and they assured us that a dozen caskets would be on the first available plane and that more would follow as needed. We also imposed on our supplier to call our daughter in Seattle and assure her of our safety. We later learned that this was the first authentic word she had received to this effect. She passed this advice on to our other relatives in the lower 48 states, including our younger son attending school in Forest Grove, Oregon.

About this same time we received word that the Motor Ship Chena, a 400-odd foot freighter that had been discharging cargo in Valdez at the time of the quake had survived an incredible experience of being swept ashore with a 30 foot wave and then was able to go out to ~~sea~~ under power with the returning wave, was arriving in Cordova with dead and wounded. Preparations were then made for this arrival.

After the transfer of the wounded from this vessel to the local hospital our ancient combination hearse and ambulance commenced to show signs of fatigue, probably in sympathy with the operator. A quick diagnosis indicated a faulty gas gauge. For immediate cure we obtained a five gallon can full of gas from the Alaska Steamship agent and belatedly learned that someone had used it for water storage during the winter. This was finally resolved by obtaining an unopened five gallons of aviation gas, a couple of cans of starter fluid, and a couple of cans of Ban-Ice from the nearby Standard Oil marine station.

The first of the dead removed from the Chena proved to be a dear friend and associate of many years, Paul Gregorieff, who had operated as a mail boat contractor in Prince William Sound with a route originating in Cordova. He was killed while working in the hold of the Chena as a longshoreman when the cargo shifted.

The emotions of the bereaved, by this time, had reached a high peak. Realization had started to set in. Throughout Sunday and for many days following our phones were ringing constantly along with our doorbell. My wife, Shirley, performed a dedicated service in trying to give answers to the many queries: "When can we see our mother?" "When is our son's funeral?" "When will so and so be ready to ship?" and so on. In addition to this she maintained records and spent a great deal of time in post office work.

The most of the native peoples of the area are accustomed to, and demand that they may view the dead. We endeavored to permit this, as much as was physically and humanely possible, in the small mortuary chapel we maintain. In some cases restorative work was possible in the time available; preservation only was

accomplished in other cases. I think the most rewarding moment of the entire period was when the patriarch of Chenega came in to view his wife. After his prayers and salutations to her he turned to me and then in rapid dialect he said, "I will be forever in your debt and my gratitude to you will continue so long as I live for what you have done. I was frightened of what I might see. You have made her rest." This same thought was expressed in many ways by many of the bereaved who had fought waters surging as high as 90 feet and watched their fellows disappear. The horror of that experience will live with them forever. Maybe we were able to give them a little peace with our work with those recovered by "Making them rest."

During this period we have had a total of 11 cases that we can attribute directly to the disaster and more will continue to be recovered as searching parties continue searching the hundreds of miles of shoreline in Prince William Sound. Shirley, in recapping the fiscal side of the picture, announced that we acquire an additional \$4,037.00 in receivables, slightly under Mitford's "National Average Cost."

In fact months ago, when Shirley first called the Mitford article to my attention, after a session with the books, she made the wistful comment, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could, some time, have just one "Average Cost Funeral." I sometimes selfishly agree with her. Then maybe she could spend a month visiting her new grandson who has taken up residence with our daughter; maybe our vintage "Caddy" combination could be replaced with a modern station wagon conversion. Anyway, we did have one \$960 service last year that may make possible the visit to the grandson if the attorneys ever decide who is going to qualify as administrator for the estate and we can get paid.

COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT THE POSTAL RATES IN THE EARLY DAYS? IT TAKES 15¢ TO MAIL A LETTER NOW. THAT WOULD GIVE US SOME IDEA OF THE INFLATION RATE.

That same letter would go for 2¢, unless you wanted it to go airmail. At that time, we had no service except by steamship. I have known times at the local post office when we would get two or three months mail accumulated due to a strike or other cause. It would accumulate in Seattle. All of this would come to the post office and we would stack it up wherever we could, in the little corridors, and sometimes we would leave it stacked on trucks. Airmail was probably a dime, as I recall.

WHERE WOULD THE MAIL HAVE TO GO TO CONNECT WITH AIR SERVICE?

There was no air service in 1935. Seattle would be the first place.

We had some slight connection with Anchorage via steamboat to Seward, up the railroad to Anchorage, but Anchorage had no air service either. We had here, and I still think we have, fourteen hundred miles of bush route originating from Cordova. It serves Prince William Sound, the upper Chitina Valley, and down the coast to Icy Bay. Of course, we have the major trunk line service once each way each day.

HOW LONG HAS CORDOVA BEEN SERVED BY AIRLINE?

When we speak of the trunk lines, the service started during 1944, the forerunner of Western Airlines. They called it Pacific Northern Airlines. Of course, the bush service started way before that. This started when the Mile 13 was a military base. We had no access to it except running on the rails with little hand cars. With military secrecy, we would get a couple of hours notice that a plane was going to land, and would be going to Juneau, and would we please rush the mail out. I think after the war, about 1948-49, we got the highway connection. Then scheduled air service started.

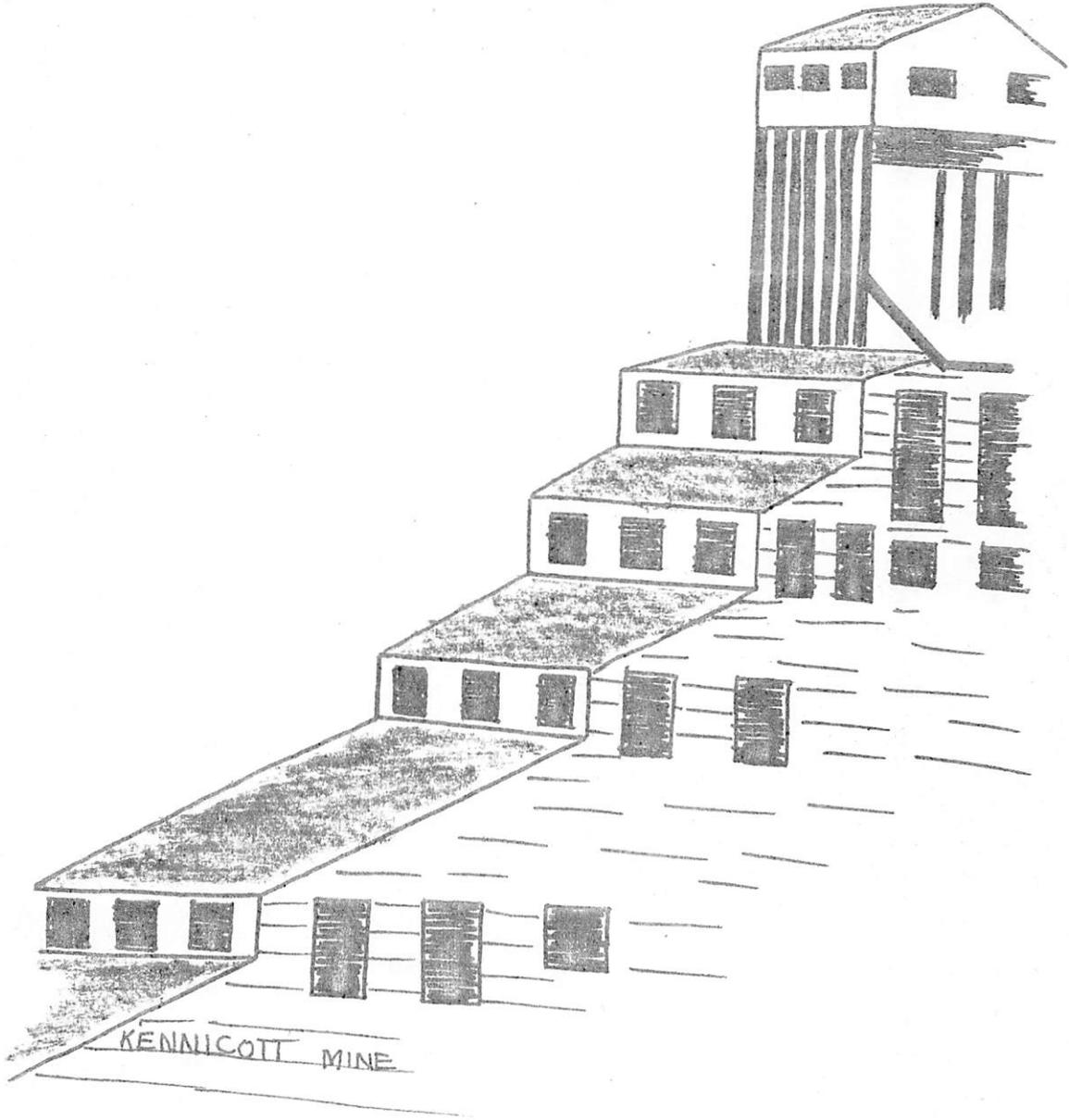
CAN YOU RECALL SOMETHING OF THE HISTORY OF THE CANNING PLANTS THAT WERE HERE? YOU MENTIONED THREE DIFFERENT NAMES IN REFERRING TO THE ONE OUT AT ORCA BAY.

Morpac was Parks Cannery, and prior to that it was Western Fishery. Prior to that it was out here on the Eyak River. Have any of you been down the river and seen the old pilings where the cannery used to be? That was an A.W. Parks operation. They burned out there and then they moved out to the Orca location. From there they moved to town and they burned there also in 1965, I think. Then they became Morpac. A long time prior to that, there was a cannery operating in Odiak Slough right alongside the causeway that you drive across. You can still find remnants, I suspect, on the other side. You can find remnants of the old tin piled. Maybe its been hauled away. The fish for that operation were caught out on the flats of the Eyak River, Eyak Lake, and then carted across on a little horse-drawn rail cart. Orca was primarily for the Prince William Sound fish. Right here in Odiak Slough was for Copper Delta fish.

WHEN THE RAILROAD WAS BUILT WAS THERE A CANNING PLANT IN OPERATION?

That I cannot answer for sure. I am sure there was at Orca, but I don't know what the operation was here. I just never talked to anybody that was around.

MR. FRANK BURNS



John Anderson 1980

Around nineteen hundred a number of prospectors were searching for copper in an area called Nicoliar Creek. They had pack horses to carry provisions along with them. At night they would turn their horses out with cow bells on them and let them graze. Most of the country had a lot of good grazing potential. In the morning they got up to get the horses but the horses had disappeared. They couldn't find them so they walked up along the area which now is Kennicott. Up on the mountainside they saw a lot of green outcroppings. They figured those were pastures for the horses so they would most likely be there. They walked up to this area. What they found there was not grass, but it was copper outgrowth. Copper outgrowth is green, like grass, if you know. So that was the start of Kennicott.

They filed their location and reported their findings. Their finances were done by New York people. I think it was Guggenheim at the time. The Guggenheims are responsible for a lot of prospecting in Alaska.

Anyhow, in order to get this to the market, they would have to have a railroad. They went back to the New York representative to make a proposition for authority there. Only one of the engineers or group of engineers that made a survey was recommended. Some started Katalla, Alaska. That's how come the original company that was building the railroad was named the Katalla Company. During that time Katalla had no harbor able to handle ships. Ore out of the country had to be shipped so they had to build a breakwater. Well, about the first or second season after the breakwater was built, a storm came up. It was totally destroyed.

A man named Mike Heney had made a survey from Chitina down the Copper River Valley, to Cordova. Cordova was not a town at the time, it was a little area down close to the lake, what they call Eyak. It was on claims there by a survey called the Kelly Survey. Anyhow, Mr. Heney had arrived here and he decided to start his railroad out of Cordova. He had been very successful in building White Pass and Yukon Railroad out of Skagway into Whitehorse. And he had knowledge of railroad building before that. Heney had worked for a railroad construction company building one of the Canadian railroads from either Vancouver or Prince Rupert to the east coast. Anyhow, he come up here with his body of men which are highly experienced. A man named Murchison, who is a track man, and a man named Hawkins, also a very good man for bridge-building. He started out from Cordova with this hunch that he would get there first.

So he started building quite rapidly, but of course in those days they didn't have all the kind of machinery that you have nowadays. Like a bulldozer and that sort of thing. A lot of work was done by hand, pick and shovel, might say, or what they called Frisco Scraper for the horses in those days. The men working on the railroad were, after payment, made thirty-five cents per hour. Also, horse and buggy or pair of horses would get about two-fifty per day. So that difference, in the economy today, as it was then. So, going on from there. He had started out building the railroad rather rapidly. Picked up material for construction, like bridges and that sort of thing, all along the way so they would have material handy. Of course, a lot of material was shipped up from Seattle by a lot of the old-time freighters in those days.

He was busy conducting his survey out there, taking it up, and picking up material for construction of the railroad, and one of the major buildings was the project of the bridge at Mile 27 (on the Copper

River Highway). You probably never remember it. It was a couple of steel trestles, also the Million Dollar Bridge at Miles Glacier, but it is still standing cept' for one span. A lot of material that was taken on the railroad was hauled up there by river steamer. They had stern-wheelers that hauled material up to as far as Miles Lake which is just beyond the Miles Glacier Bridge and there it was transported across that area which is more of a barrier. From there they built river steamers and hauled stern-wheelers and materials up the Copper River as far as Chitina and some on up the river.

ARE THERE ANY OF THE STEAMBOATS LEFT THERE?

No, they're all just about destroyed. There were some laying on the beach at Miles Glacier. I think it was called the Nenana. I can't remember the name of the other one. They just layed there and went to pieces. Where the Million Dollar Bridge is, there was a glacier. The glacier was on two sides there. When the railroad was built, instead of it coming down the river it came down into the lake as it does now; it came down the canyon up to the left. Have you been up towards the bridge? There's a canyon down there where the river used to come. The railroad had to be built along the mountainside. They had snow struts to keep snow off the tracks so they could keep the road in operation.

As he went along with this project, as he got about to Mile 39, the people out of Katalla decided that they would beat, and they bought out his contract and gave him a cost plus deal that finish the railroad all the way up to Kennicott. Kennicott is about one hundred and ninety-six miles away from here. He kept building hurriedly. They built the first bridge at Mile 26 and 27 in 1909. The bridge at Mile 50 was built in 1910, also a bridge across the Kuskulana River beyond Chitina is Mile 149. You may not have heard of it. It's past Strelna and that was the cantilever bridge that they had to build and put it over in a kind of hanging situation. It is still standing there. It's about two hundred sixty-four feet above the water's edge now. It is in good condition, too.

NOLAN SAID, "I WENT ACROSS THERE THIS SUMMER ABOUT TWO MILE AN HOUR SPEED LIMIT."

That's right.

DID YOU WORK ON THE RAILROAD OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

I worked on the railroad for seventeen years.

WHAT DID YOU DO?

Well, at first I was secretary to the railroad attorney working in the attorney's office. We used to make, occasionally, a trip to Valdez

was circuit court for this district and then, following that, they transferred me into what they called the superintendent's office. There we had operation of the railroad to keep the train in operation. Then, in 1925, I transferred to Kennicott as agent there at Kennicott. I was there until 1927 and following that, I came back to Cordova and worked in the auditor's office. I was there until the railroad closed in 1938.

HOW COME IT CLOSED IN 1938?

Actually, it was kind of a labor situation there, if I may say so. The owner of the railroad, especially Mr. Stannard, who was in charge of it then, could not make an agreement with the man who was operating and working the railroad, and, as they wouldn't come to terms he was willing to accept, he threaten to close it down. They said, "Well, just close it down." He said, "If you feel that way we will do so." The next day the railroad was buttoned up. The last train ran November 1938 from Kennicott to Cordova.

HOW FAR DOES THE NAILS GO UPDATING?

(Nails with numbered heads driven into the ties for dating purposes.) I don't remember the first year. But I will tell you what they were used for. They were to determine the life of a tie. They used to make ties that were hewed by hand out of hemlock. They used to have an average life of 15 years in the track. They actually were better than the sawed ties that they provided from the outside.

THE RAILROAD WAS BUILT TO BRING THE COPPER ORE OUT?

That's right.

WAS IT USED FOR ANYTHING ELSE?

Well, primarily the economy of the railroad was based on its use for Kennicott and they used to adjust their tariff on the ore shipped out, so, if the railroads showed any great loss or great profit Kennicott would absorb the balance and revenue that they payed off.

HOW OFTEN WOULD THE TRAIN RUN FROM THE MINE DOWN TO CORDOVA?

In the summer time the train would leave Cordova one day, land at Chitina the next, which is 130 miles, then go to Kennicott the second day, and the third it would return to Cordova. In other words, they made about two round trips a week except in the winter when there was snow out on the Mile 30 tracks. They would send a train out of Here every other day. They ran as far as Chitina, then they had another train that would run from Chitina to Kennicott and back. It would run the second

day because it took the car and materials that the train from Cordova left there. They called that the Brads local. The train from Cordova to Chitina and back was the Main local. The reason for that was, they had heavy snow conditions out on the Copper River Flats and to combat them they had three high-power rotaries. One rotary would leave ahead of the train every morning with two locomotives pushing it to clean the tracks. So the train could get through.

There were times in early days the trains was completely buried out on the flats because the snow drifted, and they had to be there for several days before they could get dug out by a crane. In Chitina the rotaries used to go as far as Tiekel which is Mile 100 and they would over-night there, and then they would return in the morning in time to get ahead of the train and get the track cleared. When the conditions were terribly bad they would have a rotary running from each direction so that if the snow got impacted it wouldn't be so hard to move. Otherwise, the train would not be delayed on getting back, although one time the rotary come back from Tiekel, about Mile 52 it run into a snow drift or snow slide. In order to back up and get another run at it, the rotary reverse ram on one locomotive froze so they couldn't back up on it, so they were snowed in there for three or four days before they could get them out, and they had to send rotary, and material, and crews from Cordova to relieve that train.

DID THEY HAVE WORSE SNOW STORMS IN THE PAST THAN THEY ARE NOW?

I think they are the same. Of course, in those days, the track was so low and that was the trouble and now the railroad is higher and the snow blows off the tracks. I think the storm conditions are the same now.

WHEN THEY BROUGHT THE COPPER ORE TO CORDOVA WHERE DID THEY SHIP IT TO?

They shipped it to the Tacoma Smelters.

BY BOAT?

Oh, yes, for a long time the passenger boats. See, the other boats had it in big sacks about one hundred pounds, no, two hundred pound sacks, in what they called jute bags. They would load about fifty tons of ore, sack-fulls, on each flat car, then take to Cordova where it would be stockpiled. They dumped it in a hole in the ship and it was stacked there. As it was more expensive to operate the boats with passengers, they decided to use the freighter in the wintertime. Freighters were used in the summer time to take care of the canneries up here. In the winter time they stacked piles of ore out here in the yard about where the Forestry Service is now. It had piles of it out there in the winter after the freighters were available, they would load that on the freighters. But they quit

using the faster boats because the time delay in there is so expensive that it made it costly to handle the ore. In Tacoma it was made into sheet copper and into anything copper was used for. They took out about two hundred million dollars worth of copper for the time of this operation. The time I was at Kennicott, they were shipping out about three thousand tons of copper concentrates and ore every month.

WAS THAT AN OPEN PIT MINE?

No, it was down in the bowels of the mountains. They mined the ore, hauled it up by hoist, and dumped it into buckets that held about half a ton apiece, and these had a tramline from Bonanza mine to the mine at Kennicott, or a mill, I might say. Mill is built on a hillside so it has most gravity operations, but the distance was so great that they had to have an angle station about midway. The tram altogether from the mill was about three miles and often the men going up to work in the mines would get into an empty bucket and when they landed they had put a marker on the bucket so they would know if there's a passenger on board it. When it got to the angle station, they couldn't see the man because he was ducked down inside that bucket to get away from the fear of going across the deep canyons.

WOULD THAT MINE OPERATE DURING THE WINTER?

Oh, yes, they kept working continuously, but in the winter months, after they had that block-up at Mile 52 they decided to close down the railroad in the winter months, on account of the snow condition and it was more expensive in the winter time. And they would cut down on the amount of the milled ore and the high grade ore which was better handled in box cars. It was kept in what they called a kind of depot. So when they got ready to haul high grade ore, it kept moving out of there almost in a continuous stream. And one thing about that tram, after it got into operation, the weight of the buckets that carried ore was so intense, they would put a solenoid brake on it and it would generate electricity for some of the electricity generated for the Kennicott operation.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WORKED IN THE MINES?

I would say approximately, during the normal time, about three hundred people at the mine and there was nearly about that many that worked for the railroad, and connection in the track operation, maintenance, and the operation of the trains. You see, they had a separate crew for each rotary which took care of about seven men, and they had three crews there, in addition to two train crews. One train crew for the branch and one for main lines and any other train crew consisted of about five men. The section crew went through high demand. They didn't have much more than ten men because there was more work to be taken care of there, and the number of section work

were, they had one out of Cordova which they called number one connection, at Mile 30, which you may know. They had another connection at Mile 52, another connection then at Mile 78, and 89, and Tiekel at Mile 100, and at Chitina, and they had a crew at the branch at Mile 172, and then one at McCarthy.

MR. BURNS, WHEN THE RAILROAD SHUT DOWN, WHAT DID IT DO TO THE TOWN OF CORDOVA?

They thought the town would dry up, but I think they went ahead and developed a fishing industry which was not so highly developed then as it is now, and it kept on. I think Cordova has hardly slumped at all since that time.

DID THE LOCAL PEOPLE DEVELOPE THE FISHING INDUSTRY, OR WAS IT THE FISHING COMPANIES FROM THE LOWER FORTY-EIGHT?

I think then mostly the people developed fishing, the local people, because that's where they were living, and most of them had their home here. Then, of course, now with easier transportation outside, lots of them had made their homes in the states or lower forty-eight.

HOW FAR APART WERE THE TRACKWALKER SHACK?

Would be about the distance that a man could walk on snow shoes in the daytime in the winter. In the wintertime the trackwalkers used to patrol the entire track for oh, broken rails, or drifts, or things like that that might be dangerous to the operation of the train. I might say that the section crew were crews of nationalities. The number one section came up on the old steamer Tacu for the Coast Guard. He was old Charlie Eklund. Then the next crew were mostly Greeks because the second foreman was Greek, and Mile 52 were mostly like Bohemian. Mile 78, the foreman there Finlander so most of his crew was Fins. Mile 89, the foreman there was Irish so he had mostly Irishmen to work with him. And at McCarthy, I might say, the other people were so subdivided, but at McCarthy, the foreman was German, most of the time, so he carries a crew of German people.

WERE THERE ANY NORWEGIAN?

Yes, there were a lot of Norwegian. They were mostly working in, like the bridge crews, and that sort of thing.

(STUDENT) "I HAD AN UNCLE THAT WORKED ON SOME OF THESE BRIDGES.

Oh, is that so?

WHERE ALL OF THOSE MEN LOST THEIR LIVES.

You mean at Chitina, when seven were lost in there? Oh, is that so? I knew a lot of those men.

HIS NAME WAS PETE.

WERE THESE DIFFERENT MILEPOST THAT YOU SPEAK OF, AND THE DIFFERENT CREWS, WERE THEY PERMANENTLY STATIONED IN THESE LOCATIONS?

Oh, yes, sections had their own living quarters, and the cook and the cooking house, and that sort of stuff, but they were all at the stations, I might say, but except for their branch or up beyond Chitina. They had one section crew that would more or less rotate. He had his crew moving cars.

EACH SECTION CREW WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THAT SECTION OF THE RAILROAD?

Yes, that's right. In the summertime patrol on a little hand speeder. In the winter time they had to do it on snowshoes because the snow wasn't possible with anything else.

WHEN THE SNOW WAS ON THE TRACKS, HOW COULD THEY BE SURE THAT THE TRACKS WERE IN GOOD CONDITION?

Then they would have to take and gamble on that because the train had been there the day before and scopped the track clean and they could tell whether there are broken rails or that sort of thing.

HOW DID THE DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS OF THESE SECTION CREWS GET ALONG? WAS THERE ANY FIGHTING AMONG THE CREWS?

I think everything was very peaceful. They seem to have no objections. They all kind of liked their work, they were pretty steady, they never rotated very much, they were along the track almost since the town was built.

WHAT DID THEY DO WITH THE ENGINE WHEN THEY SHUT DOWN THE RAILROAD?

Well, two of the locomotives were taken down to California to a logging company to what you call McLeod River Logging Company and sold to them, but the rest of them were shipped to Anchorage. I think some of them were destroyed, and that kind of stuff, because Anchorage got away from steam operation later on too, and the three rotary that they had were sold successful here. The Northern Pacific Railroad Company bought them. They shipped them down there.

YOU KNOW THE CABOOSE IS HERE AT THE SCHOOL AND THE CARPENTRY CLASS IS REBUILDING IT? WHAT WAS THE NUMBER OF IT THAT YOU REMEMBER? DOES IT SHOW ON THERE?

Caboose 014.

I had charge of the payroll the last time I worked for the railroad. Then I used to know all the individual personnel.

MR. BURNS, YOU'VE SEEN A LOT OF CHANGES IN CORDOVA OVER THE YEARS. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE CHANGES, OR DID YOU LIKE HOW IT USED TO BE?

I liked the old system quite right, of course. I would be, I was part of it, and following that, of course, I went for the Alaska Steam Shipping Company. It was still the same thing. The people that owned the railroad company owned the Shipping Company at that time. The working equipment for the railroad. They had, I think thirteen locomotives and they started out with four. Of one type were what they called the Mikado type, but they were such long wheelbase they had higher wheels, they like them for rotary because they wouldn't stall down. But bad for any fast moving on the track because they spread the track on the long reaches. But they had another type; they had five of those that were more factory type and they were used for uses like running the train to and from Chitina, and McCarthy, and Kennicott. Then they had these other locomotives, as I said, were good for rotary use because they were successful in snow and they used to mix them with one type, then the other.

THE NAME OF THE MAN WAS PETE NAREEN. HE WORKED ON MILE 27 BRIDGE AND THE MILLION DOLLAR BRIDGE.

That was long before my time, I guess he still lives here.

HE LIVES IN VALDEZ, NOW.

Well, the time they built the railroad, Valdez was trying to build a railroad out of Valdez, too. You heard about the shooting of Keystone Canyon, haven't you? There was kind of fights over trying to get the railway out of Valdez. You heard about that? The Valdez people were not very successful. They called it the Alaska Home Railway and the one locomotive they had bought they finally sold to Mr. Heney. He was using his own locomotive to put police up the railroad. Mr. Heney was not alive at the time the railroad was closed down in 1910, when the driving of the Copper Spike took place at Kennicott, but his locomotive was there. Mr. Heney, it happened that he had gone to bring some horses up on the ship. The ship was grounded and as it was sinking, he dove down in the hole to release his horses. He thought maybe they could get free, but by the time he came to the surface, up on the deck of the ship, everybody had left, even the

lifeboats, and he tried to swim ashore. The exposure was so great that he contracted pneumonia. He died a few months later out in a hospital in San Francisco. I might say along here that Mr. Heney's name is revered. This mountain out here we call Heney Mountain for him. Mt. Eccles was named for Mr. S. W. Eccles; he used to be President of Kennicott Copper Corporation. At the time the railroad was being built, Hawkins Island was named after Mr. Hawkins. He was on Mr. Heney's crew.

DID YOU KNOW ALL THE MEN PERSONALLY?

No, they were gone before I came here. See, I started with the railroad in 1919. In fact, 1918. I was a soldier boy over where the pipeline terminal is now. We called it Fort Liscum in those days.

WHERE WAS THAT?

Over across the bay from Valdez. Do you know where the terminal for the pipeline is? On the sound where Fort Liscum used to set. See, Fort Liscum had crews that maintained the telegraph line from Valdez to Eagle. Their purpose was maintaining that a line be kept in operation, but after a while they got more adequate road service there. Later that was abandoned, of course. Radio took place of a lot of that, too.

WHAT ABOUT THE EARLY STEAMSHIP SERVICE?

Well, in the earlier days, they used to have a passenger steamer two times a week. They would bring in everything the town would need. Yes, passengers, and supplies, and cannery supplies in the summer time, and they would have some tourist operations. We started with tourist along in the early 1920's.

WHY WOULD TOURISTS COME HERE?

Always being promoted outside, it's something like going to a new place, like Switzerland.

JUST A NICE PLACE TO GO?

A lot of them just went for the boat ride. They never got off the ship from the time they left Seattle until they returned. They get into a card game, and they never see anything else after that. That's the kind of tourists you saw.

WAS THERE A HOTEL HERE THAT WOULD ACCOMMODATE THEM, IF THEY WANTED TO GET OFF THE SHIP?

Oh, yes, they had the Windsor Hotel! They had two wings, and they built a third wing to take care of the tourists, but after the business got started they had what you called a Golden Belt Line tour. They used to go from Cordova to Chitina by train then take autos from Chitina to Fairbanks. They would take the Alaska River, which was finished in 1923, down to Anchorage, from Anchorage go back to Seward, then they would get on the next steamer going south.

SEWARD STILL HAS THAT RAILROAD RUNNING, DON'T THEY?

Oh, yes, they have the Alaska Railroad Company. It is run by the government that's still operating.

HOW WERE THE ROTARY SNOW PLOW OPERATED? WERE THEY PUSHED BY ONE LOCOMOTIVE?

They were pushed by two locomotives.

HOW DID THE ROTARY GO AROUND?

They had a big wheel at the end of it, and their own steam to operate it. The motion was furnished by the locomotive and as they would come up to snow, it would clear it, and they are just like the one now, but except they were bigger. They were about twelve foot wide span.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED HERE IN ALASKA?

I came here in 1917 which makes it 62 years.

MR. BURNS, WHO WERE SOME OTHER PEOPLE WHO WERE HERE ABOUT THE SAME TIME YOU CAME, AND ARE THEY HERE NOW?

Pete Nicholoff is the only one I can recall right now, I don't know if he has much of a story to tell. He is Virginia Lacey's father. They live up on the hill there on C Street.

WHAT DID HE DO?

He operated a gas boat, he was kind of connected with fishing. He did a lot of contract boat work, too. By hauling and moving barges around, and that sort of thing.

HOW MANY CAMPS DID THEY HAVE FOR THE RAILROAD?

I would say about seven.

WAS FISHING GOING ON WHEN THE RAILROAD WAS IN OPERATION?

Yes, they did some fishing and it wasn't so controlled then.

When I came to Cordova, they were fishing in the Copper River, at the Abercrombie Rapids for king salmon. They used to dip on this platform built up over the river and dip these fifty pound salmon out of the river as they would come along. They would load them in flat cars, and bring them to Cordova for the canneries. There was also a cannery up at 55 Mile on the other side of Abercrombie Rapids Canyon. The government closed them down in 1920-21.

THERE WERE TOO MANY FISH BEING CAUGHT?

They were getting the seed fish, you see.

THE DIP NET METHOD WAS THE WAY THE NATIVES DID IT?

They were not Natives doing this. They were real fishermen. They made a very good living at that. Of course, fish in those days was not very high in price.

THEY HAD A CANNERY HERE?

Yes, they had one location down there where lowcost housing is now. Right near there was a cannery, but that was closed down when they started building the railroad. They had one right where the city dock terminal is right now. The New England Fish Company had a packing company first and they had one at the dock that became Morpac Company. The one they call Alaska Packers was Mr. Halserty, which was a clam cannery in those days. The main purpose was to can clams exclusively. The canned clams including razor clams. That's all they did, can razor clams. They were called fine minced clams and were popular all over the world.

HOW WERE THEY HARVESTED?

They were dug with the little shovel they call clam guns. They have a short handle. Shovel with the narrow blade. They used to find a place where a clam was setting. -It looked like a bubble. Put a shovel down down and make a quick turn and dig the clam up and very quickly. He had a tunnel. He would disappear if they had a chance to get away.

THAT WAS SLOW GOING. HOW DID THEY MAKE A BUSINESS OUT OF THAT?

They dug enough clams to make a man's living out of it. Four or five boxes, in these kerosene boxes.

BLAZO BOX?

Yes, something like that.

WHERE DID YOU LIVE HERE IN CORDOVA?

I used to live one time at the Lathrop building, which is now the bank. I was there when the fire burned us out of the best theater in the west coast.

HOW LONG WAS IT THERE?

It was burned in the fall of 1951. They didn't rebuild it after the fire. It was built and finished in 1919. It had sound pictures and built for sound in the 30's. I was running it, moonlighting for about 15 years.

I HEAR YOU HAD A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA THAT WAS PLAYING HERE.

Yes, that is right, we did. Mrs. Steen was one of the members.

YES, SHE SHOWED US SOME PHOTOGRAPHS.

We used to put on concerts on the stage. In the theater once a month. I play a trumpet.

WHAT SIZE ORCHESTRA DID YOU HAVE?

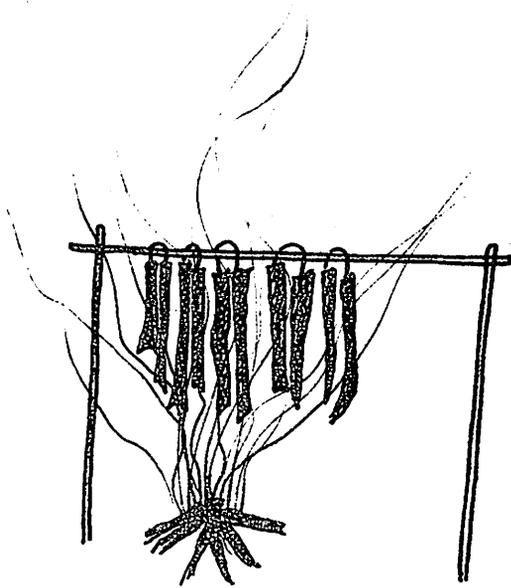
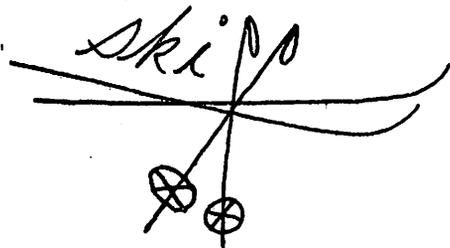
Ten man or something like that. One of the members was the organist at the theater. He was more or less director, you see. They had a big pipe organ at the theater. A Kimball organ used for silent pictures. Yes, no sound. After they came into sound, they discontinued the orchestra, and the organ, it was destroyed in the fire.

Mrs. Frank Steen

Smoking fish

The schools

The Trains



President's Visit

John Anderson 1980

DID YOU EVER RIDE THE TRAINS HERE?

I got to ride the train once. The railroad people and my friends had passes and I didn't have a pass and it was kind of an expensive thing in those days. We didn't have any money, like the kids do nowadays. They have money to jump on the plane and go to Anchorage. In those days we didn't have that kind of money. Then when working and excursions came (they used to have the train go down to the dock when the boats came in and pick the passengers up and put them on the train), I was working so I couldn't go. So if they had an excursion and it was cheap and I had the money at the end of payday, I was working so I still couldn't go. I didn't go on the railroad until 1934. That was my first trip and it was all the way to Chitina. I had a job to go to and the people paid my fare. That was my only ride, and the little excursions out to Mile 13, I never got to go on those.

HOW LONG WAS THE RIDE?

Well, to Chitina I believe was 130 miles and Kennicott, of course, was 199, Kennicott-McCarthy, and I've never yet been to Kennicott-McCarthy, but now I'm gonna go one of these days.

WE WENT THERE LAST YEAR.

You kids are lucky. That's really history and you get to see it. Like I say, the kids and my friends that were railroaders, of course the big part of the people in those days were railroaders, we felt like we were kind of ripped off and I think that at that time, we were. The town kids, we called ourselves, lived on that end of town towards the ocean dock. So the ocean dock kids kind of played together and the town kids would play with either our end or go to the Railroad Road. Railroad Road was a long ways we thought. This was when we were very young, in the first and second grades. If you were invited to a birthday party over in the Railroad Road you walked. The Old Town kids were also Railroaders.

You remember Pete Loveseth. All of you I think remember Pete. Well, Pete lived in Old Town, so when our family got together with the Loveseths, that was like going out into the country. Really. You walked in those days. We never had a car. My folks didn't have a car until about 1949. Most important in our lives was a boat. My dad liked to hunt and he was out in the boat every chance he got. So we went to the islands and we got to visit Art Tiedeman when they were very young, when Art was a very young man. His folks had a place down at Alice Cove and that was really an expedition. My dad was friends with the old folks Tiedeman and we would go down there. That was quite an outing. That was in the railroad days.

One of the earliest recollections that I have was the President of the United States visiting Cordova. Did you ever know that? President Harding came to visit. Of course there was a lot of excitement. I wasn't old enough to realize how much preparation there was in having a President, the things that had to go into entertaining the President, but I do know that it was almost as important as the Fourth of July because we had a parade and flags and we all met down on the dock; there must have

been every kid in town, and we were issued a flag. Then we walked up behind the car as they drove slowly with the President. We walked behind. Then there was a grandstand. I think some of you have seen pictures of the grandstand. It was either called the grandstand or the bandstand. It was right at the head of Main Street, and a little bit beyond, well it was almost where the pink house is, over on that knoll. Up above, we had the flags and the cannon. President Harding got out of the car and went up on the bandstand and spoke and I don't remember a thing he said. I think I must have been about five years old, but I do remember looking up and seeing my flag was gone, so all this time I was waving an empty stick and, of course, I knew the President had seen that, and I remember being real embarrassed. I was in tears to think that I waved a stick at the President instead of a flag.

Our Fourth of July, when we were children, well the Fourth of July really was celebrated. Now I think the people are more or less thinking that the Fourth of July isn't an important day. I don't know where the patriotism has gone to but it was a big celebration and everybody dressed up. If they didn't do anything, they just stood around on the streets and took in what was being done. It was just wonderful and the same with the New Year's Party. The New Year's Party included the children as much as the adults. We had a great big Elk's building right where the drugstore stands now. It was a two-story building and the Elk's was upstairs. They would start real early in the evening so the children were able to participate in costume. It was something you looked forward to. It was really the thing of the year. The Fourth of July and New Year's with the costumes and the fun things were really tremendous.

I don't know how many of you have stopped to think of hearing a train whistle in Cordova. When I lived here, of course, it was just something that you took for granted; the train came through and it started whistling about where the powder house is now. It would whistle when it came to the trestle where the road is going over the Eyak slough and, of course, it whistled down where the high school crossing is. It would come along and give another big whistle right at the end of C Street because of the traffic going down to the dock, so the train would have to whistle. These were all rules. Then it wouldn't whistle until it got down towards Ocean Dock. Then it would give another whistle. You could hear that whistle all over town. After I had been outside for a while I came back and the train wasn't here anymore. I knew there was something missing. I used to worry about the whistle being gone.

When we were very little, if a neighbor lady decided she was going to take us on a hike, we would walk out as far as the powder house on the railroad track and you could always pick up the little copper nuggets. There was always chunks of copper that had fallen off the flat cars or the box cars. They would stop there and maybe shift, but I guess you don't call it shifting, but switching tracks. Some of the copper would fall off and you were welcome to pick up all you wanted to. We'd pick those up and figure we had really found something. Then we would come back and we would make little stands up along the sidewalk

where the tourists would come up from the boats, and where the kids used to sell lemonade outside when it was hot. We would sell copper nuggets. We would have them for a nickel or a penny. Competition was hot because the closer you could get to the docks the first tourists you would get. It was kind of fun to be a child in Cordova in those days. I don't see little stands around of any kind anymore.

Of course, in the winter time there was skiing and skating like you have now. Maybe I'm wrong but it seems to me we did a lot more skating than what's been going on the last few years. I don't know whether it's the weather or not, but there wasn't a day in the winter time when you couldn't go down to the lake and skate. Skating was the thing and we walked. There was never anyone to pick us up and take us down. There were very few cars. There were two taxis. I don't remember ever riding in a taxi. The doctor had a car. The superintendent of the railroad had a car. Not even a bookkeeper. A lot of the officers didn't have cars. So if you wanted to skate you hiked down, then you hiked back, and you saw some beautiful sunsets. Of course we still have the same sunsets. That hasn't changed.

HOW THICK WAS THE ICE WHEN YOU SKATED?

I don't know who would ever test it but it would always be eight to ten or twelve inches thick. You could skate on it. I really don't know how thick it has to be to skate on. The lake will almost freeze solid. In the, when we were kids, the cars were light and you could drive cars on it. The minister was very interested in the youth and he did all kinds of things with us. One of the things he had was a little light car. I imagine it was a Ford. We would get our sled and a long rope and tie behind his car and we would go down to the end of the lake and whip around and we didn't think it was dangerous and evidently none of the adults did because they never stopped him from doing it. Well, we didn't go fast. We had an old toboggan, too. I don't think we went over fifteen or twenty but we thought we were really going.

Times were hard. It wasn't that you could go uptown and buy a hamburger or eat the things now that you kids could do. He would take us down to his house and treat us to cocoa and cold cuts. That was a big treat when we had been out on the lake for a couple of hours. Down in the old Presbyterian Church, that's where the Baptist Church stands now, there was a big Presbyterian church and the people lived upstairs. Down in the basement was a tremendous gym. When I think of it, it was really a nice gym. It was open like the youth center is. It was open to the public and you had to take your turn. We played a lot of basketball and volleyball. It was quite a thing.

I don't know how many of you have ever had a home party but we had home parties. That was nice. Everybody would open their home to the class. Say the freshmen would want to have a freshman party. We would get together with one of the people that had a big house and then we would get up chaperones and then they would have a party. We would either play games or dance or visit. That was a big social thing that we would do. I haven't heard of a home party or house party since

I've been back, and that's been over twenty years. The biggest house, and the one that we always liked to go to because they had the best floor, was the O'Neal house. They had twelve children and they were always thinking of what to do for the children. No matter what class wanted to have a party, it included one of their children. If you were lucky enough to be included in a class that had one of their children, you got invited. We had a lot of good times.

IS THE HOUSE YOU LIVED IN STILL STANDING?

The house I lived in was the four-plex on the other side of Glenn Mast's house. I lived upstairs there for many years. When I had a chance to buy it, about fifteen years ago. I bought it. Now we never had a big house. It wasn't big enough to have our whole class but the Spanish class we would have. Then our Spanish teacher would have us to her apartment. She would have Spanish I and Spanish II and she would have something and we would have to cook, like chili and different kinds of Spanish recipes. We would cook a meal at her house and that was kind of fun because it gave us a chance to really get to know the teacher and teacher got to know us, and cook something and just have a good fellowship. We looked forward to that.

We did a lot of hiking. I don't know how many of you kids have done it. You are just lazy, see. You just are lazy.

WE SKI!

Oh. That's wonderful. In the summer time and at this time of year it's just beautiful at Tripod, or up at Eyak. That was the thing to do. On Saturdays we would run up to Eyak and look around. We didn't even have cameras to take pictures. There was a book up there you could sign their name in that book. That was the thing to do. Then the Golden Stairs, that was one of the places we would go to quite often and hike out to the end of the Power Creek Road. I don't know why we didn't think of bears. I never saw the bears. In those days I never gave a bear a thought because we would play in the woods up here and never saw a bear.

YOU NEVER SAW ONE?

Very rarely did I when we were growing up. Now when I was in high school I remember seeing a bear on Hinchinbrook Island. They say that the railroad kept them away from the area. The railroad really kept the bears back. Then, after the railroad was closed down, we would see a bear and it was more common. In fact, then they even came into town. They would come down Main Street. Behind the Northern Hotel there was a bear one morning. They did come down.

DO YOU THINK THERE ARE MORE NOW THAN THERE USED TO BE, PERHAPS?

The last few years there might not have been as much. The bear hunters don't come to Cordova like they used to. There was a time that there were a lot of bears, like down at the cannery. They would come down the hill to Morpac and ~~the~~ New England Cannery. It was kind of bad for a while, I would say. Of course, then we had deer that would come down. That wasn't so bad but there was a lot of shooting.

We had a beautiful theater when I was growing up. There was no TV but we had a theater. Cat Lathrop put in three theaters in Alaska, one in Fairbanks, one in Anchorage, and one in Cordova. Ours was considered the most beautiful theater in Alaska. Of course, the movies were good. We had a good standard of movies. That was the thing to do. If you could scare up and earn fifteen cents you could go to the movies. Until you were in high school, then I think it was forty. I really feel that TV has taken over a lot. You are missing a lot by having a TV, really. Still, you see an awful lot, you see all over the world, but you don't get out and do a lot of things. You shouldn't sit and look at TV all day Saturday. I ~~know~~ there's age groups that will ~~sit~~ and watch TV all day Saturday. But I think you kids are out of that age group.

I do know that Cordova was a delightful place to grow up. I have never been sorry that I grew up in a small town. Everybody was friendly. There was always a spirit of friendliness, as far as I knew. I never felt that there was any discrimination, any hard feelings or any problems at all.

Politically, we had the same Mayor for 21 years. Dr. Chase was our mayor for many, many years. He happened to be the doctor that delivered me.

I have a picture of Nirvana Park. I'll just pass it around. Now they are beginning to want to revive Nirvana Park. I think it is a good thing that people are getting an interest in it because every town should have a park. These pictures happen to be right after the old gentleman had it finished and he invited all the kids to come down. He loved children and he wanted us to come down and have our picture taken in the park so he could send them around. And what did he call us? I think he called us fairies, little park fairies. He really did a lot of work. If there is one person in town that had that much interest again it would be kept up. Nirvana is towards the city airport.

Another thing we had in Cordova was a zoo. I can't find many people yet that remember that zoo. But we had a zoo and it had beavers, wolverines, bears, and eagles. I think it had a mink and I've forgotten what else. Of course, the bear was the big thing. They had three little bears. It was right down where the Igloo is now. You know where the Igloo is on Main Street? They had it all caged in and up against the rocks and it was a natural setting for a zoo.

Do you ~~know~~ we had a symphony orchestra? Did any of you ever hear of that? Have any of you heard of a symphony in Alaska? There is one in Anchorage, I think. Maybe Fairbanks has one. I know Juneau was working on one. We had an old German fellow that came from Valdez. He had been hurt very badly in the Valdez mines. He came to the Cordova hospital to be mended up. He had laid in the hospital for many

months. My Dad and some of the other oldtimers, which at that time they were the oldtimers, befriended him. Then when he recovered he decided to live in Cordova. The only thing he could do after he got out of the mine was play the violin. He played the violin very beautifully. He had played for the crowned heads of Europe. He had been with a gypsy band and had travelled all over Russia and Italy. Then he decided he wanted to come to Alaska during the Gold Rush. He played in the dance halls in Nome. Then he settled in Cordova. He gave violin lessons to those that could afford to take them. I think he charged ten dollars a month. If you couldn't afford it, he would give you a lesson if you were interested. How many of you know Johnny Hoover? His sister was one of the ones that he gave lessons to. She had talent. She was heading for Europe to study but she died in route. She died of TB. So many of the Native people had TB and they didn't realize it at the time, what was wrong with some of the kids that weren't feeling well. There was TB epidemics and we didn't realize it. There were seven people from Cordova that died. She was one of them. That was in about thirty-four or thirty-three. Then they had several people that ended up in the sanitarium. Some of them recovered.

The girls' symphony orchestra played and we played for charity. If there was someone that needed something we would play. We never played for money and one of the charities was ourselves.

The man lived in an old building and the building was an old two-story building where the grade school stands now. There was two or three wooden buildings on that swamp there. One of the buildings he lived in, in a little room in the back. So he was charity. We played and earned money for the coal. They had to burn a lot of coal. I don't know what they charged for it, but we would earn enough for maybe two tons of coal. That was enough to almost see him through the winter. That was kind of exciting. I had a program but I couldn't get my hands on a program. We played some quite difficult pieces. There's Frank Burns.

The orchestra was in the theater, the movie theater. It was absolutely beautiful. We had a pipe organ that was one of the nicest organs in Alaska. When that theater burned it was a great loss. That is where the bank is now, the National Bank of Anchorage. That was beautiful theater, upholstered seats, carpet, and the whole works. A hand-painted cathedral ceiling was beautiful.

The building next to it burned, the Imperial Bar. It was a wooden building and it burned. Nobody was worried about the theater burning because it was supposed to be a fireproof building, a concrete building, but a window was open and the draft just sucked the flames in and the whole downstairs of that building was on fire before anyone realized it. It went in through the furnace room and all the wooden parts burned and there was no way that they could stop it. It just gutted the building. There was a collection there that Dr. Chase had, a stuffed bear and lots of Indian artifacts. They were irreplaceable and they just went up in flames.

A lot of people have come to town and never heard that there was a symphony orchestra. There was a ski club and when they started talking about the Sheridan Ski Club I said it would be nice to revive

the ski club because there had been one here before. Also there was a Salvation Army. All the churches were represented and at one time the Salvation Army was very active in Cordova. I was going to show you a picture of the ski club. They were very informal but they were very dedicated skiers. They kept together for many many years.

I guess you have seen early pictures of Cordova. They never removed the snow; we didn't have snow equipment, of course, to clean the streets when it snowed. It just snowed and there it laid. I think I was probably in the 7th or 8th grade before I remember them clearing the streets. All the groceries were delivered by horse and sled.

WOULD YOU GET TO SCHOOL?

Oh, yes. The only thing that ever stopped us from school was sickness. Never the weather.

DID YOU HAVE ELECTRICITY WHEN YOU WENT TO SCHOOL?

Well, we had electricity and I don't remember a lot of power outages. Now I might not have a good memory on that, but I don't remember ever being sent home from school on account of a power outage. For the last twenty years I have heard of more power outages than when I was in school.

People would ski every chance they had; cross-country or downhill. They used the same skis for everything. I think what my dad would think now of the skis.

I don't think there are too many pictures around of the symphony and Nirvana Park. I think there might be a few down at the museum. We also had a crackerjack basketball team and we took on anybody that wanted to play with us. We beat the nurses and we beat the town women. We were a little bit swell-headed. There was no such thing as travel. We earned money and paid for our own uniforms. There was no money for traveling. There was no thought of traveling to Valdez, even. It wasn't until I was in high school, I think the last year, that Valdez came over and played. Now the Valdez girls and the Cordova girls never played but the boys did. That was just the beginning. It was something new.

I hear that Jessie and Agnes talked about some of the foods. I don't know if they remember the days that the North Star trading vessel would come down from Nome. Now Agnes lived out on the river at the time, out on the end of the Eyak River. Her homestead had a name but I don't remember what it was. There was a boat that came in and the people in town had a chance to go down and buy reindeer. This was the thing that was advertised somehow in advance. I believe a whole reindeer cost nine dollars. If you could afford two, you would go down and buy two with someone who wanted to share it. We didn't have refrigerators so it was put down in lard and we would make meatballs and roasts, and a lot was put up in cans and jars. We would have meat, just plain meat, put up in jars.

DID THE LARD PRESERVE THE MEAT?

The lard preserved it. You would have a cool spot to put it in so it wasn't frozen. It would be cooked, prepared before putting it in the lard. It was a lot of work. Later I found out people did this with their pigs that they butchered. They would cook them, and smoke them, and what not.

WAS THIS LARD HOG FAT?

No, it was from the reindeer.

NOW, THE REINDEER WERE NOT NATIVE TO THIS AREA?

No, they were from Nome. See, the boat started in Nome. It loaded with ivory and reindeer. They were taking it south for trading. It was called the North Star. Sitka deer were transplanted in here from southeastern Alaska. The transplant took and there are deer here now. They are much better than the reindeer, I think.

NOW SOMEONE TOLD US THAT THE MOOSE...

The moose were transplanted much later. That was in about nineteen forty, nineteen forty-five when they brought the moose in. The deer were brought in, in the early thirties. They tried to transplant pheasant. A man went out and bought several pairs of pheasants and brought them up and tried to transplant them, but they were too wet and didn't make it through the season. In eastern Washington it is cool and dry.

Did Agnes and Jessie talk about the splitting of the schools? Jessie went to school in Tatitlek. She came and went to the government school here. When I started school there was an old fire hall down on Second Street. The first and second grade were upstairs in the fire hall. We went there for several years. Then there was this talk of a government school coming in. There was people for it and people against it. My thought was, being a child, and having friends that had to go down to the Native school, I didn't think it was fair at all. I never realized it until the last twenty years that they didn't like the idea of a government school either. There should never have been the separation, but there was.

DO YOU KNOW THE REASON FOR THE SEPARATION?

The government stepped in and decided that they wanted the Native people to have their own school. Well, this was fine, except some of the Native people didn't want it. Many of the people were married

to Swedes or Norwegians. Their children were half and half and they would have to go to the Native school. There was a lot of hard feelings. I remember that my friend at the time was half Aleut and half Swedish and her Dad just put his foot down and that was all. She went to our school. They didn't move her but they moved some of the others. It was a kind of a tearful thing because you had to start kindergarten and first and second grade and then get up in the third grade and they were separated.

I remember the opening night down there. We had what we called a junior orchestra, the ones that weren't quite so good, but we were very willing. They didn't have to ask us twice to play. We went down to play for the grand opening. It was a nice school but it was a very cold night. They just had pot-bellied stoves for heat. There were no furnaces in the building as far as I could see. The building was not an excellent building as far as I could see. Myra McDonald, a lot of you kids remember Myra, she was one of the teachers there. She now has moved to the Pioneer home in Anchorage. She was one of the government teachers.

DO YOU THINK THAT ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE SEPARATION WAS TO LET THE NATIVE PEOPLE HOLD ON TO SOME OF THEIR CUSTOMS?

Why didn't they bring it in to our schools. Why didn't they introduce us to them? Then we could have learned to braid seal guts and beef and some of the copper work.

My dad would always talk about Agnes's smoked fish, Agnes's dad's smoked fish. Oh, it was always the best in the world. He would always try to go down to the place and get their fish. Then Agnes smoked some fish for us, brought it up one time, and I thought if Agnes can smoke fish why can't I. So, we've been smoking our own fish. It is not going to be a lost art as far as I am concerned. I like to know all these things that need to be known. Smoked fish is a real delicacy.

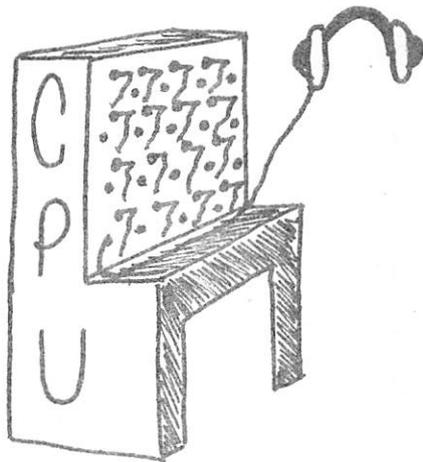
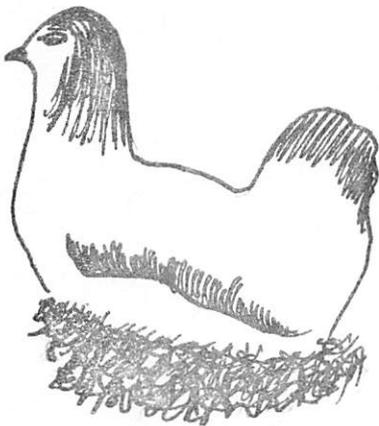
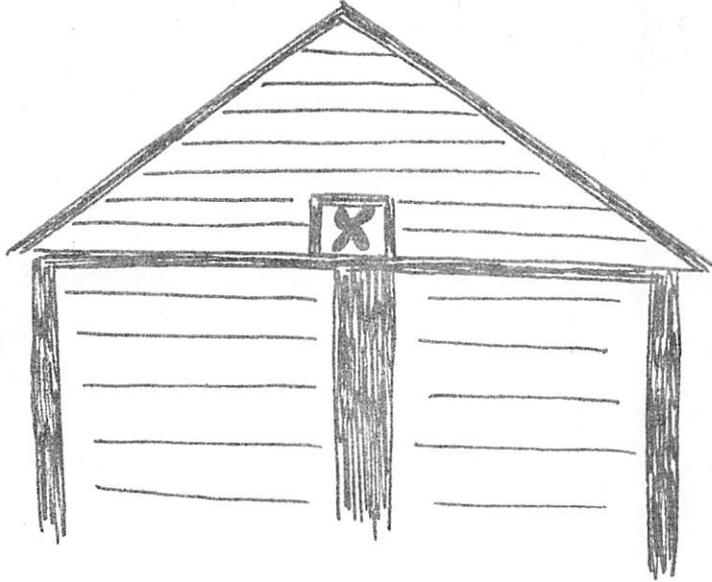
DO YOU THINK YOUR SMOKED FISH IS AS GOOD AS JESSIE'S?

Oh, mine is better than Jessie's. Get that on tape!

HOW LONG HAS THE COAST GUARD BEEN IN OPERATION HERE?

Since 1950. I don't know exactly what year they came, but that is a picture in 1950 and there is a ship laying in the harbor. I remember the Coast Guard when I was in grade school. One of the boys that was in the Coast Guard has a hobby and he brought this lamp that he made to my dad's store. It never sold. I think he didn't want to sell it. Some of the things in the store have a "Not for Sale" sign on them.

Vina Young



I came here in the summer of 1934. I got acquainted with all the officials. At that time there were no cliques; everyone was the same. Everybody was working for a living. I was out hunting with the president of the company and his wife in the fall for ducks and things. There was a dairy here and it was very dirty. So they asked me if I would start a dairy and I said I didn't want to do that. Well, they said, there's all the children here and the milk isn't fit to drink. We sure would appreciate it if you would. So I said I would.

There was a cow in Kennicott. So I bought this cow and I had to take possession of the cow. Oh, I went on the railroad to Kennicott and I got the cow. Called her Goldie. She was a very good cow. That was on the 5th of May and the mine was running so they took me all through the mine, or rather, not the mine, through the mill up there where they crushed the copper and what not. They were bringing the copper across a big canyon, ten miles wide, in buckets. The only way to get it over there was in a bucket. So my first evening up there they gave a big dinner dance for me, and so on, so on. The next day I was supposed to have lunch at the mine. I had no idea it was ten miles to go in a bucket so I went down to start out for the mine and I saw this bucket. It's scattered six or seven miles, I don't know, ten miles. They wanted me to get up in one of these buckets. I said, "No way I'd go there." And I didn't go there either. And they brought all the copper across the big canyon, dumped it at the mill. It went in the top. There was a great deal of water running. It was washed from one level to the other. They got enough gold and silver out of that copper to pay for the maintenance of the whole thing and the copper was clear profit. Then they brought it down here in gondola cars and unloaded it on the dock. The railroad went down on the dock. There was a big tunnel you had to go through on the railroad. Now that back road is just a highway.

DID YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS GETTING THE COW?

No, well you know they were hauling copper on the railroad, and they loaded the copper in each end of the car and made a regular place for the cow in the middle, a regular box stall. We stayed all night in Chitina. The superintendent of the railroad was there and Mr. Hansen said, "Now, Vina, you got to sell me the first quart of milk." And he got the first quart of milk. And there was a large hotel in Chitina at that time. They served the meals homestyle. It was a very large hotel. It must have had thirty or forty rooms. There were baths and showers.

TELL US ABOUT THE DINNER THERE. DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT THE DINNER CONSISTED OF?

They had vegetables and everything. Oh they served wonderful meals. I've got a menu from my first Thanksgiving in Cordova. It was fifty cents with cocktails and everything.

YOU BROUGHT BACK ONE COW. NOW, DID YOU HAVE OTHER COWS?

No, not then. I eventually did buy his dairy. The government closed him out, and out of the eight cows that I bought from him, there was one cow that had a full udder. About two of them only had two teats and one of them only had one. Do you know what a milk needle is? The thing that they have on ranches in case of a cow getting bruised, so you can't milk by hand? There's a needle that you put up that is hollow and milk will come down out of these two little holes in this needle. It will save hurting the cow and helping it heal and whatnot. He had done that because he was too lazy to milk the cows and it got an infection in these udders. They would lose the use of that quarter or half.

HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT DAIRYING?

Oh, I was raised on a big ranch. We had thirty-nine cows on the ranch.

WHERE WAS THAT?

Minnesota.

WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR HAY?

They shipped every bit of it in. Not only the hay, but your feed, your salt, your bottles, your bottle caps. When I took over, freight was only sixteen dollars a ton. The grain that you bought would be about twenty-five or thirty dollars a ton. The best. When I stopped, it was sixty-five dollars a ton for freight plus over a hundred dollars for the feed and your hay. I bought double compressed hay. Because it didn't take much space. That ran about sixty-five to eighty dollars a ton.

WHAT YEAR WAS THAT? DO YOU REMEMBER?

Well, I came here in 1934. I had the dairy nineteen years.

WHERE WAS IT LOCATED?

Do you know where Mr. Bynum lives? Right down Lake Avenue. That was my cow barn where they live. And their apartment is upstairs, over my cow barn. It was a nice cow barn. I had the nicest barn in the territory at that time, Fairbanks even.

HOW MANY PEOPLE DID YOU HAVE WORKING WITH YOU?

I had a husband to start with and we separated. Then I took care of the place, milked the cows, fifteen cows, night and morning, delivered milk twice a day, hauled all my feed, done all my bookkeeping. I had a Grade-A dairy. It's got to be good to have a Grade-A dairy.

DID YOU MILK BY HAND?

Oh, yes. You couldn't take a chance on a machine in case of mastitis. Now kids, I don't suppose any of you know what that is, do you? The milk is stringy, and it's very contagious, and if you milk with a machine, and outside there's many farms lose everything they have by that same thing because you have a dip that's some per cent something. You put that dip on and rub their udders all off. It's an antiseptic and a lot of people are in a hurry and they don't do it properly and this mastitis, one milking can spread through a whole herd. If you have that happen, and you are milking by hand, when you take that first milk out of the udder you can feel a slipping in the udder and then you know you've got mastitis. With a milking machine there's nothing to indicate that so you can spread it in your whole herd. Outside, on the other hand, they can sell that stock for butchering. It won't hurt the meat, it's only the milk. Up here where can you sell meat?

DID YOU HAVE ANY CHICKENS?

Yeah. After me and my husband separated I was talked into getting rid of the cows. I was working much too hard, had been over the years. Started chickens. I had five hundred laying. The kids came down there with sling shots and BB guns. I had a very nice farm, very nice. Every cow had a window in front of her. They broke windows and shot my chickens. The feathers just came off of them like a snow storm, so they stopped laying. I put boards up then over the lower half of the windows so the kids couldn't see in. I came home one day. They were all broke out, the screens and everything, and chickens all over the place, the feathers all over the place. So I had a cousin that was superintendent of General Mills in Seattle, although I didn't know he was there. So I wrote the company and about the next boat in, there was a rap came on my door and this man said, "I'm so and so from General Foods. Your cousin Harry told me to come up here and see what was going on." I was a pretty good customer in Alaska you know. So I took him out to the barn. I had bought these crates that they raise the laying chickens in. That cost me over a thousand dollars. Anyhow, he took a look at them and he said to get rid of them right away. He said the first time, maybe not, but the second time, the yolks of the eggs that are in the chickens will harden and you'll lose them. Then I went to work in the telephone office. I worked there seven years. I was the last girl on the payroll when they cut over to the automatic. I worked from twelve to eight in the morning. I had seniority but the U.S. Marshall and the police wanted me to work with them because they knew that I wouldn't talk about anything that went on. So I worked from

twelve to eight .

YOU PROBABLY HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR SOME INSIDE INFORMATION ON THAT JOB.

Oh yes, I had murders and suicides and many things that was funny. One man, he was married, very young at the time, and he played for the dances in the Cordova House. Him and his wife got into a scrap so he decided he was going to commit suicide. He went down on the tide flats. The tide was out. He lay down in the tide flats, was going to drown, but as the water was coming in he wanted no part of it so he began to scream and yell for help. So a man by the name of John Alexander, he called the office and said, "Vina, get somebody down here quick. Somebody is out there drowning." So I knew that they couldn't walk out there so I called the fire department and the police and they went down and pulled him out of the mud down there. That's one of the funny things that happened. There was many of them.

WAS JOHN ALEXANDER THE CITY MANAGER AT THAT TIME?

When he came here, Van Brocklin was mayor. Don Van Brocklin brought him here as city manager. Now if any of you youngsters want to ask me a question I will answer it gladly. Anything I can.

WE ARE READING THE STORY THE IRON TRAIL AND SOMEONE TOLD US YOU...

The Iron Trail was written by Rex Beach. I knew him personally. I knew Rex Beech very well.

IS HE STILL LIVING?

I don't think so. He couldn't be. He had pure white hair at that time. He was a very nice man and they said he was an alcoholic but in my years of knowing Rex Beach I never saw him drunk once. There would be a bunch and they wanted to treat so he'd get a glass of liquor. I went out on the boat once and he had to come from Seward on the boat. He was at my dinner table too. There was a lady walking on the deck of the boat like they usually do, and I was talking to him. This lady walked up and she said, "Oh, you know, I hear Rex Beech is on the boat." And I said, "Oh?" She said, "Do you know him?" And I said, "Well, I can't say. I might if I saw him." She was satisfied. I didn't lie. I couldn't say, and when she went away he said, "That was quick thinking." Have you heard of Peter Freicken? He was the scientist-explorer that took Greenland for Denmark. He was a personal friend of mine, too.

DID HE COME HERE TO CORDOVA? WHAT WAS HIS BUSINESS HERE?

Yes. He just came here traveling around. Many people just came to the territory to spend holidays. A lot of them got taken up with it. He was an explorer and he had lived in Greenland and he got his leg frozen and he took his jackknife and cut his leg off.

WHY DIDN'T HE BLEED TO DEATH?

I don't know. He wasn't a bit proud of that wooden leg you know. That was a touchy subject and he was a salty man. He had a tongue like a whiplash. You wasn't taken to trying to stick your nose into any of his business.

WHERE DID THAT ACCIDENT HAPPEN?

In Greenland. Then he had married an Eskimo and had a son. He sent the son back to Denmark and then went back to Denmark and he married a Danish girl.

I knew the President of the Chase National Bank at that time, too. You knew everybody and everybody knew you at that time. Another personal friend was a Bartlett. He was Senator here and a Governor. It was just like the bunch of us sitting here. There wasn't any cliques to try to entertain. If they did entertain, everybody was welcome.

YOU SEE A CHANGE? THAT'S NO LONGER TRUE? WHAT HAS CAUSED THAT?

That's true. I wouldn't know.

MRS. YOUNG, TALK A LITTLE ABOUT REX BEACH. IT WOULD HELP BRING TO LIFE THE STORY WE ARE READING.

Well, I couldn't say what his life was otherwise than when he was here. When he did his writing he would always do it in his room. He never talked about it. He was a man that did very little talking.

WHERE WAS THE ROUNDHOUSE LOCATED?

The roundhouse burned in 1958 or so. You know where the lower housing is there? That was where the turn-around was for the train, the engines coming in to go into the roundhouse. The powder house was where they had this big concrete building for all of their dynamite. That was called the "High Line." They would haul the ore from Kennicott in the summertime and they would take and stack it there and haul it during the winter when the boats otherwise would have been empty.

DID THE RAILROAD GO ACROSS THE EDGE OF THE LAKE OR DID IT GO AROUND THE LAKE?

No, no. Along the lake. It went out all the way to 13 just like it does, straight out, and it went up to the Million Dollar Bridge, and made that turn down around that way and made that turn down around that way and then got going again..

WHEN THEY BUILT THIS HIGHWAY, DID IT FOLLOW THE OLD RAILROAD?

Yes, it sure did. When they started, all the ties were up above. To start with they filled in between the ties. A lot of people ride out there. Charlotte Barth, who used to live here, her and the health nurse and the bookkeeper from the hospital and myself, I was working at the telephone office at the time; they would go to church on Sunday morning. I would go home and sleep for a couple of hours and they would be ready and we would follow that road week by week while it was being built.

HOW WOULD YOU GET OUT THERE?

Drive in the car. I had a truck. There wasn't too many of them in town. In fact when I come here there was two cars in town. The first truck I had when I come here was a Dodge. From that time on I have had nothing but Chevrolets. I did have a Ford but that thing was just a two-bit ante and I didn't keep it over about three or four months. I got it practically for nothing because the taxi driver was drunk and killed a little girl and everybody was afraid of the car. They blamed the car instead of the driver. That's right.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU PAID FOR THE TRUCK?

I bought my first truck in St. Cloud, Minnesota. I bought a green color first. It was a Chevrolet in 1935, from Lee Dickinson. He would drive that car maybe a week and the rear end would go out. Put it in and another rear end would go out. So I bought it. I paid two hundred and fifty dollars for a practically new car. So I had this car, a Chevrolet Coach it was, and I bought my spider gear, blocked the car up and I put it in there. It was in there when I got rid of the car.

DID YOU DRIVE FROM ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA TO SEATTLE?

Yes, I drove. I got on the boat. There was a big strike on. There had been all summer. I got on the boat the 10th day of December. We got here the twenty-ninth. They had to charter this boat from the government. It was an old cannery tender. I think I got the article at home in the newspaper and if I have I'll let you have it. The people that was on there, they were all from being down there all this time and that's when I brought my Dodge home. The banker that was here, his name was Tom Jeeter, he had gotten married "outside". They had a Scottie dog for a wedding present. So when I opened the door of the truck and

we put stuff in there so the dog could be in there and be warm because there were people sleeping on the floor in sleeping bags. I had drawn a lower berth and there was a lady on there that had a baby, so I gave her my berth and climbed up above. They were three high. She smoked cigarettes and I was sick all the way. My Christmas dinner consisted of a little tiny vegetable dish about so big around, half-full of boiled rice.

DID YOU KNOW MR. LATHROP? A HIGH SCHOOL IN FAIRBANKS IS NAMED AFTER HIM.

Very well. Yes, I knew him very well. He was a funny man. He expected so much. This is a story one of the men told me happened to him. I don't doubt it. They were building a place to land where the Cordova airlines is now, that big building. He had these men working and they were taking wheelbarrows and bringing gravel to make the runway. This man stopped to smoke and Lathrop come up and tied into him because he wasn't working. He was filling his pipe. That night this man went up to Lathrop, they had finished the day, and he said "Cap" (everybody called him "Cap") "would you buy me a shirt up to the store tomorrow?" "Cap" Lathrop said, "Yes, what size do you wear?" And the man said, "Hell, you ought to know, you been looking down my neck all day!" That was his last day on the job.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE REMEMBRANCES, SOME OF THE THINGS THAT YOU LIKE TO RECALL BEST OF ALL?

Well, one of my favorite ones is Dr. Chase that used to be here, he and his wife. His wife had tuberculosis in her backbone and they'd had to graft. She could go to dances all the time but she couldn't dance because if she'd a got jarred it could have caused trouble. Dr. Chase was mayor here for many years. He did many good things for this town. If the people had paid him the money they owed him for doctoring and whatnot he wouldn't have had to die a charity patient which he did outside. Ellen was a very nice lady and she always used to call me "Keed". She'd see me a dozen times a day and she'd say, "Hiya keed! What are you doing?" They had a store, she did. Everybody was always "Vina, would you haul this? Would you haul that?" And I always did because we didn't have but one car, taxi and that was 25¢, from town to the ocean dock. The big battleships used to always come up here for summer manuevers so there was a lot of activity and you never went to a dance that wasn't formal. One time I was out with the skipper of a big flat-top. We'd gone out on this north road to the end, a bunch of us, and walked over into this big valley. They call it the basin out here. We went out the 7 Mile road to the end instead of going out where the highway is now.

NOW THE BATTLE SHIPS DIDN'T COME INTO THE HARBOR DID THEY?

Out by New England, yes. They anchored there. We had many. The Charleston was here. The Swan was here. The Swan was the flat-top. This was 1936 I think.

WERE YOU HERE WHEN THEY BUILT THE RAILROAD?

Oh, no. That was built in 1909. I come in 1934. I have that book though, the actual book, not a copy of the book. I have the actual book, the first edition. At the time they built that railroad, Katalla wanted it, see, and there was a lot of equipment over at Katalla. And do you know where Abercrombie cannery is up the highway? There was only room for one line to go through there so they had a big time over who was going to get to that line. There was the Guggenheims and this other company. I don't remember what this other company was. So the other company was pulling all kinds of dirty things to get possession of that line. There was a man that got sick and they called the doctor. It gives the doctor's name in this book that I have and he knew that if you gave this man, he didn't have this disease, this drug, he would break out like it was smallpox. So he gave this man this drug and he broke out and he quarantined the town until he had advantage over the other company.

I have the book that was the actual survey with all the pictures from the road from Valdez to Fairbanks. My attorney is a book demon, same as I am. He collects old books. I have a full encyclopedia from 1892. I have about 7000 phonograph records and about five or six thousand of them are the old 78's. I have Bing Crosby's first record that he cut. It's broken, like I just told a TV man the other day. It's split in the middle. When I moved out to the place out there somebody dropped the box and this one got split. It's not shattered. It is just split. That was Shirley Temple's The Lollipops you know. Anytime you want to come out you are welcome to come out and see them.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OLD PICTURES OF CORDOVA?

Yes. I had a great many and when they started to build the museum I gave these pictures to the museum. What become of them from there I don't know. I know I loaned six of my precious books to a minister that was here at that time and the day that he was leaving I had to go to his house and try to find my books. I found two of the six. That stopped me from being a good fellow.

YOU SAID A BEAR HAS BEEN COMING AROUND YOUR HOUSE?

I've killed three when I had the dairy. One of them was stalking a moose that I raised. I raised over forty moose. These moose that are here, I raised them.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU RAISED THE MOOSE?

Well, they would pick them up different places and bring them in the planes, little ones, and I would take them and feed them milk and take care of them until they were big enough to turn out in the fall. They were babies and they would do anything for milk. They followed me like a dog.

LINDA LANKARD'S MOTHER SAID THAT AFTER THE MOOSE HAD BEEN TURNED LOOSE, IF THEY WERE ON THE ROAD WHEN A CAR WOULD PASS BY, THEY WOULD COME OVER AND EAT RIGHT OUT OF YOUR HANDS.

I remember one they brought, I don't think she weighed over twenty pounds, a little bit of a scrawny, long-legged deal, and I had this little one. I used to call her "Crybaby." At night she would come to the corner of the fence by my house. She would start to whimper, her being so little and everything. I would take two bottles of warm milk and before I'd go to bed about ten-thirty I'd put them under my pillow and when she'd come to the corner of the fence I would get up and go out and feed her her warm milk.

WHERE DID THEY GET THESE MOOSE ANYWAY?

Picked them up all over the country. I had one that wouldn't get dry. She just wouldn't dry off so I took her an old rain coat, made her a blanket, took an old rain hat, punched holes in it, put her ears through it, and I had her for quite a long while, about three months I guess. I gave her extra care. One morning I went out, fed them all. I fed her. I'd always take and mix her feed separate. I fed her and petted her then I turned and went back to my other chores. I came out and she didn't look quite right. I came over and she was dead. So I called the doctor and I asked him if he would come and perform an autopsy because I wanted to know what was wrong. So Dr. Cauthen came and she had her ribs crushed into her lungs. When she grew enough that her lungs, that's when she died, see?

DID THE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT BRING THE MOOSE IN?

Yes. I have come to the conclusion over the years that most of those moose might have been deserted. Those moose would just follow me like a dog all over. I bought canned milk and diluted it to the consistency of milk and I bought calf feed. I had that for them and I bought oatmeal and mixed it in. The same as I do with my birds now. I have about 250 birds I feed now and eight squirrels. Last winter I would go out and call them and they would come and fly all over my hands. They haven't started now.

DO YOU LIKE LIVING OUT THERE BETTER THAN YOU LIKE LIVING IN TOWN?

Oh, yes.

ALL BY YOURSELF?

When I had the campground, the trailer court, that was a real headache. The dairy was bad enough but that was much more worse. There's many things a lot more interesting than I have told you yet but I don't want to publicize them.

DO YOU MEAN YOU KNOW SOME STORIES THAT IT JUST WOULDN'T DO TO TELL?

That's right.

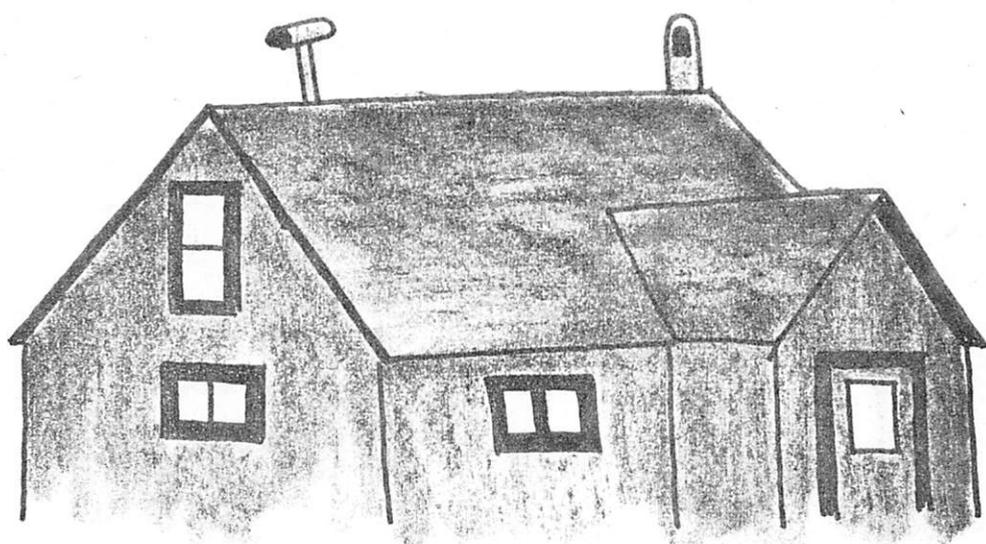
HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT WRITING A BOOK?

No. I have had it suggested to me and I said, "Well, I will let somebody else do it." I wouldn't want to do that.

You could always give your characters a different name.

But.....

Doris Williams



THE RED DRAGON

John Anderson 1980

This is a picture of The Dragon the way it was when it was first built. It was built in July, 1908. In the Cordova Times of August, 1978, Kornelia Grabinska gave a report on the Red Dragon. She has got it down pretty well so I think, probably, I might just give mostly from this newspaper clipping. Then there are other things that I want to show you.

The ghosts inhabiting the Red Dragon described by Katherine Wilson in her 1923 book "Copper Tints" are no longer there, according to Doris Williams, the present occupants of Cordova's oldest building, located next to St. George's Episcopal Church.

The name, spontaneously given to the building by workers on the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad after it was painted bright red, certainly lived up to its meaning in ancient Chinese mythology, in which the dragon is a symbol of the electrically charged, dynamic, arousing force that manifests itself in creative activity.

Built in 1908 by Rev. Edgar Newton and Bishop Peter Rowe, the Red Dragon was a recreational hall for the railroad workers who wanted to stay away from Cordova's 26 saloons.

Michael Heney, builder of the railroad, donated \$10,000 for the construction of the building and tract of land near the railroad depot.

One hundred people came to the grand opening of the Red Dragon on July 16, 1908. Soon a Sunday school and a women's guild were organized, both of which used the Dragon for their meetings.

On weekdays, billiards and other games were played while books and magazines could be read next to a big fireplace which warmed the building and gave it charm. Some of the homeless workers slept at the Dragon and considered it home.

On Sundays a small altar was set up and religious services were held there until 1919, when St. George's Episcopal Church was erected.

The Red Dragon's superintendent arrived in Cordova in January 1909. He later became known as a distinguished artist-Eustace Paul Ziegler. Ziegler "fitted in," as an old-timer said, and railroad workers loved him. He left Cordova in 1924 and moved with his family to Seattle.

When the railroad was completed and the workers left town, the character of Cordova changed. Saloons were changed into businesses of different kinds.

At least five other gathering places and a movie with a pipe organ

were in use in the 1920's.

Patrons of the Red Dragon were then railroad functionaries and elderly people playing chess and "solo" and reading magazines.

The Red Dragon, which previously was supported in part by the deposits left in the old donation box, started to receive personal checks instead.

Open to the public every day from 2:30 to 10 p.m. as a reading room, the Red Dragon was also an editorial room for the "Alaska Churchman" and a meeting place for the Women's Guild.

The Women's Guild decided to open a public library there in 1925 and increased the number of books from year to year. In 1938 there were more than 5,000 books.

During those years the Cordova Drama Club used the Dragon to rehearse and perform plays.

The Cordova Times reported in an August 1938 issue that the Red Dragon was the oldest building then in use in Cordova.

When the old rectory was sold in 1944, the Red Dragon served as a vicarage. The money from the sale was used for the Dragon's renovation. During 1945 the building was insulated and remodeled to provide living quarters for the Rev. Mervin Wanner, the priest-in-charge, and a room for parish meetings.

In the 1950's the Dragon was used for Sunday school and as the church office. Potluck dinners and dances were held there. The Men's Club was established in 1956, and erection of a new chimney was scheduled.

The 50th anniversary of the construction of the Red Dragon and the incorporation of the city of Cordova was marked by a gala celebration in July 1958, and Ziegler was invited from Seattle as the guest of honor.

The Red Dragon was nearly destroyed in 1964 when the Department of Highways wanted access through the church land. The plan required the demolition of the Dragon. Fortunately the highway was rerouted.

The building was condemned by the congregation of the Episcopal Church in 1969, but it was later decided to make the building habitable. To secure the money for renovation it was necessary to take in renters.

The first family moved in the same year; over a period of nine years six families lived in the Dragon. Some of the tenants took good care of the building, some did not.

- Last year, Bishop Cochran and members of the church agreed that the best way to preserve the Dragon would be to rent it to one of their members. The current occupants also take care of St. George's Church.

"The Red Dragon still stands," a 1924 edition of the Alaska Churchman reported, "...but today it is only a clubhouse."

Today, in 1978, the Red Dragon is "only" a rented house but it is more than that. It is still the Red Dragon.

COULD YOU TELL THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME "RED DRAGON"?

Yes. This was in the Alaska Journal, Spring, 1978. It is a big article on Eustace Ziegler. In it there was a piece about the Red Dragon. "When he was twenty-eight, the Right Reverend Peter Trimble Rowe, Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, visited Detroit and recruited Ziegler for missionary duty in Alaska at a salary of \$750 a year. He was to be stationed in Cordova, a raw frontier boomtown where Michael J. Heney was building the Copper River and North Western Railroad to reach the copper mines at Kennicott. A clubhouse had been built at Cordova for the railroad workers, and its operation was taken over by the Episcopal Church. Because it was the most readily available paint, the building was painted boxcar red, where it immediately became known as the Red Dragon. Ziegler was to be in charge of the club. That was how it was called the Red Dragon.

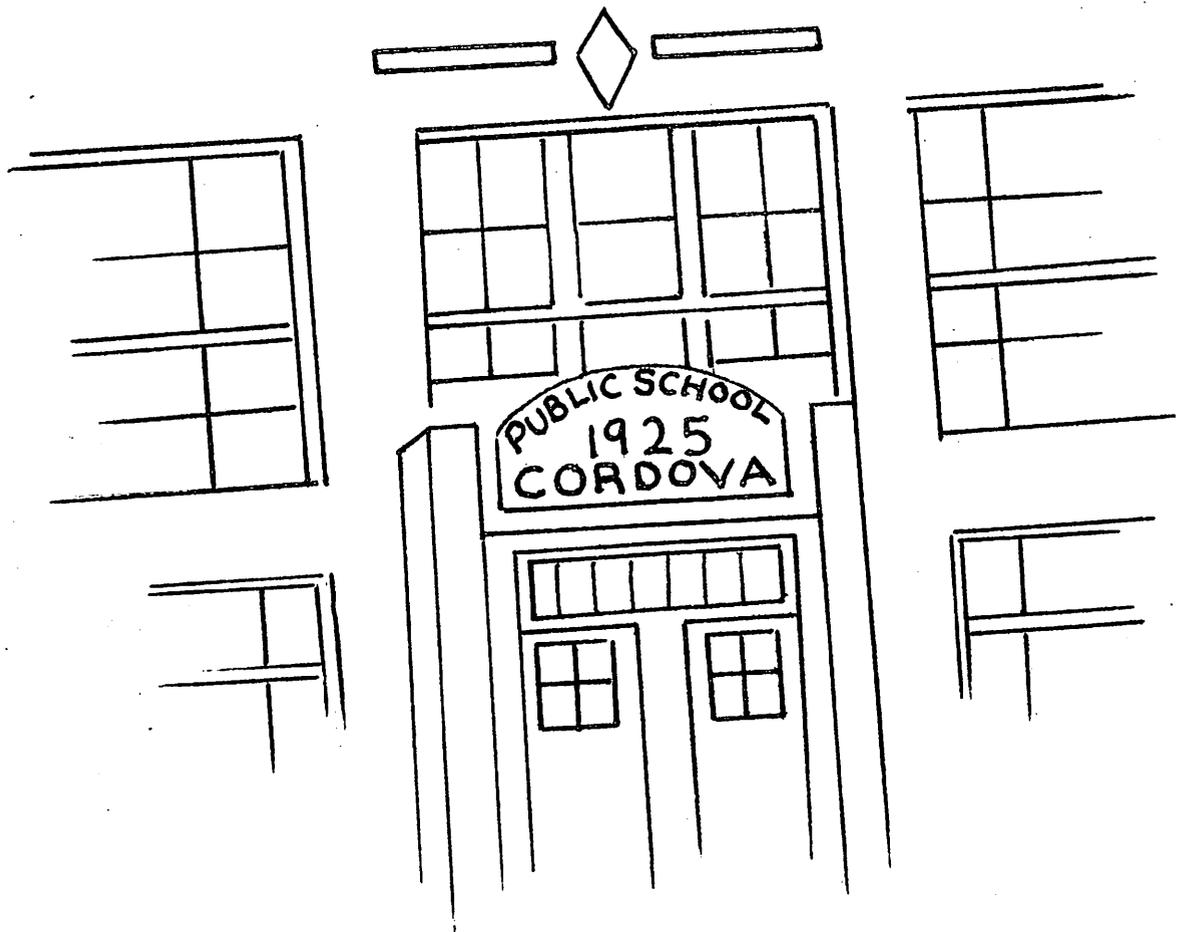
Now, in Mrs. Jansen's report in The Copper Spike it says, "The man took one look at the barn-red building with its old-fashioned outhouse perched outside and affectionately dubbed it the Red Dragon. The Red Dragon may not have been the first place in Cordova, but it has been the most enduring, as it is now the oldest building in Cordova, and its original red siding has been covered with shingles of a sedate grey." This was in the Copper Spike.

Okay. Now this is a newspaper that was published in 1908. It used to be called the Cordova Alaskan. This is a real old paper. It is very interesting to see. It has an article on all the business people here in Cordova. There is also an article about the church service here at the Red Dragon. Here is a picture of the Red Dragon over the fireplace. It was all hand embroidered by one of the members of the congregation. It hung right on the fireplace. I would imagine that is how St. George's became St. George (St. George's Episcopal Church).

There is another piece in the Copper Spike that I wanted to read to you. The minister that was here, and members of the church, lent quite a few things to the museum. They would have gotten wet because the basement of the church is so damp. If you are in the museum sometime, you should go and look because there are more pictures of the Red Dragon.

Reading from The Copper Spike: Lots in the new town site went on sale in June. One lot was donated to the Episcopal Church for construction of a seven day a week clubhouse for the railroad men. Reverend E.P. Newton, who was to build the clubhouse, found himself bidding against the owner of the Northern Saloon for a pile of scarce lumber. Both men were intent on building the first building in the new town. The saloon keeper won, and the Northern Saloon became the first place of business to open its doors. Reverend Newton's clubhouse was second. It was a railroad man's reading room and meeting place, on Sunday a church.

PETE LOVESETH



John Anderson 1980

My name is Pete Loveseth. I was born and raised in Cordova and spent all of my life here with the exception of about ten years from 1950 to 1960 when I was away. Mrs. Maxwell called me the other day and asked me if I'd come and tell some stories of the old Cordova. I'm really not much of a story teller, so she said it would be fine if I just came and answered some questions that you might have to ask. I don't know if I can be of any help to you or not, but I'll certainly try to answer some of the questions you might put forth.

WHAT WAS SOME OF YOUR CHILDHOOD LIKE?

It was pretty much like everybody else's. We didn't have any motorcycles or snow machines or anything like that. We made most of our own means of transportation like skis, skates, bicycles, and shanks mare. Anyway, we had to walk. We had a lot of games to play. We were always playing games like kick the can, hide and seek, and all that. We would go up to the old lily pond up here and go swimming. Occassionally, we would go swimming in the reservoir. We did a lot of hunting and a lot of fishing. We had a lot of fun. It seems like the later years, the high school years, probably the focal point was the drug store. After school, and after basketball games, we'd go in and have a milkshake or a coke.

WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL?

I went to school here at Cordova High School. I graduated from Cordova High School in 1939.

WHERE WAS THE SCHOOL?

The school was right up the hill where that apartment house is. There was another building of equal size, an old wood building, along side of it. I thought we had a very good shcool. We didn't have kindergarten when I went to school, but we had all twelve grades, and I thought we had a very good curriculum in high school. We only had four teachers in high school. In my junior year, I think there was about sixty-eight students. I think we probably had as well rounded curriculum as you can find any place. We didn't have all the electives. But, for example, when I was a freshman, we had English 1, algebra 1. These were required subjects, and general science. Then, as an elective, you could have either Spanish 1, or Latin, or you could have typing. As you progressed through the grades, your electives got a little more. You could get up to two electives, maybe three, provided your grade average was high enough. They wouldn't allow you to take more than four subjects unless your grade average was high enough to do so. I think we did get a very good education.

DO YOU REMEMBER HOW MANY CREDITS YOU HAD TO HAVE IN ORDER TO GRADUATE?

I don't recall how many, but I know that the requirements were three years of English, two years of math, which was Algebra, and plain geometry. I also took trig and solid geometry and advanced algebra. We had chemistry, physics, biology, general science, four years of English, Spanish 1, and Spanish 2, Latin 1, Latin 2. For the girls, there was home economics, and shop for the boys, mechanical drawing. We had really a well-rounded curriculum.

HOW ABOUT YOUR EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES?

Well, there weren't very many. A few plays were put on and that was just about it. Most of us had to work after school. Things were tough in those days. I know I washed dishes and everything else wherever I could find a job. During my high school years, a lot of the time when the ore boats were coming in to haul the copper ore from Cordova down to Tacoma, we used to go down to the long shore. They would allow us to work about a twenty hour stretch, stopping for an hour for dinners. Then they would knock you off, and if you were able to come back ten hours later for the second stretch, you were welcome to it, but it was real hard work because we had to shovel this copper ore out with snow shovels, out of these railroad cars.

WHERE WOULD YOU PUT IT?

We would put it in big hoppers on the dock. They would run the train of railroad cars out on the dock and you'd shovel these big steel hoppers full of copper ore. Then the ship's gear would lift it up into the hold of the freighter. In about two or three days the ship would be loaded and away it would go.

HOW MUCH DID THEY PAY?

Well, that was big money, it was penalty money and we were getting about ninety cents an hour for the straight time and one dollar thirty-five for the overtime. That was big, big, big money. Otherwise, most of your work was around thirty-five or forty cents an hour. We got about forty cents an hour in the cannery when I worked there and no overtime. You just worked until the job was done. Sometimes it was three o'clock in the morning when you got finished up.

WHAT CANNERIES DID YOU WORK IN?

Well, I worked where New England is now.

WHAT DID YOU DO?

A little bit of everything. Just browsed about you know, with the fish, the can loft, the warehouse, everything.

WHEN DID YOU START THAT STORE DOWN THERE?

Well, right after World War II my two brothers-in-law and myself bought the Northern Mink Market which was the place that Jack Dinneen had right now. We had that for five years and we sold out. That was in 1950 we sold out. Then, we kind of split up and went our various ways. I came back here again in 1960, and my wife and I bought out the Ross Drug Store, the drug sundries and soda fountain place. Then, in 1963, just one month prior to the big fire, we bought the Osborne jewelry store, which is where Steen's furniture store is. Mr. Steen's father was an old-time jeweler in Cordova. He has since passed away so we bought the stock and fixtures from Mrs. Steen. That's how we got in the jewelry business, and one month later, of course, we burned our own store out. We moved across the street and after that we built the building where the 1st National Bank of Anchorage is located. We had that for ten years. That was a jewelry store and we rented out part of the clothing store.

The fire was May 2, 1963. Most of you kids don't remember. It was all wooden sidewalks, frame buildings, a real old time town, you know. Well, one morning at four o'clock the siren blew and I looked out the window and looked up toward the Club Cafe. Flames were shooting up a hundred feet high, or so. So I told my wife, "This is it. Just get packing." We started in. We had two apartments that were rented to people. One couple was out of town. They had gone on vacation. The other gal in the apartment was a nurse. She was working on duty so we went in and packed up all the belongings in both places and got them out of the way. We moved the piano out, stereo set, out the back window, across the roof, down the alley, and into a truck. I had some help. Some fellows came and helped me.

It was one hour and forty-five minutes from the time the siren blew until the wall on B Street fell in, that's next to the Alaskan Hotel. So you can see how fast it went. There was no wind, a beautiful calm morning. The flames just created its own draft and you could hear it come down. In an hour and forty-five minutes the whole thing was shot. They did try to stem the tide a little bit by blasting right in the middle of the block. It was apparently a little too late and it just spread the fire. The old city hall where they have the youth center, that was on fire too. The roof was on fire. Sparks and everything were flying all over. The fire department was spread so thin. They were doing all they could do to contain it to one block. It was just amazing what they did. How did the fire start? Well, they don't seem to know, exactly, or they don't say, exactly. Presumably, it was back in the cafe, behind the Club Bar. That would be my guess. It went fast.

NOW, ALL THE BUILDINGS THAT WERE DESTROYED, WERE THEY COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS OR WERE SOME OF THEM RESIDENTIAL?

They were commercial buildings; however, at that time, nearly all the buildings had apartments overhead. So there were perhaps a hundred and twenty-five people who were homeless. Nobody was hurt, however. This was the fortunate thing. With the loss that occurred, nobody was physically hurt. After all, if you can get by with no loss of life or nobody being injured, what have you lost? Dollars is all you've lost and they are replacable. It was quite a fire. They even had two big pumping units flown down by the National Guard from the Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage to try to keep it from spreading any more. Jack Dinneen was fire chief at that time. I think he did a fantastic job of controlling the fire as well as he did. He did a real fine job, and he did a fine job for many years as the fire chief.

THE FIRE WAS CONTAINED IN THIS ONE BLOCK AREA?

One block, yes, however it did jump from time to time to the roofs of other places and they were stamped out. Now, the Club Bowling Alley was a recent building at the time of the fire and they saved that one by stopping up the drain on the flat roof and flooding it, letting the flooding spill over the sides, so they didn't lose much on that particular side of the street, except the old hospital building which is where the Prince William Motel is located. It was a big frame building, a three story building. It went down, of course, and the Times building on the other end of the block, the south side, went down.

WAS THE FEDERAL BUILDING THE ONLY MASONARY BUILDING AT THE TIME?

Yes. I believe it probably was. The structure where the National Bank of Alaska is located burned out about ten years prior to that. I wasn't here at the time, but it was a concrete structure up to the first floor, and above the first floor it was frame and stucco. They lost that building which really was a terrible loss because it housed that beautiful theater, as well as several apartments upstairs, some stores, and offices. And they lost that because nobody was on their toes, apparently. Way down in the furnace room, which was probably about five stories all the way down, they left a window open for ventilation. When the building next to it caught fire, all the flames came up through that window and caused a conflagration in the Lathrop building.

WAS SARAH'S LIQUOR STORE THERE AT THAT TIME?

No. It might have been over at the other place.

WAS MAIN STREET HOOKED ON WITH THE RAILROAD WHEN THAT STARTED?

Oh, yes. Of course the railroad didn't go up there. The railroad depot was right down here as you start up the hill where the highway goes through. That was the railroad depot. The ticket agent was there.

RIGHT THERE WHERE THE FLASHING LIGHT IS?

Yes. Right there.

DID THE RAILROAD TRACKS GO DOWN BY THE HIGHWAY?

Yes. They ran right along the road just the way it goes right now, except when it got over by where the swimming pool is, there was a high trestle that went across there clear over to C Street, kind of a curving trestle. Inside that place there was no fill of any kind. The tide came in and out of there, and there used to be a lot of boats and boat houses. The railroad just continues right down that road, and right on past where it goes down to the old ocean dock, where Morpac is. In fact they didn't even build a breakwater until 1935.

DID THE EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE THE TRESTLE THAT YOU MENTIONED?

It did damage to the dock area. You will have to remember that the entire land mass here raised six or seven feet; everything, mountains, the whole thing. As a result, that particular little cove there underneath the trestle was dry and worthless. There was also a cannery that was out where one wing of the Reluctant Fisherman is. So they tore the cannery down and burned it up. They put a big fill in there. There was a very high cut that the railroad had made for the railway right about where the Fish and Game building is and where the Reluctant Fisherman is. They made a cut right through the rock for the railroad to go through, and another one on further down just before you turn the curve to go on down to the dock.

DID THE FERRY COME IN THERE?

No, there were no ferries at all here until Alaska acquired statehood in 1959. The first ferry I saw come here was right after the fire in 1963. The Malaspina came in one time. We did have the little ferry going just shortly after statehood, the Chilkat.

WERE YOU HERE IN THE '64 EARTHQUAKE? WAS IT REALLY BAD?

Well, we didn't feel much effect from it. I think possibly the fact that we are sitting on a big pile of rock probably saved us because that earthquake had an intensity of eight point three on the Richter scale which is really a fantastic earthquake. I think one of

the worst things about it is, it lasted so long. It lasted a little over four minutes which just seems like a lifetime when you have something like that going. If you compare it to what they had in southern California a week or two ago, about a six point something, it lasted about thirty seconds, and look at all the damage it did down there. Then consider what could have occurred here or could have occurred down there if they had that intensity for that length of time. It did knock down all the concrete bridges from the Eyak River on beyond.

THEN THE MILLION DOLLAR BRIDGE WAS DAMAGED?

The Million Dollar Bridge was damaged. Yes. There was a series of bridges from here to Mile 13, and once you got past the Eyak River, you got out on the glacier moraine and it just gets shaky. All the bridges just went down like dominos.

WERE THERE A LOT OF AFTERSHOCKS?

There were quite a few aftershocks.

WHAT ABOUT THE TIDAL WAVE?

Well. You know everybody talks about the tidal wave. I don't think we really experienced a tidal wave. This particular quake occurred about a quarter to six in the evening and it happened to be low tide. The water just seemed to move out of the harbor. We just seemed to lose the water. All the boats were lying over on their sides and you could see the propellers and the rudders. Then it would come back in a little bit and go back out again. The Coast Guard ship was aground three or four times trying to get down the channel to get out. There was just no water. Then about ten o'clock that night the tide started coming in. Then is when our water came in, I would say, not as a tidal wave, but as a big, high, fast tide. It was probably going anywhere from fifteen to eighteen knots. You could look out here in the bay and see the light buoys lifted up off their anchors, just sail on up the pike up there.

HOW FAR DID THE TIDE COME IN?

Well, it came in about four feet over the docks. Over the breakwaters. Then, of course, when it goes out again, that's when it does the damage. It sucks right out again and pulls everything with it.

YOU DIDN'T CALL THAT A TIDAL WAVE?

Well, I don't call it a tidal wave. I don't call it a sunami, anyway, because we didn't get the big swell that runs forty miles an hour or something.

WERE THERE MANY PEOPLE OUT IN BOATS?

Well, there were some out in boats here and there. We lost several people around Prince William Sound, people living out all around the Sound. They had cabins or homes around. We lost several people out there. Their situation was probably a little different because some of those people, like the people over in Chenega, definitely had a tidal wave.

WHAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WAVE THAT HIT OUT THERE AND THE ONE THAT CAME IN HERE?

I think they actually experienced a tidal wave. Kodiak did. Possibly because they're out in the open someplace, open to the ocean more than we were. I'll probably be contradicted on this, but I don't consider this much of a tidal wave. I just figure it was a real high tide. One of the things that would probably bear this out is the fact that, in this area, the land lifted, whereas on the other side of the area, Anchorage, and the Kenai, every place on the other side sank. The earth crust just sank. If you are tilted uphill you are not going to get as bad a tidal wave or water action as you would if you were on the lower side.

Norman Swanson

NORTHERN LIGHT PACKING Co.

COPPER ORE

CRYSTAL FALLS CANNERY

EARTHQUAKE

PIONEER IGLOO

John Anderson 1980

I landed in Cordova at four o'clock in the morning on May 10, 1919. The first thing I heard, a railroad whistle and the bells. I had to get out of bed and see because I was in southeastern Alaska in 1916 and "Boy, Cordova has got a railroad. I've gotta see this!" So I got up and took a look. A nice bright sunny day and there was the train. So, then we went out to the Eyak River Packing Company and that summer I worked in the cannery. I stayed there all summer and in 1920 I come back up. Then they made me fireman of the boiler. I cooked the fish and run their whole boiler system.

In 1922 we had a lot of freight that had to be hauled down to the cannery. So they took it by the railroad out at Mile 7. They had a warehouse there. The Mile 7 radio station was in operation. So we hauled freight for a whole month from that warehouse to the cannery, two trips a day.

GOING DOWN THE RIVER IN A BOAT?

No. No. This was in the spring of the year. Ice and snow. We had a dog team that we run to town with during the winter months; mail and fresh vegetables, and meat, and so forth. Once a week. And in 1922 I quit the cannery, or the owner. He was so cranky that year that I didn't like to work for him any more. Then seven of us partners formed a partnership for fishermen. We built the Northern Light Packing Company at Mountain Slough. Then we lived in town and in the late 20's and early 30's I longshored along the dock.

WHAT DID THEY PACK IN THEM DAYS?

At Eyak River it was red salmon and, of course, some years pink salmon from the Sound. They didn't operate every year. Then, of course, the silver season some years. But then when we started the Crystals Falls Cannery it was renamed after the crash in 1930. It was renamed the Crystal Falls Packing Company. I stayed with the fishing most of the time although I lived in town and talked with all the oldtimers that were living at that present time. It was a very interesting town. This was one of the busiest towns in Alaska during those years. There was one passenger steamer in here every week. In fact, they come from the South and on the return they loaded ore and headed back. They come in on Friday and Saturday and come back from Seward on Monday and Tuesday, loaded up and went to Seattle to the Tacoma Smelter.

DID YOU EVER HELP LOAD THE TRAIN OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

I loaded the vessel with copper ore, yes. That's in the fall and winter, you know. I was extra. It was in 1933, I guess, when I worked forty hours straight down there. We unloaded fifteen hundred tons of freight for the railroad and Chitina and the interior and put fifteen hundred tons of ore back, copper ore.

HOW LONG WOULD IT TAKE THE TRAIN FROM HERE UP TO KENNICOTT?

They went daily. It didn't run very fast. I suppose they made the trip in the daylight hours in the winter time to McCarthy and come back the next day. In the winter time they had to, even if they didn't take down any ore. They had to make two trips a week to keep that railroad right-of-way open with snow plows. See, they had the second biggest rotary plows in the world. The only bigger ones was in California going over the pass to Nevada. They had to have two locomotives to push this rotary.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE EARTHQUAKE?

Oh, definitely. I was here. When it hit the town I was just putting on my coat. See, they burned down in sixty-three so we were having our meals in the bowling alley. Here comes everybody running all over the place. "What's that? What's that?" Well, I was calm and easy. I was in a concrete building. There was no chance of that falling down. So I said, "It's just an old-fashioned earthquake."

Had one on the flats in 1920, in the fall, at the Copper River flats. My brother and I were working in the cannery painting skiffs. It was a nice day. I got dizzy before I got out of the building. We all run to get out. The thing shook and groaned and the whole flat was just like jelly. The sixty-four earthquake was worse, on the flats.

DID YOU EVER FISH?

Oh, yeah, sure, but I went on the cannery tenders. I was still a young fellow and in 1921 I went engineer on the cannery tenders. Twenty-one and twenty-two. And in 1924 when we had the Northern Light Packing Company we had a tender that I became the Captain of, in between town and the cannery. I run that for six years. Then, of course, I worked for New England Fish in 1934. I had to help take the Caleb Haley out. They didn't have no boatmen. Then I was supposed to come back in 1935 and the fishermen and the canneries, they couldn't agree on the price so the canneries, they were going to fix the fishermen. They weren't going to operate on the flats. So I was a new man for New England. I was left on the beach outside. I had to go and get another job. They didn't have nothing up in Alaska. Things were pretty bad then. And I just got married so I was stuck down there till 1943. Then my stepdad wanted me back up here. So I come up alone in 1943. Then I went fishing. I fished on the flats and helped in the cannery until the earthquake.

IN YOUR FISHING EXPERIENCE WAS THERE EVER A DANGER OR STORM?
WAS THERE EVER A TIME WHEN YOU WERE IN A TIGHT OUT THERE IN THOSE
BOATS?

No. I always played it very cool and calm. I had too many old-time fishermen that I knew that told me about the Copper River Flats.

WHAT DID THEY TELL YOU?

They told me to watch myself when I set the gear near the bars.

WOULD THERE BE A DANGER OF GETTING STUCK ON THE SANDBARS?

No. Not necessarily. Of course I only had a skiff and an outboard motor. The flats were pretty shallow at that time. I didn't have no power boat. You had to be careful at the change of the tide, you know, where you got your net. There was a friend of mine, he was at Grass Island, and he didn't watch himself and the first thing you know the gear and the skiff and everything went on top of the Grass Island bar and, of course, a big wave come over and he got swamped. There was lots of other help around there and he got the skiff and the gear back, but he got soaking wet in the deal. I almost got caught a couple of times but I saw it coming so I started pulling the gear in.

HOW MUCH WOULD YOU GET FOR YOUR FISH AT THAT TIME?

In 1919 it was ten and twenty, ten for the cannery fishermen and twenty for the independents.

TWENTY CENTS A POUND?

No, for a fish. Then in 1922 the price went up to 12½ and 25. The fishermen went on strike. Then, of course, during the war years the price was set by the government. I think we got forty-three cents a fish during the war years. Red salmon. Of course the pink salmon on the Sound were less, quite a bit less. My stepdad fished Bristol Bay from 1900 to 1913 and he was getting three cents a fish. He fished in a sailboat.

DID YOU EVER USE THOSE TRAPS TO CATCH FISH?

No. See the only ones that could have fish traps in here was canneries. But I've helped braill traps.

HOW MUCH WOULD THEY GET IN A TRAP?

Well, it all depends. See, in 1943, the last two weeks, they had to put me on the Byak in New England. I didn't want to be on a tender anymore because they put radios on there and you got instructions to go here and there from the office and I didn't like that kind of business.

So we brailled the last traps at Porcupine Point, Knowles Head, and at Johnson Point. We weren't going to load the Eyak down and see if we could get it completely loaded. We got a lot of fish out of Porcupine trap, more out of Knowles, and they had two spillers at Johnson Point. One had over fifteen thousand fish. That's according to the watchman. The other had about a thousand. So we took the small spiller. We was still short seven thousand fish of loading the Eyak that time and when they counted the fish off of that boat, a hundred and seventy-six thousand.

HOW DID THE FISH TRAPS WORK?

They had leads from shore. They were pile traps here and floaters. Most of them were floaters. They anchored them out. Then they had a pot. They had a tunnel in the heart. They went into the pot and from the pot, depending on the area, if the fish worked both ways they had two spillers. If they only come one way there was only one spiller. They went from the pot into another tunnel and into the spiller and the spiller you can lift up and brail.

YOU NEVER WORKED UP AT KENNICOTT?

No. In the late 20's I applied for a job in the diesel engine up there at LaTouche. But I found out that when anybody was a diesel engineer the only way to get a job, the man had to die, and you had to be first on the list to replace him. That was one of the jobs you couldn't beg, borrow, or steal. They couldn't get me on underground. I don't care how high I go up but I got a funny feeling when I go underground.

WAS THAT JOB CONSIDERED HAZARDOUS?

In the mines? Well, sure it was. Up at Kennicott, most of them, if they stayed any length of time, got copper dust in the lungs, and then they got loaded up, and then they got sick, and then not before long they died. The one at LaTouche was an open pit mine so it wasn't quite so bad. It was low grade ore.

HOW MUCH COPPER DID THEY GET OUT OF KENNICOTT?

Well, with the combined operation, with low grade, at the time they run, their quotation was three hundred and fifty-five million dollars worth of copper. But in 1918 when the first world war was on, for one solid year one million dollars worth of copper ore went out of port every month. Every month.

WHAT DID THEY DO WITH IT AFTER THAT?

Well, they unloaded it at the Tacoma smelter. They smelted it and put it into copper bars. Then it went to wherever they manufactured anything that had to have copper in it.

MR. SWANSON, TELL US ABOUT THIS MEDAL THAT YOU ARE WEARING ON YOUR COAT?

That was an American Legion button that my daughter gave to me. It was a Father's Day present or a birthday present. The other pins are the ones that's important pins. In 1948 my stepdad took me into the Pioneer Igloo. You had to live here thirty years before you could join the order. That was the first part of November, or the first part of December, and it was election of officers. They nominated me for second vice-president. Boom. I gets up and says, "Can't I see how this organization works for one year? I'll be glad to take an office next year." I was railroaded.

WHAT WERE YOU DUTIES?

To run the Igloo. The President of the Igloo, to run the meeting. I was the boss.

WHAT DID YOU TALK ABOUT?

Well, we had the regular procedure every week, and special days when we had dinners for the ladies, the ladies had dinners for us. I run the Igloo for two years from vice-president to president. When I became the president and fall came for re-election I says, "Now. We're not gonna have things the way it was. We got lots of members underneath us. We'll bring them up. I refuse being re-elected president. Let the others have a go at it. If we get short later on I'll take it again." We never run short. In 1972 I became the Grand President of the whole state of Alaska. So everybody knows me. I can go into any town in Alaska where there is a Pioneer Igloo and I'm not on the street ten minutes before somebody is hollering at me.

Astrid Sandstrom

Information about

Kennicott, Copper & Cordova

The Red Dragon

The 64' Earthquake

Old Cordova Times Papers

Schools Past & Present

Personal Views of Cordova

John Anderson 1990

HOW DID CORDOVA START OUT?

Cordova became a town in 1908, due to the fact that copper had been found in the Kennicott copper mines. Cordova was designated the best port at the time because it was an ice-free port all year round. To get the copper from the Kennicott mines involved building a railroad, the Copper River Northwestern Railroad from the port of Cordova to the Kennicott mines.

WHEN THE TOWN STARTED TO GROW, WHAT WERE THE FIRST BUILDINGS?

The first building was a bar and the next one was the Red Dragon. The Red Dragon was a library and a place for the men to come to relax and read. No drinks were allowed; it was just a place for men to relax. It is beside the Episcopal church.

WHEN DID YOU COME TO CORDOVA?

I came here in 1959. In January, of course, was the statehood, when Alaska became a state. We came in May of 1959, so we just missed the big bonfire they had for statehood.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT THE 1964 EARTHQUAKE?

I, myself, was in Los Angeles the weekend of the earthquake. I wasn't here but I came right back on Tuesday and I was here for all the aftershocks and it shook for three or four weeks. It would shake every day, a minor one. The windows would rattle.

WHEN YOU GOT BACK, WHAT DID THE TOWN LOOK LIKE?

The town wasn't visibly changed. Along the slough everything was shaken down there. The people who had wharves that their boats used to come up to could no longer use the slough to have their boats come up. And you see the pictures in the museum, the houses along the slough were battered. The town proper had cracked windows and things that probably were ready to crack anyway. Everybody filed earthquake insurance for any repair jobs they needed done, naturally. The biggest expense to the city of Cordova regarding the earthquake was to get the harbor filled again, to get it dredged so that the boats could come in because the ocean floor had risen so that it was very dangerous for navigation.

WHICH YEAR WAS THE MILLION DOLLAR BRIDGE BUILT?

The Million Dollar Bridge itself was built in 1910. The railroad was built in 1908, 1909, 1910, and was finished in 1911.

WHEN DID COPPER START BEING PRODUCED?

They day the first load of copper came to Cordova they called it "Copper Day" they had a big celebration. The first load of copper, I'm sure, was 1911. The last load, the last trip on the railroad to the mine, the train got there, that this would be the last time the train would go in, so they just packed what they could take with them on the train and everything was left as it was, lamps on the table, and even dirty dishes on the table. The mines have been a great place for vandalism and for people to take souvenirs all through the years because there were so many things left.

WHEN THE MINE WAS GOING, WHY DID CORDOVA HAVE TO USE CANADIAN COAL INSTEAD OF ALASKAN COAL?

Well, the coal of course would come from Yakutat because that's where the coal fields are. The government froze all the leases in Yakutat and Katalla. Katalla was where that coal was. There were about five thousand people in Katalla waiting to start mining but the government froze all the leases and put an end fo all the oil leases so they didn't mine the coal. To this day the coal in Katalla hasn't been mined. The people of Cordova, well they just got mad. They had what they called a coal party one day. They went down to the dock where there was a ship with imported coal. They were very upset and angry and had their shovels with them. They proceeded to unload the coal and throw it in the bay until they were stopped. They did protest it and the protests and the coal party were headlines all over the United States.

WHEN THEY STARTED REBUILDING CORDOVA AFTER THE FIRE, HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVED HERE?

I would say around two thousand people were here, after the fire.

WHEN OLD TOWN WAS BUILT AND ADDED TO CORDOVA, HOW MANY PEOPLE CAME IN?

No. Old Town was not added to Cordova. The Eyak settlement was there and the town moved up here. This was the new location for the new townsite and the businesses that were in Eyak all moved up here on 1st Street and established this here. There was a cannery down at Eyak and you can still see it today, about where the low-cost housing is, and rail warehouse down there. I have pictures of the way Eyak used to look. Eyak businesses moved up here and this was the townsite. That was in 1908.

DID THEY START BUILDING A SCHOOL HERE AT THAT TIME?

Not in 1908. They had a school in the old hospital building. Then they built the school the one up on the hill there. That was a wooden building. Then in 1925 they put the exterior on and that was the high school.

WHEN WAS THE NEW HIGH SCHOOL BUILT?

I was here when the high school started. I remember very well. That's been in the last fifteen years. It is a new high school, comparatively new. Then my boys came here to Cordova. That's how I'm in Cordova. My boys came here with a construction company that built Mt. Eccles School. They liked Cordova so well they stayed here.

The museum was built with the Centennial grant money in 1967. It was completed and opened for the Iceworm Festival in 1968. Then a few years later the library was added on to the building to make the one complex that we have now.

APPROXIMATELY HOW OLD ARE SOME OF THE ITEMS IN THE MUSEUM?

Some of the artifacts in the Osborn Collection which is loaned to us by Gail and Frank Steen are fossilized ivory. I wouldn't dare to guess how old it is. Very old.

DO YOU HAVE AN ANTIQUE TYPEWRITERS?

Yes, we do. We have a typewriter here that was used up at the Kennicott mines. I have had it on display but I don't have it out. We have four typewriters that are quite old. That was the oldest one.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OLD NEWSPAPERS FROM THE TIME CORDOVA FIRST STARTED?

We have a complete set of the Cordova Times beginning in 1916. From 1921 they are pretty complete up to the present time. When the town burned, the papers were cast out of the burning building and they were stored. Space was at such a premium after the fire because everybody had their earthly possessions stored somewhere that had been rescued from the fire. When this building was completed, all the papers were given to the Cordova Historical Society as reference and we immediately established the policy that we would keep one paper and any paper that we had more copies of we would sell. At our last Historical Society we decided to sell every single thing and knock the prices down to a dollar a paper. They will be available to the public for a dollar a paper. There are so many people who come to Cordova and are so pleased to pick up a paper with possibly their wedding, or the birth of their children, or their graduation. Things like that. They do have a very historical value.

YESTERDAY WE WERE WATCHING A FILM ABOUT THE HISTORY OF CORDOVA. WAS THAT FILM MADE HERE IN CORDOVA?

That film was made entirely by photographs, a collection of photographs of Cordova. Most of them belong to the Cordova Historical Society, but not all of them. They were put together in the film by Larry Beck. It was filmed by Centennial money that our Cordova Bicentennial Committee sponsored.

AFTER WATCHING THE FILM, I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT THE GUY IN THE CABIN. THE FILM DID NOT SAY WHERE THE CABIN WAS LOCATED.

That is Larry Beck's own cabin in Anchorage, somewhere around Anchorage, but I don't know where.

WHEN THEY STARTED THE SCHOOL, APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY CHILDREN WERE THERE?

I really don't know. I have never heard the exact number of pupils but there were enough to warrant hiring teachers and starting a school, so the city voted to open up schools.

DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY TEACHERS THEY HIRED TO COME IN HERE?

There were two at first. They just had two rooms so there were two teachers. Miss Nettleton was one. I don't remember the name of the other. When the school got bigger they had a principal. Her name was Miss Pickel. That was the beginning of the school systems.

WHEN DID THE FISHING INDUSTRY BECOME IMPORTANT IN CORDOVA?

After the railroad went out, the people that were here and liked Alaska started fishing. Then the canneries expanded. There had been a lot of canneries that have failed, that have burned. Of course Cordova has always been a fishing town and that took care of the economy. Yet today canneries have kept the economy going.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHEN THE FIRST CANNERY WAS BUILT?

No, I can't give you the exact date. In 1906 there were canneries along the Eyak and in the town of Eyak. There was a cannery before the railroad started.

WHEN DID THE FIRST AIRPORT AND AIRPLANE COME INTO CORDOVA?

I don't have all these dates in my head. Dates, I just can't remember them. That location where the small city field is has always been the location.

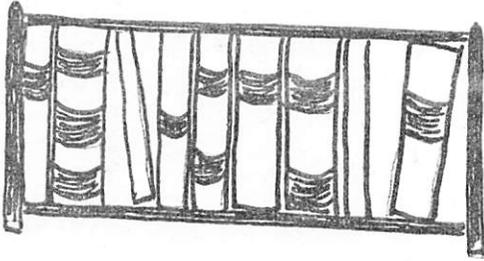
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO ADD?

Well, I can say that Cordova is a very interesting town to live in and it has a lot of information to offer people. I feel visitors are certainly thrilled when they come here and see the natural beauty all around. Many people compare it to Switzerland an account of the mountains, the mountain range out there. Everybody felt that when the railroad went out that would just be the end of it, but it wasn't. It has grown and it is growing fast every year. More homes are being built and the canneries are getting bigger. The fishing industry is getting so much bigger. It is just growing.

DO YOU KNOW WHEN THEY STARTED A RECREATION CENTER?

Well, the first what you would really call a recreation center is the Red Dragon because that was the recreation for the men on the railroad. That was the first. They have always had baseball teams, I understand. They would go over to Valdez and play baseball back in the 20's. They have always had a good basketball team that played throughout the state. The community spirit behind promoting sports here, I think, has been very very good. The people are behind the swim team and the basketball team seems to get good support. I feel that we have a good school system. Of course, I think Cordova is a good place to live.

Corvina Erickson



The Red Dragon

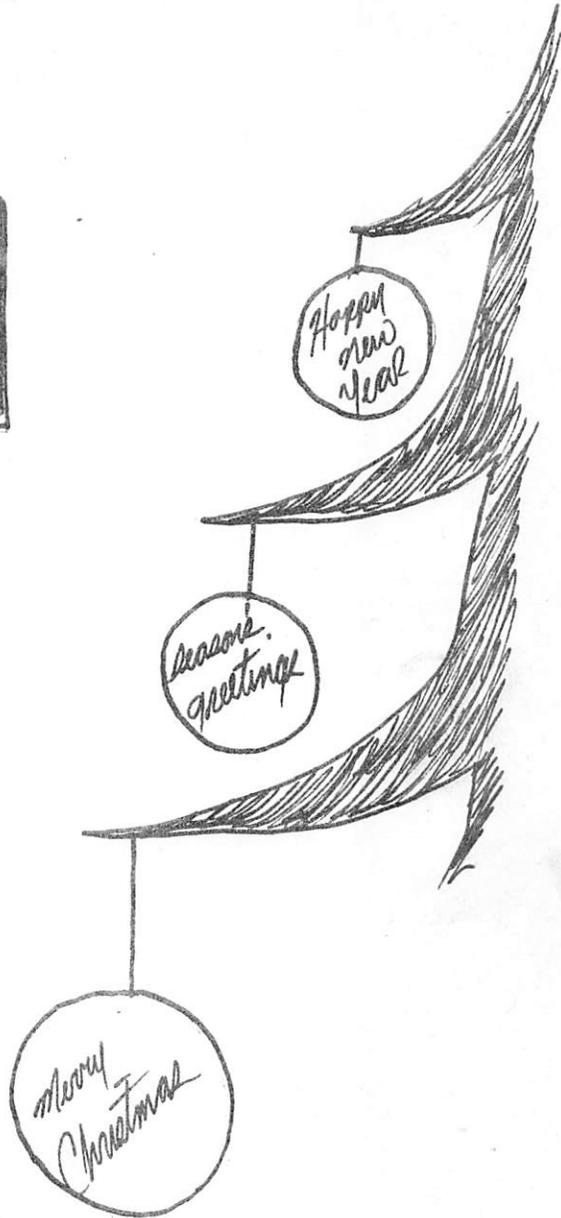
Kennicott

Norway / Sweden

The 64' Quake

Old Library

Present Library



John Anderson 1990

I am Miss Corrine Erickson and I am the head librarian of the Cordova Public Library.

HOW IS YOUR BACKGROUND DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY?

I would have to say that my heritage is a lot different from some of the people here because I grew up in the state of Pennsylvania. My parents and my grandparents came from the country of Sweden. They brought with them a lot of the customs that they were acquainted with over there. They brought them to this country and when I grew up, I grew up with a lot of the Swedish heritage around me.

DESCRIBE SOME OF THE CUSTOMS THAT ARE DIFFERENT AND THEIR VALUE AND INTEREST.

I think that perhaps some of the customs would be what I can remember growing up as a child, particularly when it came to the holidays. I am thinking particularly of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and so on. My parents would relate to me how they would celebrate those customs in the country of Sweden. One thing stands out most in my mind. I can remember my grandmother and we would butcher our pigs, come around October. They would make head cheese and blood sausage and things like this especially on Christmas. I can still see my Mom making fruit cake and my Dad down in the basement putting up lutefisk and the process he went through to put that up. I used to think, "Boy, that stuff sure smells horrible!" When it came time for Christmas, though, they really enjoyed it. Another thing too was the pickled herring. These are some of the things that they brought with them when they came over from Sweden. Another thing that I think is probably different is that I grew up where they had coal, the mining of coal. I can still remember the steel mills that would be lit up at night. They would make steel that would be used in various things that we use today. I can still see the smoke coming out of the smokestack.

Being here in Alaska, of course, and being that this is a fishing industry here, it is so different. Now I don't get to see the fire blazing out of the chimney where sometimes you would think the place was on fire. Actually, what it was, was a hot furnace and they were melting down the metal to go into the making of steel.

Some of the other customs, too, that I remember, especially of Norway and Sweden, would be the Santa Lucia Festival. One of the girls would wear a candle, and an advent wreath on her head, and she would get up early in the morning, and she would make breakfast and serve each member of the family in bed. I like to think of Christmas starting December thirteenth. That was the date in Sweden when they began preparing for Christmas. I think of all those Swedish goodies, too, that Mom used to make. Right now I would have to say that my mouth is watering because they do put out a spread.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE STORIES OR LEGENDS THAT YOU REMEMBER YOUR PARENTS OR GRANDPARENTS TELLING?

I remember my father telling us how they would have the yule log and have a big bonfire and sing Christmas carols. Another thing that I remember Miss Hansen telling is that they would have a Christmas tree. They would all join hands together and march around the Christmas tree singing Christmas carols. That was really something to do. Of course, not being accustomed to that, growing up as a child, are some of the memories that she brought to me from Norway.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS OF LIVING THAT WERE COMMON IN DAYS PAST THAT ARE DIFFERENT FROM TODAY'S LIFESTYLES?

Well, that's a little bit difficult for me to answer in this respect because I was used to the coal mines and the steel mills and factories like that back in the states and now I am living in Alaska. I have been up here about 18 years and here I have seen the fishing industry. I will say that what is different today is that they are experimenting with more and more new ideas. We have a fish hatchery which we didn't have when I first came to Cordova. Now they are talking about the bottom fishing and experimenting with that. That's another new concept of an industry that we will be looking into. I think, perhaps, the overall new methods in fishing, the new techniques that they have are different. So, all in all, we can see progress. It's different because when you can remember when you were younger and see how we've progressed this far, it's interesting.

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION OF CORDOVA NOW SINCE YOU LIVED HERE IN THE PAST?

I love Cordova. I have been in, well, let's say, the first five years that I was in the community here. I was in and out. I came to Cordova to help Miss Hansen who had a youth home here in Cordova. I was a housemother to seventeen, teenaged boys. We moved our home from here up to Wasilla so I lived up in the Wasilla area. I came back down to Cordova to lend a hand at the Faith Lutheran Mission. I wasn't looking for any particular job at the time but it just so happened that they needed someone to take over the Cordova Public Library. I was asked if I would take it for a month and a half for a friend of mine and, as a result, the month and a half was extended, I think, up to eight years. It doesn't seem possible that I have been a librarian that long. I would have to say that I have been in Alaska a total of going on eighteen years. Most of those years have been spent in and out of Cordova and the rest have been permanent.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE 1964 EARTHQUAKE?

Yes, I do. I was not in Cordova at the time. I can relate what I thought of the earthquake when I lived over in Naknek. I was in

Naknek; Alaska on March twenty-fourth or was it the twenty-seventh, when Alaska started to rock and roll like it never rocked before. I had just come down from lighting the stove at church. I came up to Alaska as a missionary. I was stationed over at Naknek; Alaska. I had just lit the stove at church and was headed down to my friend's house for coffee when all of a sudden I thought I felt sick, and I thought if I was going to faint I had better sit down and rest a spell. So I got to my girl friend's front porch and I sat down. I went to put my head down and the ground was rolling. The ground started rolling all over the place. Pretty soon the house began to creak and I thought, "Oh my goodness! What in the world is going on?" I couldn't figure it out and my girl friend's younger son came from the old movie theater house over there and he was terrified. By this time Catherine had come from her laundry room and made it to the front door and told us that we were going through an earthquake. I thought, "Oh! No wonder I feel so topsy-turvy."

It was really something to see the ground rolling and the houses were swaying and creaking. We didn't experience any real damage in our area, but it was something that I don't think a person would ever forget when they think of what could happen during an earthquake.

WILL YOU COMMENT ON THE BUILDING OF THE COPPER RIVER RAILROAD?

That brings up a unique history and aspect of the community. When Cordova was first founded, our town got its beginning because of the copper that was found up in Kennecott and they were trying to figure out how they were going to get the copper out when they hit upon the idea of a railroad. I think of our Irish Prince, Mr. Heney, who constructed the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad. This was a unique aspect because, after the railroad was built and they were finally able to get the ore out from Kennecott, they tell me that there was enough ore that went over the Cordova docks in one week's time equal to what it cost to buy Alaska from Russia. That seems unreal but it happened. So copper became the source of our main industry.

Then the railroad closed down and when I think of how the railroad got its early beginning I would have to go back to the early 1900's. I don't know the exact date. Say around the early 1900's. They tell me that it was around in 1938 that the railroad closed down. I think it probably was a sad day to see the railroad go.

WHAT COULD THEY DO TO KEEP THE COMMUNITY GOING?

That is when fishing began to show signs of popularity and it still is today.

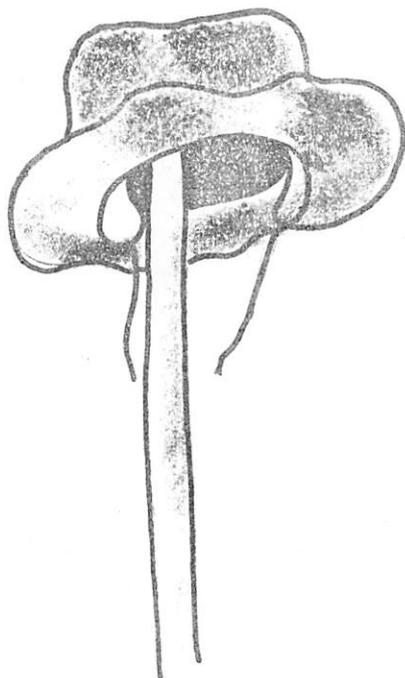
TELL ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY AND THE MUSEUM.

The library got its beginning in the Red Dragon days. This was in the 1920's. Mrs. F.A. Hanson was the person in charge of the building. The Red Dragon was used as a reading room where people could come by and

sit by the fire and read. After the closing down of the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad the city took over the operation of the library which is now the Cordova Public Library. Mrs. Bea Dinneen served as a librarian for over twenty years. Before moving into the present building in 1971 the library was located in the old Windsor Hotel. I can remember when we were in the Windsor Hotel because I started as a librarian up there at the Windsor. I can still see the little cubbyhole. There was no place to come in to sit down and read. We outgrew that library by leaps and bounds. The city kept on telling me that we were going to get a new library. Then they moved us from the old Windsor Hotel to the occupied part of the museum for a while. Then we moved to where we are now in our present library and, by the way, we are outgrowing it too! So, you see, your library has got quite a bit of history behind it. It is a city operated library. We have a staff to lend a hand.

At the time I became librarian I was not interested in working at the library. I have always enjoyed going to the library to read and to check out books. I never dreamed that I would be working at the library. I think, had you met me when I was going to school and told me I was going to become a librarian some day I would have said, "Nothing doing. No way." I will admit that I did not take over the library. I didn't realize what I was getting myself into. I knew the library had a system and I thought, "let me see, now, how to do this." So I proceeded to master the Dewey system with the help of the high school librarian who gave me a lot of encouragement and a lot of help which didn't make a lot of sense to me. I also took a few courses in library science to set me up, the sort of thing that shows you how to run a library. I would like to say that I am still going to learn a lot. I would like to say that I really learned a lot by being here at the library each day. It seems I learned something new because a library is a whole adventure. You cover everything from A to Z. I think there's nothing left out. I would like to say that your library is a growing library. It's one where people come in and look for information. Some like to just come in and sit and listen to music. Others enjoy reading the newspaper, keeping up in current events, magazines, and paperback books are drawing people in. I would like to say that your library is a well-used library, with many items in the library. We are gaining more and more new members and I think we can look back someday and say that we have the best little library in the state of Alaska!

DAR GLASEN



John Anderson 1990

When I came here just about all you had was the Main Street. The Ocean Dock was down there where Morpac is now. All the road we had was from that end of Main Street out to Mile Seven. That is all the road we had. You would look up the street in the morning and you would see about two trucks parked on the street and a couple of cab stands. That's about all the vehicles we had in town. I think at that time there was about ten trucks and about four cars.

WHAT WAS YOUR OCCUPATION?

I was fishing then. I was a fisherman. In the wintertime I worked for the transfer outfit. One of the trucking outfits in town.

WHEN DID YOU START WORKING AT HOOVER'S?

In the fall of 1943. I just worked on in the wintertime and fished in the summer. It's a whole lot different then than now. We had no airplanes and there was no road to get to the airfield. You had the steamship come in the summertime. It would come in once a week. In the wintertime, if you was lucky, once a month. That's when you got your mail and your supplies. That's the way you got them. You didn't have airplanes flying everyday.

HOW MANY STORES DID YOU HAVE?

We had the same amount of stores then that you have now. Main Street was about the same except you have a couple less bars.

MR. GLASEN, WAS FISHING DIFFERENT?

Well, fishing was a lot different.

COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT?

Well, there was about a third or half as many fishermen out there. The fish all went in the cans. We fished six days a week. The whole fleet, well, like I say, you can go down to the harbor and pick out any boat and it is worth more than the whole fleet was in those days. We would go out on the fishing grounds and, if we got to town once or twice a season, we were lucky. Otherwise you got out there and stayed there. I think the fish pack, if they look it up, has been about the same no matter the fishermen there is now, they are not getting any more fish. The only thing that makes it so lucrative is the price is so high they are making good money at it. At that time we were fishing for humpies for ten cents apiece. In the spring, to start out with, we had the clamming season which they don't have any more. Everybody in town was digging clams. At that time we got six and a half cents a pound. Then they put up about forty thousand cases a

year?

DID YOU WORK FOR THE CANNERIES OR DID YOU WORK FOR YOURSELF?

I was independent. I was a fisherman.

DID ALL THE FISHERMEN WORK FOR THEMSELVES?

No. Some of them fished company gear and they'd give them half and them half. The independent fishermen fished for themselves.

DID YOU HAVE YOUR OWN BOAT?

Yeah. We had our own boats.

DID YOU EVER HAVE ANY NARROW ESCAPES WHILE YOU WERE OUT ON THE WATER?

No, we was careful. We didn't have to take the chances they do now days. There wasn't that much money in it.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE 1964 EARTHQUAKE?

Well, it was just one of them things that happen.

WERE YOU HERE.

Yes, I was here. You got shook around a little bit and that's about all. You might have been scared for a minute or two but not too long. We didn't get hit too bad here, not like they did in Kodiak, and Valdez, and them places. All it did to us was shake us up a little bit and drain our water out.

ARE YOU FISHING NOW?

No. I am retired now. I have had the transfer outfit up here since 1948. I went in as a partner in 1948. I think it was about 1952 when I bought my partner out and I have had it since then by myself.

DO YOU SEE MANY CHANGES IN CORDOVA SINCE YOU'VE BEEN HERE?

Not really no. The town has burnt down and they've built it up again. Like all your new motels and all. There used to be hotels on the Main Street which burned up or torn down. They just replaced them. As far as the people, there are a few more people here but a lot of them is just people that was local here and their families were raised here. Their kids has built new homes. They've got kids. I think that's your biggest increase in populations. There has been a few from outside come in but not too many. When I first come here, the Glasen family, there was three of us. And there was one house. Now there's six houses and all the way from two to six kids, in each house. You can take the Blakes, the deVilles, and all them. It's the same with them. You could name a lot of them that way. It's just the families and the kids that's raised up. They've built their own house.

WHAT BRINGS PEOPLE TO CORDOVA?

Anymore I don't know. When I come up here it was a place where you were free. You could do as you wanted. The people were friendly. You could make a good living. Maybe that's why they still come.

DO YOU THINK THOSE OPPORTUNITIES ARE STILL HERE?

The opportunities are here if they go after them.

DOES IT TAKE A SPECIAL KIND OF PERSON TO COME HERE AND BE SUCCESSFUL AND STAY?

Well, I don't know. You see a lot of them come and go. Some of them make it and some of them don't. If they want to put out and work a little bit I think they can make it. I don't think any of that has changed. Success depends on the person. What effort they put in it.

WHERE DID YOU COME HERE FROM?

Michigan.

WERE THERE MANY CANNERIES WHEN YOU CAME?

About the same amount of canneries that there is today. You had New England, Park's, at that time, Halford's. Then on the other dock you had Gilbert's. Then you had some small ones out on the city dock. A lot of them is closed down now. You still got New England. You got Morpac. You got about the same. They are a little more modern. They handle fish different. Approximately it is the same thing.

WHAT ABOUT CRYSTAL FALLS?

Yeah, that was outside of town. That was a big cannery. It's closed down now.

WHEN DID CRYSTAL FALLS CANNERY CLOSE?

The year of the earthquake.

DID THE EARTHQUAKE CAUSE THE CANNERY TO CLOSE?

It raised the land so high up around there that there wasn't no water there and the boats couldn't get in so they closed down. That's the cannery out at Mountain Slough.

WHAT ABOUT PERCY CONRAD'S CANNERY?

Well, that was just a small cannery. He put up a few clams and a few fish. It's about the same now as it was then.

IS HE STILL OPEN OUT THERE?

He isn't. No. But he sold it out and the other fellows run that.

MR. GLASEN, WHY IS THERE NO MORE CLAM FISHING?

The clams disappeared. Cycles they used to run in. They were just coming back when the earthquake hit. They haven't come back since. There are a few out there but not many.

WHAT KIND OF CLAMS ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

Razor clams.

DOES ANYBODY KNOW WHY?

Just the ground raising up, I imagine. Just destroyed the beds. You would have to ask the Fish and Game that. I don't know.

DO YOU THINK THAT THE CLAMS WOULD HAVE COME BACK IF THE EARTHQUAKE HADN'T HIT THEM?

You will never know. We will just have to wait and see. As far as the town, it is about the same. You had your Road Commission and had two men operating it when I come here. Then you got your city government thing, they hired more people, put more people to work. Your FAA is still about the same as it was when I come here. Then you got your city government. That has doubled and tripled. Your department of Fish and Game has doubled and tripled. Your enforcement has doubled and tripled. That's about the only difference.

MR. GLASEN, DO YOU KNOW ANY STORIES OR ADVENTURES THAT SOMEBODY MIGHT HAVE HAD FISHING?

Well, I tell you some of them you wouldn't dare tell. No, I don't know of any. You had them all the time but you had everybody out there to help you and you didn't pay no attention to them.

DO YOU HAVE ANY GOOD STORIES ABOUT DEER HUNTING OR BEAR HUNTING?

No. You would always go out and get what moose you want and what deer you want and that's about all you could say.

WAS THE HUNTING SEASON DIFFERENT THEN THAN IT IS NOW?

No. Not really. You have a longer season now than we did then. We used to hunt deer. We had a ten day season. Now you got three month season. Or four.

DID THEY STILL LIMIT HOW MANY DEER YOU COULD KILL?

At that time you could have one deer and one buck.

THAT WOULD BE ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THROUGH THE WINTER?

No. You had to buy meat then.

THAT WASN'T TOO LONG AFTER THEY PLANTED THE DEER HERE, WAS IT?

Well, it was twenty years afterwards. That was what was wrong with the deer. They didn't take enough of them off and they all died off.

DO YOU THINK HUNTING IS BETTER SINCE THE FISH AND GAME IMPOSED RULES? ARE THERE MORE ANIMALS HERE THAN THEY USED TO BE?

No, there are not as many. That's why I say that at that time they didn't take enough. They had too many animals. I think it is holding about the same. We don't have the birds we used to have. That was on account of the earthquake. It destroyed all the food that the ducks and geese had out there. It has never grown back.

THERE USED TO BE A LOT OF ANIMALS OUT AROUND THE AIRPORT. DO YOU REMEMBER THAT?

The reason you don't have them now is there is so much traffic. They moved back away from the highway.

DID YOU EVER RIDE ON THE RAILROAD?

Just from here to 13 is all. See, the railroad was closed down when I come here.

Glenn Mast

THE EARTHQUAKE

THE MILE 13 ROAD

THE CLAM CANNERIES

THE LOCAL AIRLINES

FISHING INDUSTRY



John Anderson 1980

I am going through a lot of papers now. I just retired not too long ago and I am going through a lot of papers throwing stuff out. I am not throwing anything out that I feel is valuable because I was connected with the museum for twelve years. I found a letter that I started to write to somebody, I don't remember who it was, of my first impression of Cordova. In that letter I stated: "All of the buildings are sort of a dismal gray."

I came in March of 1959 and the town was, uh, a lot of snow like this, snow and rain mixed, and it was really a dismal looking place. Of course, at that time, all the buildings were the old buildings. I mean they had false fronts. The Main Street block, most of it was two stories high. You kids were born after sixty-three, weren't you? So you don't remember the old town either. This was a gravel road out here. In front of our house it was just a narrow little lane, sort of winding. There were houses across the street here. It looked sort of dismal until you got used to it. Boardwalks. All the streets were gravel. After you got used to it, why, we've been here twenty-one years, so we must have liked it a little bit. I was really surprised at that letter, but things have changed. I think they did the wrong thing when they tore all these old buildings down. I think they should have saved some of them. I know some of them could have been saved. More than likely they would have cost money but they could have been saved. The new buildings they are building are just the same you would find in New York City or any place. I mean, there is no distinctive style any more. It is all just block.

We lived at Mile 13 for the first nine years and the road then was a gravel road and they had just started construction on the road. There was about two or three miles of the road from about Mile 7 or 9 to about Mile 11 that had been widened into a two-lane road and they had built four or five bridges. Next to the road was the old railroad bed, a one-lane railroad bed with old wooden railroad bridges with turn-offs about every half mile. More than likely, some of you remember beyond Mile 13 before the road was widened, well, in fact, several places it is still not widened. Well, it was like that all the way. One lane would turn off every so often. The road around the lake has changed considerably. I have a number of slides that I could come over to the school and show you some time that I took. I didn't get too many of the town but I did get a bunch of the outside.

DID YOU EVER RIDE ON THE RAILROAD?

No. The railroad was gone when we came. The rails were taken up in 1942 beyond Mile 13 and were left in, there used to be an Army post out there, and the railroad was left in from Mile 13 to town. That was their means of transportation into town. That lasted until 1946. Then they pulled those rails and made a road out of it.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TRAINS?

Well, did Frank Burns tell you that they moved out in 1938? The railroad employees struck for more pay and the railroad said if they were going to strike they would close the railroad down. Well, nobody believed that they would close the railroad down but they struck in November of 1938. I guess within about three months the railroad was gone. All the building stopped and all the shop equipment down here. Do any of you remember the old warehouse that was down at Odiak Slough area before it burned down? The roundhouse was gone before we came. They had a big warehouse. It was about five hundred feet long and a hundred and fifty feet wide. That was a part of the old railroad establishment. When we came, they still had the old road bed, the railroad that went around and came down below us right along the shore here and the power plant was sitting down here right off of city dock. They had a means of allowing boats in right in back of the bank in the harbor house right in there. The water came in within about a block of Main Street. Do any of you remember that? You are all too young, I guess. Many of their tenders they would store there over in the winter instead of taking them out. I guess sometimes now they take them out but they used to store them down right in back of there. The water went down and it was all filled in. Urban renewal is what it was and they filled that all in. The only building that was there is the old Marine barracks right beside The Reluctant Fisherman. That building was there and they had about, oh I don't know, it must have been eight or ten huge warehouses down there along the water. In fact they could repair boats, pretty good sized boats. They had rails. You know how they could bring them in on a rail cart. They let rails down into the water and they could bring the boats in and repair them. So, that's all changed. In fact Railroad Avenue was the old railroad bed.

WHAT KIND OF FISHING INDUSTRY DID THEY HAVE THEN?

Well, it was the same. They had clams back then. All along the shore down there by APA are huge banks of clam shells. Have you noticed those? Okay. They canned clams back in those days in addition to the fish and the crab. Not as much crab as they do now. So that has changed a little bit and the boats are getting larger. They all had twenty-one, twenty-two, maybe twenty-five foot skiffs. That has all completely changed. With the earthquake, the clams were more or less pushed out. It killed a great share of them. They have never come back since that time. So the clam industry folded and they are strictly fish and crabs now.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE EARTHQUAKE?

Very, very definitely. I had never felt an earthquake before and we lived in California before we came up here. We went to Anchorage first and then to Cordova. Berkeley has a lot of earthquakes, San Francisco and Berkeley, and in that area along the California coast. I had never felt an earthquake and everybody said, "Do you feel that earthquake?" And I said, "No, I didn't feel the earthquake."

We were just ready to eat dinner the night of the big quake and the snow was about four or five feet deep. Are you familiar with the housing now at Mile 13? Six houses, and there used to be two apartments out there. Well, everybody had dug paths from house to house, little narrow paths. The snow was high so they went down these little tunnels. At this particular time these huge flocks of little chickadees or little snow birds, whatever they are, had started, I don't know whether they were going north or what they were doing, but they had come down to the lowlands and everybody would feed them crumbs out there. So here they are out in the snow banks sitting eating crumbs. I had just put some crumbs out and they were sitting there eating them. One of the families out there had this little Cocker Spaniel that loved to chase birds. He sneaked down to where the birds were and just as he jumped the birds all went up. At that time there were these two fairly good-sized trees in the area and they all started for these trees. They were going to sit down in these trees. Right at that time the earthquake hit. I will never forget this. These trees started going like this. They were about thirty feet tall and they were going back and forth like this. The birds would try to grab branches and there would be no branches there. I will never forget that.

I didn't feel it at first but my daughter said, "Daddy, do you feel that earthquake?" I said, "Naw, you are out of your mind." Then it started. It went on for five minutes. I mean it was really drastic earthquake. We had big breaks in the earth out there and it would spout up this big gray glacial moraine silt that is underlying that whole area out there. That is all glacial-formed land. It would spout up big spouts like that. A big crack, I don't know how deep it was but it was about a foot or a foot and a half wide most of the place, went right through the area and down to, the new station was out there then it went in one end of the station and came out the other. The old terminal building was out on the runway at that time. Do you remember that? No, you more than likely don't. I think they moved in 1967. The old terminal building is still out there. At one time it was right beside the runway. They moved it back when they paved. It went through the station, out, and angled right up through the terminal building and out along the edge of the runway.

When this earthquake happened, at Sheridean Glacier was a mountain on the east side of the glacier. A whole mountain just fell and went sliding across the glacier on a layer of air and it was the largest land movement that had ever been, I mean at one time. The whole mountain just caved in and off it went.

At that time there was a cabin out at Mile 19. Do any of you remember that? It is the ski cabin now. They moved it in. That used to be at Mile 19. There was a family living there. They had a young baby, I don't know, a year old, I guess. When this mountain went off it more than likely made a tremendous thunderous crash and they thought a war had started. Well, they got in their car. All the bridges went out. I mean the roadbed lowered or raised, or the bridges broke or something, and they started in, and they managed to get in, and went beyond Mile 13 coming toward town. Then they were stopped. At one of the bridges the road fell away about two or three feet. They couldn't make that but they had driven over all these broken bridges and everything into about Mile 11 or 12, and we put them up out there in an empty

apartment for about a month till they filled all the bridges. They filled them over or filled up the abutments. So they stayed there until they got the road fixed. Then they moved into town some place. I don't know what happened to them after that.

There were cars out there. One of the families had a car parked in back of the house and one beside the house. These cars were going like this. They just were missing every time. This car was over here when this one was over here and they would go back and forth like that. That was the most frightening experience I have ever had in my life. I have felt several since then when they would last thirty seconds and they wouldn't bother you, but when the ground that you are standing on goes, then you don't know what to think. It did. Huge waves would come through, ripples in the ground would come through like ocean waves.

Do any of you remember the Goodrichs? She was a nurse at the hospital, Pat Goodrich. They were in town. Most of the people from the base were in town at the time. They started in to have something to drink and they started out at the Black Sheep now, and there were waves in the road the same way about six or seven feet deep, and of course they were a little under the weather there, with their drinking, and it was in the Spring, and they said, "This goddamned Walt Mantella!", who was the head of the highway department, "He is doing poorer on the roads all the time." They were going to go back and tell him about it, about the roads, and then they got out to one of the bridges and found out that the bridges were gone. These things were about six or seven, I don't know, you couldn't see a car when they were in one of these waves. You know how you drop a stone in the water and the waves go out. The same way, that's the way the earthquake did, especially out in the flats. Now in town it didn't do that much damage except down along the shore. It did do quite a bit of damage down along the shoreline, all the boathouses and things, and Odiak Slough, especially. The whole works went out.

Another thing, when we first came, it rained. Well, you know how it rains in Cordova. We went out to Cabin Lake. You all have gone to Cabin Lake, I gather. Well, at that time there was a cabin there right about at the end of the parking lot where that first picnic table is, a pretty nice cabin in there, a log cabin. I don't know whether the military had built it or whether the CCC had built it. The CCC built a trail back in there. Then the military used it for recreation. At that time you could catch fish at Cabin Lake. I haven't been out there in a couple of years. We drove back in there this day and it was raining pretty hard. We drove back in and there were a whole group of people back there, maybe six or eight or ten cars. There must have been forty people back there and they were having a picnic. This was right after we got there. We thought, "My God! They must be out of their minds." They were having lots of fun. They were playing games and the whole works. I can understand it now. You take a picnic whenever you take a picnic.

DID YOU EVER FIND THOSE WATER TOWERS WHERE THEY GOT THE WATER FOR THE TRAINS?

No. I have seen the pipeline but I have never seen the towers. They have never been up there since I have been here that I can remember. But the pipeline is still in there. It was a watering place for the railroad. It came down. That was quite a project really. In fact, the railroad as far as I am concerned, was quite a project. They did it in three years, all the way to McCarthy, and it takes them three or four years to build two or three miles of road and they have all the good equipment to do it with. I don't know. It looks like we are going backwards.

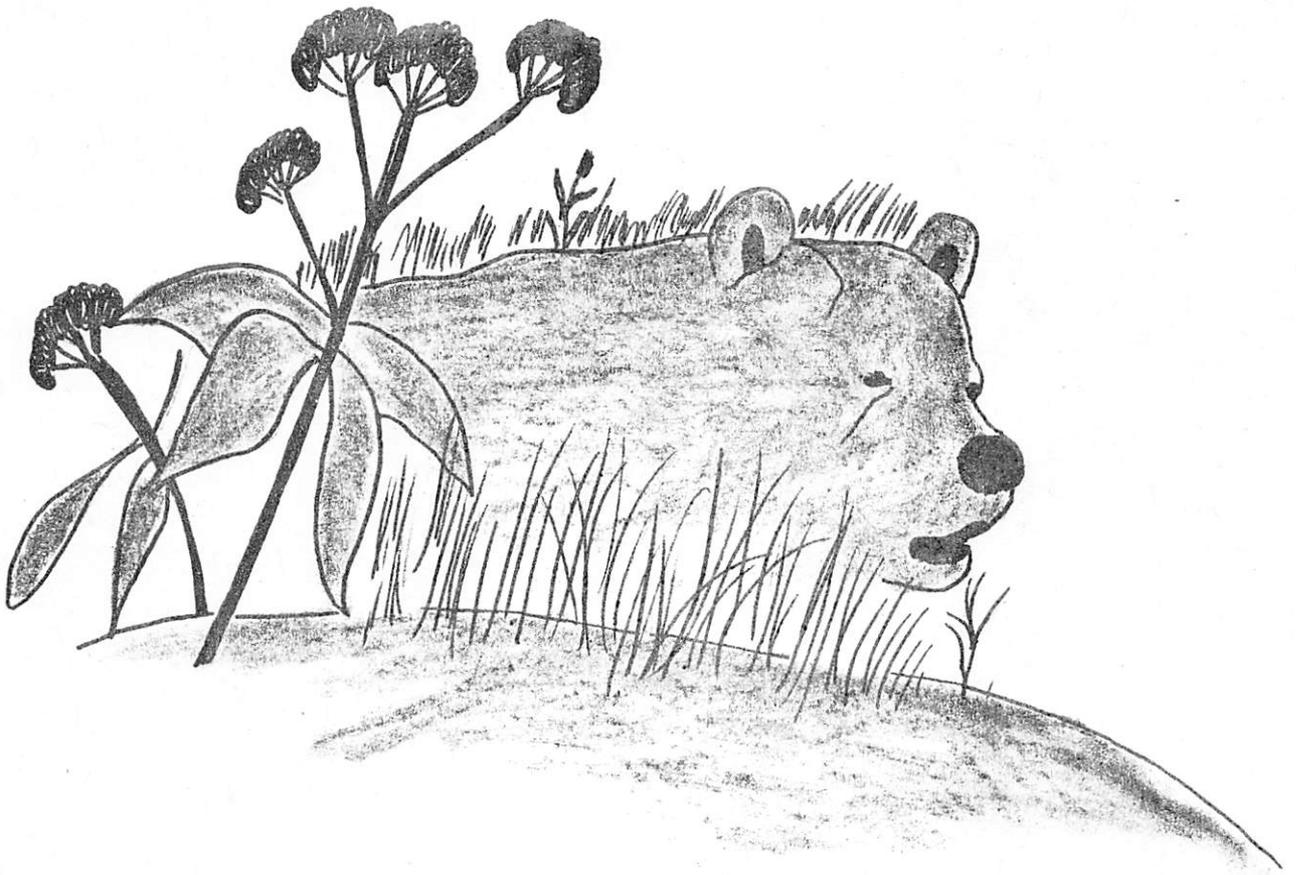
DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE AIRLINES IN CORDOVA?

When we came we had Cordova Airlines and Pacific Northern Airlines. In fact it had just changed to Cordova Airlines. Cordova Airlines had DC 3's when we came and that was quite an experience. I don't know what you think. You have ridden in airplanes, I guess. They were rough and they were slow. It took you about an hour and thirty minutes from here to Anchorage in a DC 3. But they are a very, very safe and substantial aircraft. They are one of the best aircraft that has ever been built.

HOW MUCH DID IT COST FOR THE AIRPLANE TRIP?

I think, when we came, it was either nineteen dollars for the round trip or twenty-four dollars. Pacific Northern flew "Connies", the three-tailed craft. Can you remember the "Connies"? Then Cordova Airlines was taken over by Alaska Airlines and they Convair 240's. Pacific Northern was taken over by Western Airlines and they had Lockheed Electras. Then they changed and I think everybody has 727's now. They both came in here until just several years ago when Alaska sort of got the upper hand, I guess, and pushed Western out. That is more than likely the reason for the upward push in prices. If we had two competing airlines more than likely we would get better services and better prices. It is a real shame that Western is out.

LARRY KRITCHEN

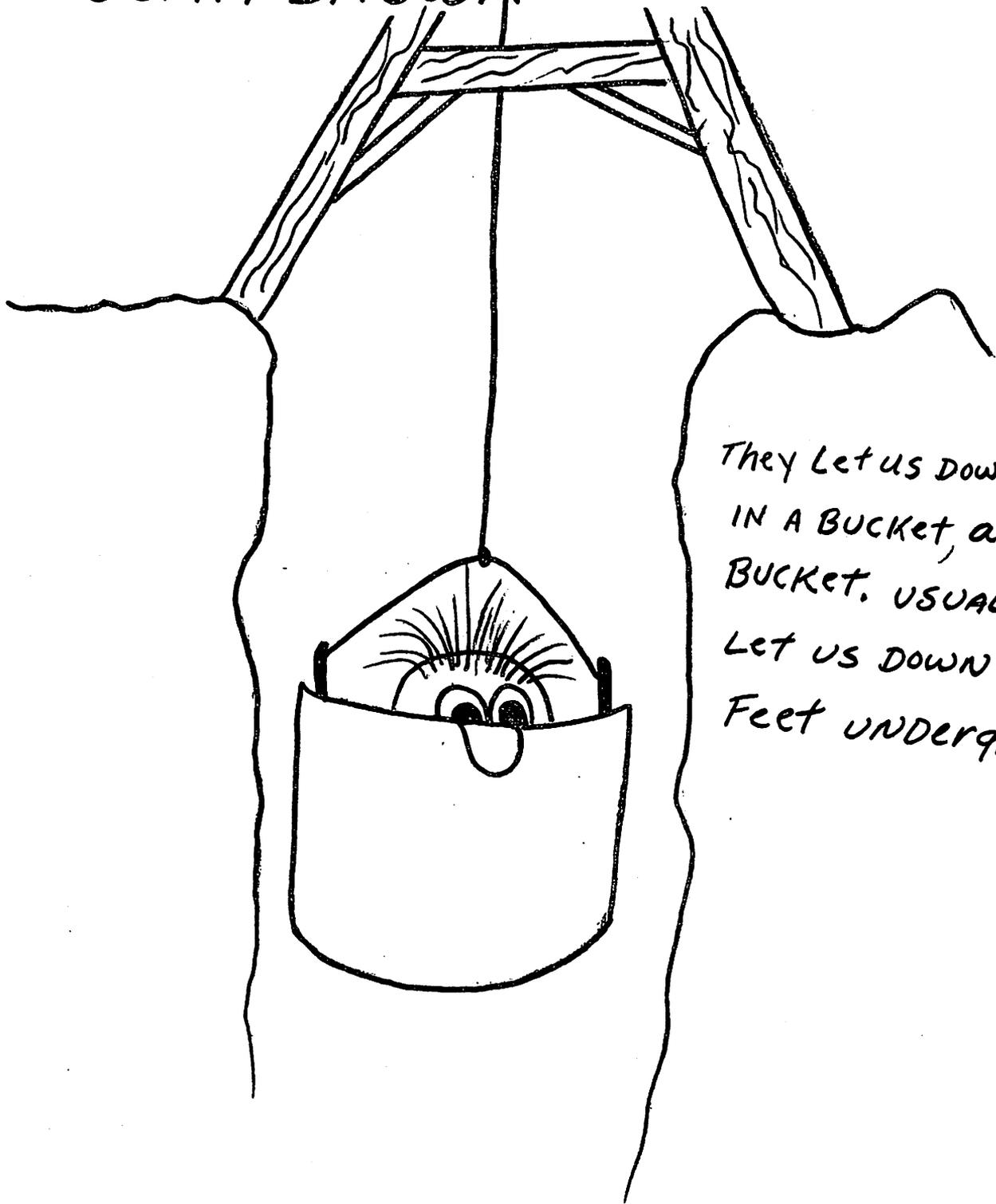


John Anderson 1980

A few years ago I had a hunter up this river, a bear hunter. We crossed this river early in the morning. It was raining so hard all day long the river came up so we were having trouble crossing it. We kept moving up the river trying different spots. Finally, it was getting pretty near dark, so we were walking back up the river and I heard some roaring and clashing teeth behind us. I looked around and there was a bear come a-running with three cubs from the other side of the river. It came running over to the river and started swimming across. I didn't get too shook up until it got half way across it. I figured somebody might have scared it, or something and it just happened to be coming our way, but it was making so much racket, clashing its teeth. Anyway, when it got halfway across the river I yelled at it to go away. The river took it down stream a little bit. There was a lot of real thick brush and a little knoll between us and the bear, and I couldn't see it after it got across the river. All of a sudden here it came running up the river, and it came over this little knoll, and it was about ten feet away from us when I shot it right in the chest. It sort of bulldozed over to one side. It went into the brush. All these cubs were with it and they went in the brush with it. It was getting dark and I went over there and saw all this blood. So I told the hunter, "We're not going in there tonight. It's too dangerous." I knew the bear was dead.

The next day we went back up there and it was in there about a hundred yards, dead. We measured it and it was forty-eight inches from her foot to the top of her back, so she was a big sow. I went back there a couple of days later and the other bears had her all covered up. They were just like bulldozers. They pulled all this moss and sticks and piled over her. They ate part of her, then they covered her up like that. We went back later and we saw about 20 different bears, so there were a lot of bears around there.

OSCAR BROWN



They Let us DOWN
IN A BUCKET, a BIG
BUCKET. USUALLY
LET US DOWN 85
Feet UNDERGROUND.

I see that you are all seated here and are expecting me to tell about things you don't know about, haven't heard about before, so I'll have to go back to 1930 when I came up to Alaska. That's what you want to know, from Alaska, experience.

When I arrived in Seattle, it was a depression on at the time and nobody seemed to be able to get any jobs, and I had only a few dollars left in my pocket from my earnings back in North Dakota in harvesting the wheat fields. And I looked down on the waterfront, and I asked about jobs, and they told me, "Look at those guys there just going out the door. They were laid off this morning." Ten of them going out." Then I thought, that's a strange thing. I can't get a job, I'll have to get out of here. So I went down to Alaska Steamship Company, down on the docks, and wanted to buy a ticket to Juneau, Alaska, and they said it was the wrong time of the year. At that time, in 1930, there wasn't much work in Alaska during the winter, but I had no choice, so I got my ticket and came up on the Northwestern, the steamship Northwestern. I paid 23 dollars, that is, on third class, down below storage, down below deck, up in the bow.

I'd never seen Alaska before, and, as I was interested in seeing, I noticed all the way up, beautiful islands, and lots of forests and spruce trees to the tops of the mountains. You know, that was great stuff, and I could see the reflection in the water of the trees upside down. I knew that Alaska had spruce trees in Southeastern Alaska but I didn't know it was that grand. I never saw anything like that, I never forgot that trip up to Juneau.

I got to Juneau and they told me that there would be cabins for rent, and at that time you didn't go to the big hotels when come a stranger like that. You look for cabins and five dollars a month, or something like that, you know. Little cabins along the beach down Willowbee Avenue, down in Juneau, down below the Governor's Mansion. I remember so well living in this little cabin, and it was a long cabin on the plank decking on the waterfront. There was no filling there at that time. The tide would come up under the dock. I didn't know there was another man living in the other end of the cabin. It had a division in the middle. He was so quiet, and he was an old man, and he kept things to himself.

One day I was kind of cold, you know. We had no oil stoves at that time and we had to get wood. I was making my fire in my stove, and I was breaking a few sticks with an axe in the cabin, and, oh, he hollered to me and told me to be quiet and not make so much noise. I didn't know he was there, see, that's the way they lived at that time, in small cabins and quietly, you know. They didn't make much racket.

There wasn't much to do, either, but I kept going down to the unemployment office down in the Alaskan Juneau gold mine, and after seven days I finally got on. They took on some of us newcomers because we were broke, and ah, if we didn't have any money, the stores wouldn't get any money, so they hired us, you know, to keep the economy going. A bunch of us worked seven weeks and got out of there and took another boat to Seward, Alaska, and worked down there on the first breakwater they built there in 1931. I remember the blasting down there, there was a hill, a cliff along the street, and, ah, they had some guys in there and they were, they were making small tunnels way in the rock, you know, about thirty feet, I guess, something like forty, maybe, and

they made a T across a tunnel and then, at the end, they loaded it up with dynamite and they said they had over ten tons of dynamite in there. They set it off one day and all of us had to get out of town and down to the dock while this blasting was going on. But it was just a rumble, you know, nothing happened, and, ah, you know, I never felt an earthquake before, and just before that, a few days before that, I woke up rolling back and forth in bed. I never had a feeling like that. It was very strange but, ah, when this blast went off, it didn't rock the ground at all. Now, I suppose you want to know about other things in Alaska now.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE WHEN YOU WERE LIVING IN NOME?

In Nome up there it was a little different from down in Seattle because everybody could go to work up there and we got a dollar an hour and, ah, as long as the ship was anchored outside of Nome we could work up on the beach. I was handling coal sacks. We had hooks, you know, we hooked on to them big coal sacks, 140 pounds each. So, I made a few dollars. Then I would make enough until the next ship would come. Some boys from California and down state of Washington and other places. They were glad to get a job like that because, in the mine, it was hard to get into the mine because the mine had its regular men, so we would work from the time the ship came in until it left, and perhaps make 20 or 30 dollars and that would take us through then until the next ship came. Anything else you would like to know?

WHAT WERE THE MINES IN NOME?

Gold mining in Nome was done all by dredges at that time, but I didn't work on the dredges more than two or three weeks. I worked for a miner that had a shaft down to bedrock 85 feet down through frozen ground and, ah, I had no other choice. I had to go. "Look," he said "Come out tomorrow morning," and I was happy to get the job, when I got out there they let us down in a bucket, 4 men at a time in a big bucket that will hold a yard of gravel. They let us down 85 feet and we had candles with us to set into the thawed ground, you know. That's all the light we had until somebody squawked and we got carbide lamps that had carbide in 'em. That's lamps on our hats so we could, see, wherever we turned, we could see. You know, that was an improvement. I worked about three months, about enough to buy our groceries.

I went up to Little Diomed Island because I was going to Bible school in Minneapolis and I was ready to go out as a missionary. I got out that fall on my own. I didn't have any supporters at that time until later. Some years later, I got support from the states. But I took off, because there was no way to get money at that time. I got out there with just a little box of groceries and I had, ah, three tons of, no, not three tons, I had 20 sacks of coal and, you know, on the way out to Little Diomed Island we passed by King Island, and, by mistake, they put my sacks ashore. I hadn't put tags on them. I

figured everybody knew whose coal it was. I got to Little Diomedé and I didn't have any coal. They put them to shore on the wrong island. I trusted in God and prayed and the teacher said, "Well, you can help me haul the coal to the school and I'll give you a few sacks, so don't go back to Nome." So I stayed that winter, and he had the flu that day, and he felt miserable.

I stayed there that winter. I had the Eskimos over to my little house that was first built by an earlier missionary that was there that left when his wife died. He had gone back to Norway, so it fell to me to move into that little house, and I lived there that winter and, ah, with a sack of coal a month, I could have a little fire in the afternoon when I had little Bible classes, and the evening I would get some sticks and build a fire. The boys would come over because when they saw me coming over from the schoolhouse they would follow me home, and I would have them as guests in the evenings, and, you know, they helped boil walrus meat. They showed me how to boil walrus meat and, ah, make good stew out of it, and then while we had Bible story together and read together then they would prepare this, you know. One of them would be cook of the Eskimos and he cooked the walrus meat, and so we had a big dish of walrus soup with pieces of meat in it. That was our picnic, or whatever you would call it, you know, in the evenings, and they had a good time. They didn't care just so they could get something warm like that. We had crackers and homemade bread and, um, I got the schoolteacher to bake bread for me. Anything else you would like to know about the island or something?

DID YOU EVER FISH AROUND THERE?

There is shallow water but they go out on the beach, and they go out and chop a hole in the ice, and there are king crabs and, oh, after January 15th we could dare to go out on this ice because it was stuck between two islands, and we would catch crabs and we would bring home a dozen crabs. Whenever we needed crabs, we would go out and catch them and bring them home and cook them. We had bullheads and bluecods, small, little, like smelts, you know, and ah, things like that, but there was no big fish came in because the water was not deep enough for big fish. But they had walrus. They came right up to the beach, sometimes, and I was out hunting with them, you know, when you go out and hunt walrus. I have never been out hunting like that and, oh, I could hear them grunting underwater because they shot one and, ah, it kept down. It wouldn't come up. Finally, when it came up, they would be ready with their paddles to poke it in the nose because they were afraid it would put its tusks up on the side of the boat on, ah, the gunwale of the boat, and tip the boat over. That's why they would just touch him in the nose with the paddles and everybody watching and then somebody with the gun would shoot the walrus right by the boat you know, and then they have to spear it, otherwise it would sink. Anything else you would like to know?

WHEN WERE YOU AT LITTLE DIOMEDE?

The first time I got out there it was in the fall of 1931. Every summer I would go into Teller or Nome and for two or three years there till thirty-four, then I went out back to Minnesota and got married and came back in thirty-five. Went to Ketchikan and back to Diomed Island, of course, and we lived there several winters until about 1939-1940. Then we moved down to Bristol Bay and we lived down there. In the fishing industry, I would fish during the summer for one month and make a couple of thousand dollars. Then I would work with my Sunday school work and church services that is, at South Naknek and I kept on there until about 1941. Then I went out to Minneapolis and came back up, and, after the war in '47, we went to Norway. We made a trip to Norway, came back from Norway in '47, and then we lived in Naknek again, oh, until about 1957. Then my wife had a stroke and we had to move to Seward, Alaska. We lived there 20 years, so I came here three years ago. Anything else you like to know?

DO YOU LIKE LITTLE DIOMEDE ISLAND?

I just love Little Diomed Island because it was a very personal, ah, fellowship we had there. The teachers were friendly, and, ah, the other missionaries who came through there, they were friendly. We got along that way because we would work together on the coal pile to move the coal. Anything, you know, if there was a rush, you know, everybody would get up in the night down on the beach, they all go together. It was one thing about that island that I loved about that place.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO BACK THERE?

Yes, yes I have been back there, two and a half years ago now, just for a trip and, ah, this time I landed by plane and stay over only one night. I came back by plane. They land on the ice now between the two islands and they have, ah, those ballon tires on the plane, and if they wouldn't slide they would roll you know. The wheels would roll, and if the snow was a little deep they would slide, and, ah, there was, ah, eight or ten inches of snow and they would load up, you know. Everybody would get into the plane until it was full. They would take off with this small plane and, ah, he didn't make it the first time. He made another round and came back and finally got it off. Some days they told me there six or seven planes landing there and people come to buy ivory right from the natives in their homes, and for other purposes, I suppose, like fishing crabs, or anything.

ARE THERE IVORY CARVERS THERE NOW?

Oh, yes, there are different house there now. When I got there, they had those underground igloos they call cogrie, the bigger council houses, but I remember two, three places where you go into a tunnel

which was made out of rock covering over like a tunnel, and I walked in and you get into a place where you see the light reflection on the ground about two or three feet below the floor. You just put your head up through those round holes. That was the door they had there. Other houses had doors on the sides. I remember those had round opening, in the floors and there was nobody to knock. You just poke your head up like a seal up through the ice, and you look around and they say, "come in," and you go up on the floor, and you sit down and they'll ask you what you want. You know, that's what they told me, that they are not very formal in their ways of receiving you. They just ask you what do you want, and they say "NONGE." That means, "What do you want?" and I said, "Nothing," and I say "NOME"; that means "Nothing" and the reason they are that way, that is, there might have been, you might have seen the game out in the open water, and you came to tell them, and they have to be so quick to pull their parkas on, and then grab their guns and run. So, see, that's why they would greet you that way.

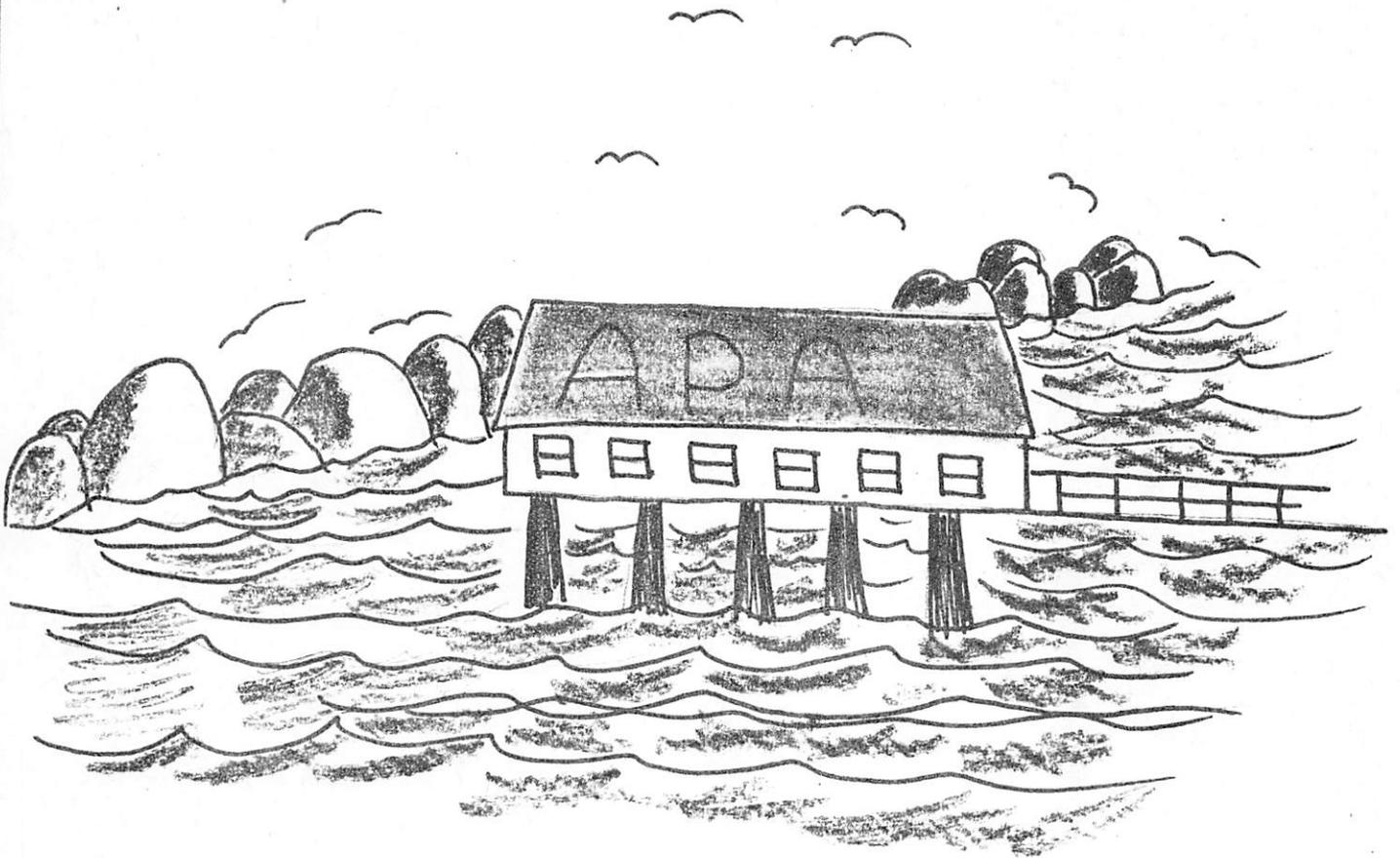
Anything else? But, ah, oh, yes, I have to tell you now they got regular houses. The housing authority brought out over 20 houses and put them up for them so they could live in. Two-room houses now, and that's quite a bit of difference. They have windows, now, and they have electric light, and they can talk to the planes when they land, they have walkie-talkies hanging there right on the wall there. I remember, and I was kind of surprised because I wanted to go back to Nome the next day because I saw some planes landing, and he said, "I'll see about that." So he went and talked to them on the plane and told them there's a man who wants to come out to the plane, and wait, so they waited for me, I grabbed my suitcases and went down to the beach and there was snowmobiles here coming back and forth, you know, just making sure. When the plane came, there they were all excited, so I hopped on, and I had to hang on for dear life because he was running over hummocks, you know, over those ice piles, you know, and ah, I had to hang on to him. See, if we tip over, I would go too. I got out there and I got into the plane and I went back to Nome and I landed, the plane landed at Wales and at Teller and at this Bravik Mission they call it over in Teller by the town and the lagoon and so that was three landings on the way back to Nome. Anything else?

ONE QUESTION, THEN IT IS TIME FOR US TO GO. DO THE PEOPLE THINK THAT THE TIMES ARE BETTER THAN THEY USED TO BE OR DO THEY LOOK BACK AT THE OLD DAYS AND SAY LIFE WAS BETTER THEN?

Oh, yes, they say good times then, but I call this the good time right now. It's much easier to live here than when I first came. I don't think that there's any comparison even. You know, at that time, we had to have the old groceries that we brought in the fall especially people out in the cabins that were up the rivers, they had moldy bacon, and, ah, old eggs, and everything that sour before spring, and now they can get everything, and I say that its easier to live up here now.

THANK YOU MR. BROWN.

Ed Hallness



John Anderson 1980

In 1937 I left Cordova and went up to the Shumagin Islands. I went up on the old steamer Star. It was a hundred and twenty-five foot steel boat that was originally built to fish halibut on the west coast. I was going up to Unga, which is in the Shumagin Islands, to fish with my uncle. When I got up there in the first of June seining hadn't started but we went gillnetting, set-netting rather, along the shore in the Shumagins. Later it became quite a fishing business. There were quite a few set-nets. We gillnetted red salmon, and salted, and we were going to do this until seining started. Well, we didn't make any money. There weren't any fish. When the seining started, the latter part of June, we fished in Ivanof Bay and we would haul the fish. This boat that my uncle bought was an old herring boat that used to fish herring on Prince William Sound. It was perhaps forty-four foot long. He had bought it a few years previously and hadn't paid much for it. It was rotten, but we used to load the boat in Ivanof Bay, then we had to run the fish to Squaw Harbor. This was on Unga Island, a distance of about eighty miles. It was open ocean.

We loaded the boat with humps and dogs, packed around fourteen thousand, and we took off that evening, and it was blowing quite hard. Before we left, the boat was loaded so the stern was under water. It just had a high hatch coaming. The water was around the hatch coaming. We put tarp over the hatch and floated the snag skiff on the stern and lashed it. Then we took off and it was dark and, like I say, blowing. I was steering. My Uncle and I had one watch. My two cousins had the other watch and the cook, of course, he didn't stand any wheel watch. Well, I looked back every so often and you could see this skiff moving back and forth across the stern because the swell was coming over, but the only thing that held it on the stern was that it was lashed, and, to tell you the truth, it was the first time I was ever on a boat where the stern was underwater. It was that rough and I was just scared to death.

We ran all that night. We got into Squaw Harbor the next morning. We unloaded. Then we turned around and went into Unga, which is a little village. Oh, perhaps about a hundred or a hundred and fifty people live there. Originally Unga was built as a codfish center. They fished codfish in the early days and they processed them on the shore in small plants, more or less individuals. They salt them and dry them. There had been a gold mine up there but it was no longer operating. So my uncle went to the liquor store; he liked his drinks, and he bought several quarts of whisky. He decided to go back to Ivanof Bay and fish again.

Well, we ran back and the weather wasn't too bad on the return trip. We loaded it up again. We were the only boat there. We made another trip to Unga. We made four or five trips like that and finally the International, which was a large steel ship, was rigged up as a floating cannery. They came down from Port Moller where they had been canning red salmon and came in there. They had a dock and a warehouse in Ivanof Bay. They tied up there and we started to fish for them.

They had four large sardine seiners from California. They were about seventy-five feet in length and they were manned by Slovenians. They are great for fishing tuna, sardines, and stuff in California. Well, each one of those boats had nine men in the

crew whereas we were five. They had a jitney, a seine skiff with a small engine in it. We used hundred fathom seines. The purse in the seine was about thirty-five fathoms in length. The rest was the lead. There was a lead on each end of the seine which was real shallow. Well, the only fishing we did, we would go along the beaches and make a set aground this school of fish, pull in one lead into the bow, pull the other one into the stern, bag the fish up in a bag, and tow it out to the larger boat and brail it aboard.

Well, these Slovenians had them seven men in these little skiffs. They were about twenty-two or twenty-four feet long for their seines. We had five in ours, an outboard motor in a well up forward for a jitney, and that's the way we fished. Well, here came the fish. It was fish all over and they put us on a limit. Our limit was seven thousand fish a day and these large Slovenian boats, their limit was fifteen thousand fish a day per boat. We couldn't go fishing before seven o'clock in the morning. All we did, we went across the bay, made a set, came back and unloaded. They would hoist these fish aboard the steamer in a big basket that carried about seven hundred per basket. Then they would put them up there and they were working day and night. This cannery for just these five boats.

One day we were waiting at the conveyor, waiting to unload, underneath the hoist, and here come a Slovenian boat. See, we didn't have a union then. This big Slovenian boat, he came in with his fish, and he told us, my uncle's name was Knute Knuson, he says, "Knute, you gotta get away from there. I want to unload." My uncle says, "How come? I been here waiting quite a while. I want to unload." "No," he says, "we have the preference." Well, my uncle was a stubborn Scandinavian. He said, "No way am I going to move."

I still remember this Slovenian. He was a big big man. He got mad. What they called him, all the other Slovenians, was Konich and Konich in Slovenian means "horsey." He was cussing. Off he went. He went fishing again. He had his fifteen thousand but he went fishing. He went down the bay and we unloaded. Then another Slovenian boat came in and unloaded. Late that afternoon here he came back. They are big beautiful boats. He had forty-four thousand humps he had caught that day with that little hundred fathom rag.

Then he and the superintendent had an argument. Well, finally the superintendent said, "Alright, I will take them." He took them on board. We couldn't fish the next day. Neither could anybody else. They cleaned up the fish you see. So these Slovenians, they never drank. They drank coffee in the morning. Never drank it the rest of the day. Never drank coffee or anything else. They made their own wine. They had raisins, you know, big sacks of them on the main boat. They had barrels up on the flying bridge and they made their own wine on these boats and they drank it like you drink water. They didn't drink water, they drank wine, and there was a big wine jug sitting on the table. They never got drunk. That was what they were used to.

Well, anyway, then we kept fishing. Well, one day, this floating cannery had eleven unions aboard it. They had cooks, stewards, had cannery labor, sailors, engineers, master mates, and pilots. The superintendent had eleven unions to deal with. His name was Johnson.

I still remember that. He was a pretty nice guy. He was a graduate of Annapolis Military Academy. Then he had gotten out of the service. He was the superintendent.

There were eight sailors aboard. The agreement when they left Seattle was that they were going to work in the cannery during the rush and get paid extra for it. Well, they refused to work. They went up and they laid in the grass up on the shore. These Orientals, well I guess they were mostly Filipinos, they were getting pretty tired. They were working day and night and they refused to work. They wouldn't work. Well, here this Johnson was. His cannery crew wouldn't work. His sailors wouldn't work, and all these fish. So he stopped us from fishing and the bins were full on the upper deck. I don't know how many thousands of fish he had in the bins, and he and the fish-house foreman went up the next morning and they threw all these fish overboard. Then we could fish again. The Oriental crew had a rest. They decided to go back to work.

Well, anyway, it left in August. It was loaded. When it left the dock we were there. All this gurry, the dead fish, had piled up on the stern of the ship. From the bottom on up you could see it. You could practically walk on it as the boat left the dock with the propeller turning over, it stirred this mess up. You talk about a smell, all this gas came out of it. You figure thirty feet of water just piled with fish heads and guts. They left.

Well, then my cousin, his daughter, was going to get married. She was going to go down to Unga and get married. So we were going to take her to Unga. My aunt was with us. They had a fox farm up there. We were going to run into Unga. Well, we ran into Unga and on the way it was a beautiful day. This was perhaps the later part of August, a beautiful day, but it was blowing in all directions, but the sun was shining up there. This boat wasn't going anyplace. It had an old gas engine in it. We were out there in the ocean and just pounding and pounding away. Well, it didn't bother my uncle because he was an old-time sailor. That was the only thing he had ever done. My aunt and my cousin were seasick. My younger cousin was with us. My uncle was sitting in the companionway doorway and I was steering. The windows were leaking, water was coming in the pilot house. He was eating smoked fish. I can still remember that. I got sick of that because I was kind of squeamish myself, you understand. He come in and he says, "You know, Ed, we hit that last swell three times. We hit it and she'd back up. We hit again, and she'd back up, and we hit her again.

Well, he had sails on this boat. He says, "We gotta put the sails up." So I helped him and my cousin, he was a boy of about fifteen, he came up and took the wheel. My uncle and I went up and we put the jib and the mainsail up. Only had one mast. We changed course and the wind hit the sails and filled them and she laid over on her side, and that's the way we went to Unga. We went like a scared rat. He was quite a sailor, that guy. In fact, when he came over here in the early days, the old cutter Bear, used to be a Coast Guard cutter up there, and he joined the Coast Guard and went on board as a sailor. He got his papers through that, somehow, his citizenship papers. Then he went fishing by himself. He came from the same place

my mother came from and he was one of the first of them to have his own halibut boat, one of them old-time schooner-type rigs. The water never bothered him. He was a small man, about five foot two and he didn't give a hoot for anything or anybody.

So, then, after she got married, the Star came in. It used to come in once a month. It would make a round trip from Seward up to the Bering Sea and back in a month. I got on board the Star and went back to Seward and back to Cordova. It was loaded with Bering Sea fishermen, but that's the end of that.

I forgot to tell you. You won't forget it. We got three and a half cents apiece for the humpbacks. Three and a half cents apiece. I was up there all summer and I still remember I made seven hundred dollars.

That old man, I will never forget him. God, he was a tough one. He died in Ballard, in Seattle you know. They call in Sluice Junction. He had one of the biggest funerals they ever had in Ballard. He knew everybody. Used to hang around the bars drunk all the time. My Aunt, she thought he was perfect, could do no wrong. She didn't know that he went on these tours you know. She didn't even know it or see it.

That Ivanof Bay is beautiful country.

WHERE IS THAT?

In the Shumagin Islands. Let's see, on the west end of the Shumagins, on the beach and along the beach there's petrified wood. You've heard of petrified wood. Well, the whole end of that island is covered with petrified wood, you know, laying down and it's turned to stone. That's up in the Shumagin Islands, on Unga Island. On another outside beach of Unga Island the beach is covered with agates. There are literally thousands of them. There's a large cliff above the beach and over the years the erosion has taken place and these agates have fallen onto the beach. You can see the veins of agate in the cliffs. Then the surf beats in on there and gradually they are worn. They aren't perfectly round but partially round. That's that world famous Agate beach. In the early days it was all fox islands.

YOU MEAN THEY RAISED FOXES ON THEM?

They raised foxes. Well, all islands in Alaska had foxes. My uncle had two islands the one he lived on and another one close by. All these islands on Prince William Sound were fox islands. These in the bay, up at the head of the bay, Observation Island, North Island, they were all fox islands. And the Aleutians were all fox islands.

I had a book when I was in the service. See, I ran out in the Aleutians. I had a large book put out by the military and it had a contour map of each island in this book, and it gave a short history on each island, and so on. They were all fox islands and the Tanaga Trading Company owned a few islands. I don't know how many but they used to kill foxes by the thousands. I still remember that. Five

thousand skins a year.

They planted foxes on all of these islands and they didn't feed them because there was bird rookeries on the islands. All those islands have bird rookeries. Then there would be stuff drifting up on the beach. Well, they just put the foxes on the islands. The foxes lived by raiding these bird rookeries. Well, they killed the rookeries off. They was after the eggs, and if there was any little ones they would get them too. They killed all the rookeries off. There was literally millions of birds.

WHAT KIND OF BIRDS?

All kinds. Everythings. I ran the chain for two years while I was in the Army. I would go from Whittier or Seward to Adak to Attu. I still remember this one trip. I have pictures, like I say, but I gave it all to my kids. We ran through what they call this whale feed. It was two days and a night we ran through it. There was whales all around us. You know, they were feeding on this whale feed and the whale birds were feeding on it. It is, I guess, like a plankton in the water. It discolored the water. It was miles, and miles, and miles of it. The birds were so fat they couldn't get out of the way of the boats. There was literally millions of them and, you know, as we would go through them, the bow wave would just wash them away. They were so fat they couldn't fly. They just sat there in the water and ate. We ran through them two days and one night out in the ocean in the Bering Sea. These great big whales in all directions were feeding. You see, that was great whale country years ago.

Well, there's all the sea birds that you would find here plus Eider ducks. There's geese. In fact, I think on Attu Island there is a species of geese that nested on those islands that were almost extinct. I read here several years ago where they took a few of them to some place on the east coast, Maryland, I think, and they hatched a bunch of small geese under proper conditions, and they took them up to those islands and replanted them. There was no other land animals except small mice. They lived on all those islands. Now there's rats on every one of them. They came in from the Japanese invasion and the American occupation. When they would unload cargo the rats would be there. There are still foxes on the island. No bears on the island.

ANY MINK?

No, there was nothing like that. There were small field mice and then foxes, of course, and they were planted, and birds and sea otter. Amchitka at one time had the largest sea otter population of the whole coast. When I was up there we would be anchored up in the barbor; they built a harbor on Amchitka because they had an airplane deal there. See, when they were bombing Kiska they were

bombing from Amchitka. They set up a big field and they had quite a bit of troops there. We would be anchored up in the bay. We formed a bay with a breakwater. These sea otters would be swimming in amongst the boats. These islands are surrounded by kelp, reefs, and kelp. That's where they like to live.

DID YOU EVER GO KELP FISHING?

No. That's too much work. I like that country up there. There's no trees. The grass cures on the ground and my uncle had five cows on the island and goats. He didn't have a barn. These goats and these cattle were roaming around all winter. You get, maybe, one or two inches of snow in the Shumagin but the grass cured on the ground in the fall. They were eating right off the ground. He never fed them.

WHAT ISLAND?

One of his islands was Egg Island. There was two islands formed a harbor. Paul Island and another island. I think he had Paul. He also had this Egg Island. He had foxes on both of them. That's south of the peninsula. Now that's quite a king crab country, a tanner crab country, shrimp country, and when I was up there it was halibut. Of course, they would haul the halibut all the way to Seattle. Now it's mostly salmon and king crabbing. In fact, this Squaw Harbor I mentioned, that was a pretty good sized salmon cannery. It was built on Unga Island. It was just like a community. When they came in the spring with the crew, they had a steamer that would bring the crew in. They had a doctor and a nurse and all their supplies, all the cannery crew, mechanics and carpenters. Then in the fall, when the season was over the steamer would come in and load all the salmon, load all the help and away they would go, and all that would be left would be the watchman. That's all there was to it.

Now, of course, they were there since the early nineteen hundreds. When I was up there in 1937 they didn't hire local people. They didn't want them. They would bring up all their help, like the Oriental crew, all their fishermen, from the states. Like the locals in Chignek, you've perhaps heard about Chignek where they make all this money, well I was in there. I never fished there but we stopped there. They came in there and they built their cannery right in front of the village, a Native village. They brought their own fishermen up with them and fished the lagoon and had traps outside of the lagoon and wouldn't hire any local help.

When I ran this Army boat, there was a young fellow that was an oiler on the boat. He was born in Chignek. Well, his dad had come up there working. He told me about it. In the early days he had come up there working for this cannery. It was Alaska Packers, I think. Then he met his wife up there and he stayed there and raised his family. He said they wouldn't hire any locals, fishermen, or tenders, or nothing, but they had this cannery right in the village. The Natives did a little trapping, and they would hunt caribou on the mainland, and if they came

in with some furs, like in the spring, they could trade at the store, if they had anything to trade with or had any money, but they wouldn't hire them in the cannery. They did that the whole length of the Alaskan coast. They just wouldn't hire them. They would bring up their labor. Of course, I guess now it has changed a little. In those days they just wouldn't do it.

The Karluk River on Kodiak Island is one of the finest fish streams in Alaska. Everything goes up there. Silvers, humps, dogs, reds, the whole works. Well, there was a village right at the mouth of the Karluk River. They lived off the river. They came in there, Alaska Packers again. They built a cannery right at the mouth of the river, and they brought seines in, and crews in, and they started beach seining right in front of the cannery. They would pull the seine up on the beach with horses in the early days. They put the fish into wagons and hauled it right in to the cannery and can it. When I fished in Kodiak in '40 and '41 I met an old-timer up there. He was fishing and was telling me about it. He said he could take me up the Karluk River and show me where the cannery had started to build a flume from up the river down into the fish-house in the cannery. The foundation, he said, was still there. Their plans were that they were going to let the fish swim up the river then they were going to fence it off. Of course, the salmon would crowd up in the front of this fence and they were going to divert the salmon into this flume and water would be running in it. He said they would swim right down into the cannery. Then, he said, they could can them, but that was just a little too much. You know the Federal Government had charge of the fisheries when we were a territory. They stopped them. But they had started. The foundation is still there. They really exploited the country.

PART TWO

In 1924 there was a large Japanese freighter coming to the states to get relief supplies for the earthquake that took place a year or so before in Japan and, in the process, on the way making the great circle route, it broke its tail shaft. They took it into Hinchinbrook Entrance and anchored it in at Port Etches awaiting a tug to come up and pick them up and take them outside. Well, when the tug came, it left Hinchinbrook Entrance on the way south in a rather severe storm, and right outside of Hinchinbrook Entrance it broke the tow line and couldn't get another tow line back on it, and it went ashore on, I think, it's Middle Point between Zaikof Bay and Rocky Bay. One crew member was killed trying to swim ashore with the line so they could rig a breeches buoy. They stayed aboard until the weather calmed down, then they took them off and brought them to town. I remember the skipper was an Englishman and he was married at the time to a Japanese woman. He was the master of the boat and the rest were Japanese. He had two boys. I met them. I was going to school here at the time. These two boys stayed with some Japanese people that owned a laundry right across the street from where the old Windsor Hotel used to be, now torn down. These two boys stayed there. They couldn't talk English. The rest of us kids couldn't talk Japanese, but we still got along. They stayed here for several weeks until finally they left. They went home. Over a period of the next two or three years they took coal off of this ship and brought it to town. The bunkers were full of steam coal. They brought it to town in the old service transfer that was here. It used to belong to a man by the name of Jim Galen. He had the transfer outfit and he was selling coal. People didn't burn oil at that time. It was sold in town and they used that Japanese coal for over two years. A Japanese family had the laundry at that time, it was a hand laundry. They had kids going to school here. Their name was Mitamura. Afterwards, a few years later, they bought the old Jones laundry that was located about where the Pop's Liquor Store is now. There was a building there and they moved down there. Then they left and I saw the old man Mitamura in Seattle in 1961 or '62. I was walking down the street one day and I met him. I think his daughter got married and was in Anchorage. They owned the Snow White laundry and Cleaners in Anchorage. We had a lot of Japanese around Cordova because the old railroad and Kennicott mine employed a lot of Japanese cooks. They turned out a better meal than white people could do. They put out good meals.

YOU WERE HERE WHEN THE RAILROAD WAS BUILT?

Not when it was built. I came after. In fact, that is the first train I ever saw in my life. We came here in 1918. My father was working. You know down here, you go halfway down the Eyak River, and there is an old cannery site there? Well, my father came over here from Valdez in 1917, I think, and he was working there. My Mother and I came from Valdez in 1918. She and I went outside and spent the winter. Then we came back in the spring of '18 and we

were quarantined. That was when they had this flu epidemic all over the United States, the latter part of World War I. We were quarantined down at the old Carlisle Packing Company. It burned down in 1947, I think. When it burned down they moved down to Orca and built the New England Cannery. Then we moved down to Eyak and he was a watchman in the winter. My mother and I stayed there and then in 1920, I think, he moved over to Boswell Bay on Ninchinbrook and bought that clam cannery over there. There was an old clam cannery over there. There was an old clam cannery there. You know those Pinnacle Rocks are where all the birds nest in the summer? Well, up in that little cove, right behind them, was a cannery and he bought that in around 1920. Then he sold it and he moved over to Whitshed. He moved over in '24. He and my mother would dig clams, come home and clean them. There was a house up on the hill and they would clean them and can them. Then he had a steamer and it was cranked by hand. They had a small retort and they cooked them on a stove in the kitchen. Then they were selling them around town like up to Kennicott mines, and so on, and gradually he built it up from there. At those days he got around five dollars a case for them. He made a good living and he was independent, you know. But that was a lot of money. The last year we operated was around 1940. Things were so difficult. You had to bring labor out. The prices for the raw material got so high and labor got so high that we couldn't compete with the plants here in town. I bought the place from him in 1941 or 1942. He had a mortgage on it and he couldn't pay off the mortgage. He couldn't raise the money. It wasn't a very big mortgage and he came to me and said, "Well, they are going to take the place away from me." So, I was working, fishing and digging clams, and I had saved up a few dollars, and I bought the mortgage, and he gave me a bill of sale for the place. Then I went in the Army in 1942 and he came back to town and went to work for another outfit. I came back in 1946 after I got out of the service. Well, everything was stolen and I was going to do something out of that but I gave it up. In 1950 I think, I sold it to Western Fisheries and they used it for a clam cannery. The boilers and the retorts are still out there. That was the end of that.

After labor got high and clams were high we just couldn't compete. We just weren't large enough. At one time in 1935 we had two hundred and something people working for us digging clams and in the cannery.

HOW MUCH DID THEY PAY THE CLAM DIGGERS?

I think they got around three or four cents a pound. The cannery labor was around fifty cents an hour without overtime. You worked hard for your money.

DID YOU EVER WORK ON THE RAILROAD?

No, I never did. I could have, I guess, but I just kept fishing.

DID YOU EVER GO ON THE RAILROAD?

Just up here a few miles and went beaver trapping. They would just drop you off wherever you wanted to go.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT TRAPPING?

Well, to be honest with you, I never made a dime at it. One time I went up there at Mile 22. You know, there is a bridge going across the Alaganic Slough. Well, right this side of it there is a cut there. On the river side of the cut there was a fellow by the name of Mack McAllister living. He was interested in a gold mine up at McKinley Lake, see. They were trying to promote that. Well, he lived there. Everyone knew him so he would come to town and he would go on a big drunk once in a while. So I got ahold of him and he said, "Yeah, you come up beaver trapping this spring." So I went up, and there he was, and I had groceries with me. I had traps and I had everything. Well, he made homebrew and he was half drunk when I got there. He was drinking and he was just ready to bottle another batch of homebrew, so I helped him and he didn't have any wood, so I helped him cut some. Like I say, he would sit there in the evening and he would drink homebrew. Well, I didn't drink at the time, see. I was going to high school up here and I just took time off. I didn't get excused or nothing. I just left, see. Well, he would sit there in the evening, and he would tell me stories, and I don't remember most of them. He was half drunk and finally we figured out we had better go beaver trapping. I never had trapped before in my life, you know. I have trapped since then but never before then. Well, he was showing me where to put the traps so I would set the traps, and then we would go home and we never did get a beaver. All them houses were dead. But he didn't care. He had company and he was half drunk. I was up there for two weeks and I helped him bottle beer. He would set a batch of beer and just about the time we would get it bottled in a day or two it would be ready to drink. The previous batch was drunk so we kept that up constantly. Mack McAllister was his name. He was quite a guy. We never got a skin. There were a lot of trappers up there though.

HOW MUCH WOULD THEY GET FOR A SKIN?

Oh, at that time it wasn't too much. It was perhaps nine or ten. You know, to you people, if a person don't give you fifty dollars he is a cheapskate, but in those if you got a dollar it was a lot of money. You could buy a package of cigarettes for ten cents. Now they are eighty cents. So that was the end of my trapping experience, with him, at least.

DID YOU EVER TRAP MINK?

I used to trap when we were out at Whitshed but I never got many, more of a pasttime than anything else.

TELL US ABOUT THE EARTHQUAKE.

Oh, yeah. We were eating supper. There was a fellow staying with me at the time. We were eating supper and here this building started to shake. Well, I staggered out. I wasn't drunk or anything but I staggered out because the building was going like this, you understand, and I pulled my light switches, you know, and I shut the stove off. I didn't have sense enough to look at the mountains. They told me they were shaking. You could see them move. I did look out here at the mud flats. The tide was out and this mud flats seemed to be like there were streaks in it. They were like coming from the beach and going towards the bay. It was just like a light and a dark streak. Well, okay, pretty soon it quit shaking. Then we heard that there was going to be a tidal wave.

Well, I have a warehouse down on the beach and it is a pretty good-sized warehouse. It extended out there. So, what am I going to do? Pretty soon the tide would come in and go out. Then late that night, oh perhaps eleven or twelve o'clock at night, they told everyone in town to go up on the hill, and a lot of people went up on the hill and moved into people's houses. Well, we didn't go. So about ten or eleven o'clock at night you could hear a roar and that was the water coming in around Salmo Point. Of course we didn't know it at the time but this ground had come up six feet in those few seconds. See, that pushed the water out, then it had to come back in and you could hear it roaring. Well, we stayed here, and there was a friend of mine living over here a couple or three houses. He went to the Pioneer Home and died several years ago. We decided we should go to higher ground. No, we will stay here. And here come the tide. You looked out in the bay. It was dark, and you know these blinker buoys down here? A couple of them went drifting down the bay. Now they have a five ton anchor on them, I believe. They were drifting and I will safely say they were going five or six miles an hour down the bay. So here come the tide and this warehouse of mine was sixty feet long. It was sticking out and here come the water rushing in around it. The water seemed to make a circle here. You know, it hit that point over here and circled around and it came up about half way up on my building, and pretty soon the building took off. I was standing up on the road up here. I figured I would climb a tree or something if it came up too high. It took off and it was going towards the small boat harbor.

Everything I owned was in that building. As luck I didn't have my skiff there. I had my skiff and boat down at APA where the Reluctant Motel is now. Urban Renewal tore it down. Well, the warehouse, just the peak of it, was sticking up, and there it went towards the small boat harbor, and I thought good God, that goes through the harbor it will take a bunch of boats with it. Anyway, it came back and got right into the harbor and it came back, and you know this warehouse over here that belongs to Samuelson now? Well, it came back, and right on the end

of that there is a track going down where they put a cradle. There it landed and there it stayed. I says, "Well, I am going down and look at that warehouse." My friend says, "No way are you going down there. That tide is coming and going." So I didn't go down.

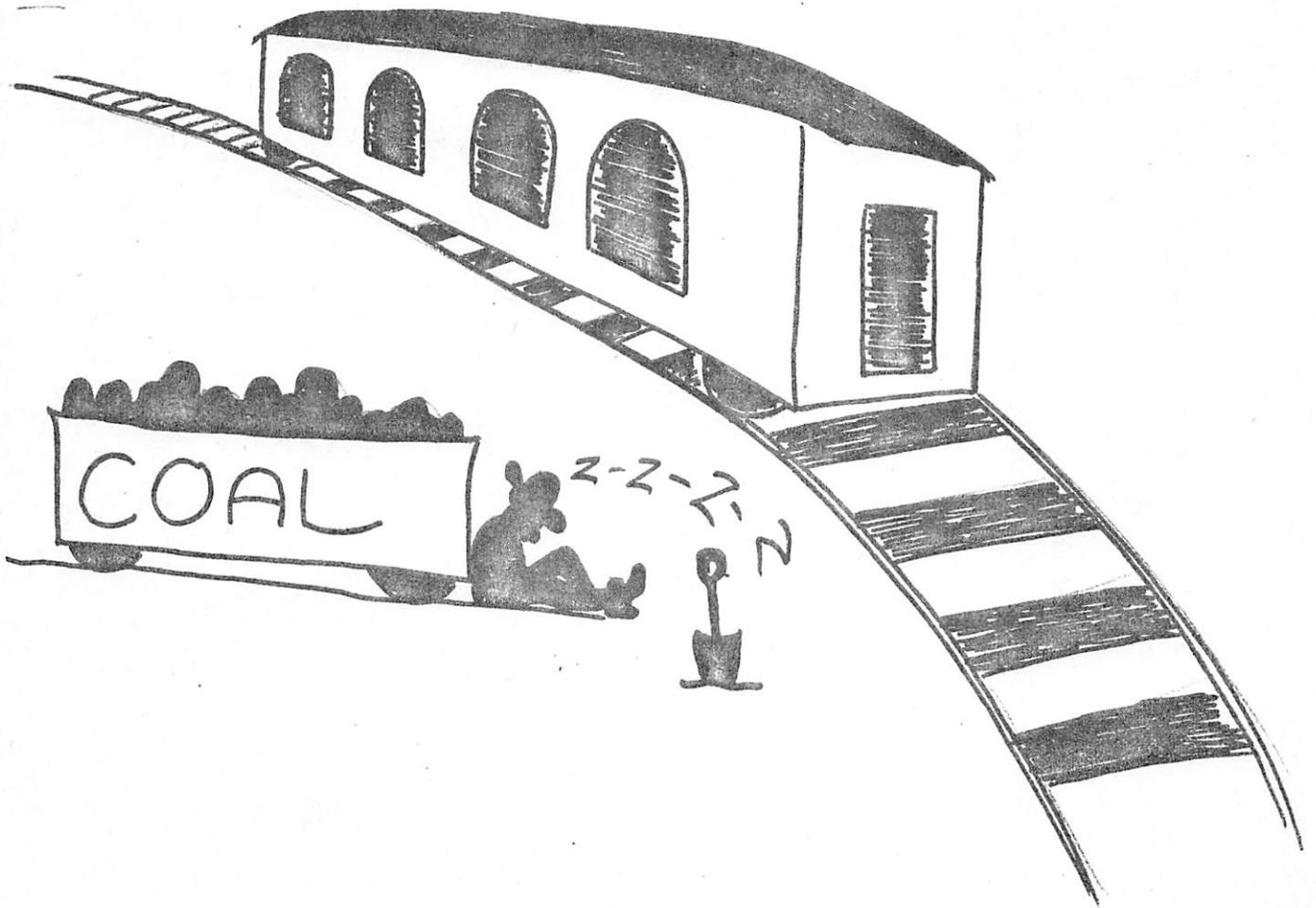
The next morning there was the warehouse right on the end of that cradle. So I went down and took a look. There was perhaps an inch of mud and I even noticed a couple of dead herring in there. Everything was in it. The door was gone but all my tools were in there, like electric saws, and drills, and band saw, the whole works, piling and all. Oh God, what a mess. You know, I had a power block in there, gear in there. I had four outboard motors. I had everything in there. I went uptown and tried to hire some guys to help me move it out because, under the old deal, there would be six or seven feet at high tide, you understand. I couldn't find anybody. Finally, I found Tommy Anderson. I think he is living here now. He came down and helped me. We were moving stuff. I got permission from Bill Bodie to move my stuff up into his warehouse. It was still standing. So I packed stuff up in there. Well, everything I had, my bathtub full of electric drills, motors, and you won't believe it, the only thing that didn't get wet was a Black and Decker Electric saw. I had been using it that afternoon and I had laid it on a plank on the floor when I came up to eat. Apparently that had floated right up to the peak of the roof and floated right back down and never got wet. Everything else was full of mud, just a mess. Well, I worked and worked. These two old kickers out here were in it. I didn't monkey with them, I just saved them for parts and I left two or three kickers in there. I just told the Army engineers to burn it up. Well, he says, "There's a lot of tools and stuff in there." I said, "Get rid of it." So, they dug a hole and burned it up and they buried the rest. I salvaged what I wanted.

Well, that set me back quite a bit you understand. Then I didn't do too well for several years. I got rid of it anyway.

WHERE DID YOU LIVE BEFORE? YOU SAID YOU CAME HERE FROM VALDEZ?

I was born in Alaska. You know where the pipeline terminal is now in Valdez? There was an Army post there in the early days called Fort Liscum, and my brother's sister's husband was the skipper on the town boat for the Army between the fort and Valdez. My dad lived down below the post. He was fishing halibut and selling them in town. He had a little building there and he raised chickens. He would bring them into town and sell them and he was a painter for the Army post. I was born there. I wasn't born in a hospital or anything. I have pictures of it, this little shack we were living in. There's a picture of me when I was born in the bed. He worked there for several years and that's when we moved over here. Right where they built the docks is where I was born. A swamp they call it.

RICHARD DAVIS



John Anderson

The main difference in my mind, in the past and the present, is possibly the difference between the peoples. When they had all those strikes down South about colored people down there, and fighting in the back of the bus, I've been there. People have stated to me that we've never had that here. Well, they're wrong..

In the old days when we had the big Empress Theater, they had a place called "nigger heaven" and except for the little kids, all the Natives had to sit up there. And I'm glad to see that was done away with before they had troubles in the South. When everything brings to mind, you talk about our police and strike problems today in Cordova and everywhere, we had them here then, but we had no radio. We had three newspapers here, but they didn't cover much of that, and sometimes for months on end there would be one murder a night. And walking along the lower railroad where the lower road is above the Times building, we had a Chief of Police and a Federal Marshall. That's all the police we had, and they were on foot. And actually, I think it was worse then than it is today.

The railroad days were quite class distinctive. The Superintendent of Railroads and the Asst. Superintendent had to live in a bigger home than anyone else. And the white collar workers, especially for the railroad, this was a railroad town, were not supposed to mingle socially with the regular laborers. And the lowest class in Cordova was fishermen. They weren't admitted to any of the clubs and they were really way down the ladder. One man who's still here, Martin Samuelson, and Tom Crystal were the first ones to break the fisherman's line and they joined the Elks. That's a definite improvement in our social life.

I just wondered if anyone had any questions about the railroad days that I could recollect? Debby?

DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME SCHEDULE OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT ON THE RAILROAD?

Oh, it varied. We had ore cars, regular long strings of them, all up to 30-35 carts of ore came down. Sometimes they'd come maybe more than once a week and sometimes it would be a ten day schedule. And they had what you call a local train with a coach and a baggage car that went up to Kennicott and back more frequently than that. See, when they had big heavy loads of ore cars, especially if it was snowing, they had to have two or three locomotives, and sometimes with a rotary snowplow in front of it.

All this work was done by hand. They shoveled the concentrated ore out of the ore cars into wheelbarrow-like affairs. And they wheeled them by hand labor. Some of the real concentrated copper ore was put in heavy burlap bags and they weighed 130-140 pounds apiece. They handloaded those out from the cars to the ships.

One that I can think of could, and sure would, give you a little more on how much they got paid, is Pete Gildness, 'cause he longshored when he first came here in the early '30's. Of course, ole Paul Pappas worked in Kennicott in the railroad days and fished too. But, he's not a very good talker.

WHEN DID YOU COME TO CORDOVA?

Mother and I came to Cordova December 19, 1915. I don't remember that trip very much. I was only a year and a half old. My father came up a week or two later. My uncle had the Model Cafe and Restaurant. My mother came up to visit them and brought me along.

They didn't plow any snow in those days. They shoveled the sidewalks and naturally, by Spring, there was a big high pile of snow on the outside of the sidewalks. There was only one place where you could cross to the other side of Main Street and that was by the bank and Davis' store. Otherwise you had to go clear up to the intersection to get across the street. And then sometimes when the ice was pretty high and pretty hard, they'd break out the fire hoses in June to wash it away so they could have street openings.

All the deliveries were done by teams of horses. They had lots of horses in Cordova. And some places in the interior used lots of horses in the summertime but in the wintertime they couldn't use them so they would bring them down to Cordova in big box cars. They had over a 100 head of horses here in the wintertime.

WHERE WERE THE BARNS?

One long barn was up there where Kenny Van Brocklin lives. Real long... it must have been 125 feet long. And then over there on the corner, which was originally the Adams building, I don't know who owns it now, there was a large tent there and 30 or 40 head of horses in that. And then the main barns that were operated by the local people were down at the foot of C Street in the industrial fill there. There was a series of barns and coal bunkers there. The coal would come off the steamers and they'd put them in dump cars and they would go up on the tressel and dump in the city coal bin. This was all hand loaded out and hand-delivered to each house. You see, there was no oil, it was all coal.

WHEN WERE AUTOMOBILES FIRST BROUGHT TO CORDOVA, DO YOU REMEMBER?

I don't remember years worth a darn, but I was pretty small, possibly seven, eight, or nine. First time I had a ride in a car I held on to the spare tire in the back end. The first delivery trucks, O'Niell Company had one, Davis-Phillips, my father and his partner, Dinneen's Grocery, and old Bill Boage had a little transfer. And Alaska Transfer

which was Jim Gallen, had the largest one. He sold coal and deliveries. They all had their own horses. Two of the dairies had their own horses. Originally French Pets, I think his name was, had a dairy in Old Town and he delivered his milk by dog cart in the summertime and a dog sled in the wintertime.

WAS THAT THE DAIRY THAT VINA YOUNG EVENTUALLY TOOK OVER AND OPERATED?

No, she took over, I think, Dick Koch's Lakeside Dairy and lots of kidding when on about Dick's mile. He was too close to the lake and they said he watered his milk..it was kinda blue. We had three dairies and my earliest recollection, we had three newspapers.

One was a weekly and two brothers competed in operating dailys. Harry and Will Steel. Later on they consolidated and worked together. I don't know who owned it. And I think Harry Steel was the last one. Will possibly died or left town.

WERE YOU HERE DURING WORLD WAR II?

No, I was in the Navy. I was in the Aleutians for a year and a half, the South Pacific a year and a half, and on the west coast for two or three months.

WHEN YOU CAME BACK DID YOU GO INTO THE GROCERY BUSINESS?

I was in the grocery business before I left. My father, brother, and I bought out my did's partner.

DID YOU EVER DO ANY FISHING?

Never done any fishing. I ran boats up and down the coast and bought fish for the cannery tenders for 35 years or more. But I've never done any commercial fishing.

DID YOU OWN BOATS?

No, the only one I owned or owned part of is the PAVLOF. It's down here now, a power barge. In fact, I converted it to brine and tanked it five, six, seven, or eight years ago.

The New England Cannery in those days was called the Carlisle Packing Company, and that was in town just about where the Standard Oil Depot is down there now. It burned down during the war. I was in

New England at the time it burned.

I GUESS YOU'VE SEEN LOTS OF CHANGES TAKE PLACE IN CORDOVA. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE TOWN? WHAT ABOUT IT'S FUTURE AS COMPARED WITH IT'S PAST? I UNDERSTAND SOME PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE ROAD OPEN AND THEN OTHER PEOPLE THINK THE IDEA IS VERY BAD.

I have mixed emotions about the road. I'd like to see the road. I'd like to be able to drive out there and the open interior country, if people who are squashing any of those roads and development don't have their way. It's very highly mineralized and beautiful scenery. But I also like the isolation. It has a different tone than the whole community. If you go into isolated villages you get a feeling it's going to be different, especially from a big city. Even a smaller city, like Valdez was, you could drive in and out. It has a different feeling than Cordova where you had to run a boat or fly in an airplane to get here.

Like Bob Korn's old cabin down at the flats, at Joe Reeves Slough. If anybody comes over here, it's cause they wanted to see me, not just because they happened to be going by. Same idea lies here. Future Cordova, there's no question about the fishing potential, and the mineral potential they have in the interior. Cordova's bound to have a future. It's inescapable. But how or when it's going to come about, I don't know.

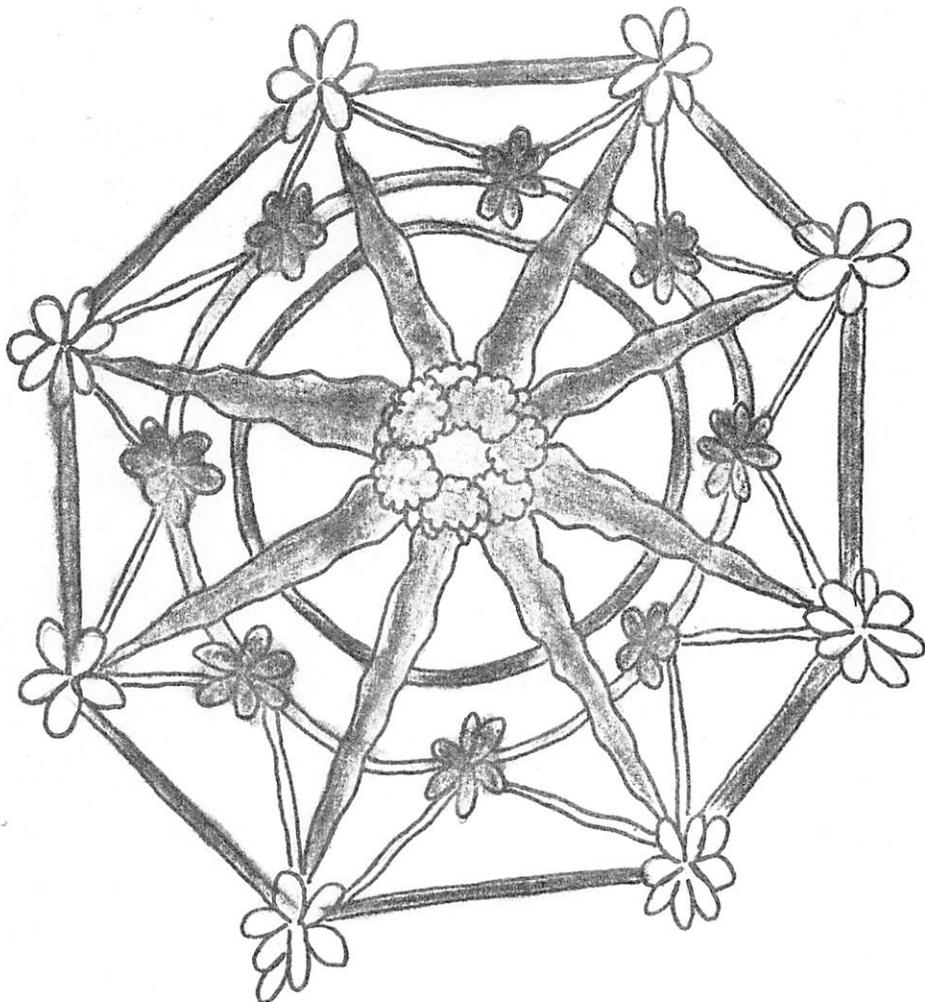
YOU THINK EVENTUALLY THERE WILL BE A ROAD NECESSARY TO DEVELOP CORDOVA'S POTENTIAL?

It's essential to open the interior country. It would not necessarily have to connect with the interior highway system. But, between the coal fields, and the oil fields, and the mineralized area like in the Bremner River, this would be the natural way to come out. The closest way to the deep water sea, and eventually it's going to happen whether we like it or not. When we run out of minerals and out of coal and oil, we're going to have to get it. It pretty near has to come through Cordova.

DO YOU THINK IT WAS A MISTAKE FOR THE RAILROAD TO CLOSE DOWN?

Well, not necessarily. It could have been discussed and talked seriously about connecting this railroad with the Alaska Railroad or this railroad on to Fairbanks and then on to Nome. It possibly would have been a cheaper means of transportation. The whole country is thinking strongly about public transportation.

NICKOLAS
KOMPKOFF



John Anderson 1980

In the following interview Nicholas Kompkoff, having served the Russian Orthodox Church in capacity of priest, explains the traditional Christmas celebration known as "Starring."

"STARRING" is a tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church. It started when the Russian Orthodox priest came here. It has changed from what it used to be before, but basically what the starring tradition means that, as the Gospel mentions, the Wise Men journeyed and followed the Star. This is why we have the tradition here of following the Star. We have a home-made star held, usually, by a leader of the village or a choir director, someone who knows all the songs. The songs that we sing are Russian-Aleut. We did put in an English translation of Many Years. The songs have been passed down from generation to generation. I think they mainly come from the services of the Orthodox Church that we have Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, especially the long one. Not too many years ago we started singing that one during the Starring Ceremony. We go from one house to another and each house will offer food. Every house that receives the Star in their home are actually receiving Christ. It signifies Christ coming into their house. The song I mentioned Dnes Kristos is a long one. It was taken from the Christmas Eve combine service. It is a very beautiful song. Recently, maybe four to five years, it started being sung during the Starring Ceremony.

WE HAD MASS ON THE NIGHT OF THE 6TH, AT MIDNIGHT. IS THAT JUST TO START THE SEASON?

Well, the tradition varies in different areas of the state, in different villages. Normally, the church service commemorating the birth of Christ starts in the evening; it starts in the evening at approximately six o'clock when we have Grand Combine & Matins. The eve of a holiday or a Sunday is the beginning of the day on the Church calendar. Maybe, because it wasn't convenient, or there was no priest in the village, the services varied. Then people were preparing for the service and they started having the service at midnight.

WHEN I WAS AT MASS I NOTICED THAT MOST EVERYONE WAS STANDING IN THE CHURCH. I NOTICED THAT THERE ARE NO CHAIRS AND YOU STAND. IS THERE A REASON FOR THAT?

There is a time during the services to sit and stand. There are many types of Russian Orthodox services; that is, vespers, divine liturgy. The mass that you attended was actually a vespers service. The reason in most Russian Orthodox churches; there are no chairs, services of divine liturgy is supposed to be one of the whole life of Christ while he was here on earth in the divine liturgy. In reverence we stand. There are some chairs now where people can sit. There are only two appointments in the church, standing and kneeling. And at one point in the service it was time to kneel and there was a time to stand. Most is standing. Sitting is permitted except for the very solemn parts of the service. There used to be a tradition in the

Church, a kind of division; men on one side and the women on the other.

I NOTICED THAT, WHY IS THAT?

That was the way it was before. There were so many different priests that came here to the area, and each one had their set of standards, and each one had their set of rules, although they were of the same faith.

I NOTICED THAT, ACCORDING TO THE SCHEDULE, EVERY DAY FOR THE THREE DAYS AT FOUR O'CLOCK EVERYONE'S AT THE CHURCH. IS THAT A TRADITION, TO MEET AT THE CHURCH AND START THERE?

The tradition is that we always assemble there, the church is the life of the group. It is the focal point of everything. All the holidays center around the church. They always go to church first and then go around to the houses.

I CERTAINLY ENJOYED GOING AROUND TO THE DIFFERENT HOUSES TO SEE THE BEAUTIFUL HOMES, TO LISTEN TO THE SONGS. LAST EVENING, I BELIEVE, WE WENT TO TWELVE DIFFERENT PLACES. HOW MANY ARE WE SUPPOSED TO GO TO TONIGHT?

Probably eight or nine.

WHEN THE FAMILY GIVES GIFTS TO THE PEOPLE, (THE REFRESHMENTS AND THE GIFTS) IS THERE A CERTAIN TYPE THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO GIVE? A BAKING? I NOTICED BARBARA OLSEN HAD PIES AND MRS. TIEDEMAN ALSO HAD PIES. IS THAT A TRADITIONAL TYPE OF FOOD, OR IS IT ANYTHING THEY DESIRE?

It is a tradition that they give food. These people represent the Wise Men traveling, their following the Star. Sometimes they don't get a chance to go home and eat or go home and have a meal. Every house offers something, and it does not have to be pie; candy, apples; whatever we have that is good. We have what we had. Dried fruit that we had which was made into pie and associated with the Russian Christmas and the giving of pies.

THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR THAT I HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS. LAST YEAR I WENT ON THE THIRD NIGHT. I WENT ON THE FIRST NIGHT THIS YEAR, SO I AM KIND OF INTERESTED THAT THERE IS A GREAT BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THIRD NIGHT.

Especially over here. I don't know exactly when it started, but the Starring tradition had been around a long time. Always the three

days. One part of the tradition is gone and hasn't been practiced for quite a while. Namely on the first day, one mask or mascalada goes along with the Star. He was an outsider, and he represents Herod's army looking for the Christ Child. One mask would come on the first day, two on the second day, and three of them on the third day. And the three on the third day would try to get the Star. This was when Herod's army went out and killed the many children searching for the Christ Child.

THEY CALL THAT MASCALADA?

Yes. Being on the third day there is masks we try to get the Star. It's just like you see now, it gets a little rough when they are trying to get something. On the third day, when we are here, it's just like when everyone is trying to get the goodies. More and more homes are giving out lots more stuff. Some people throw money out. Something that is involved in the masking tradition that we have. Sometimes we get drunk.

HAS THERE BEEN A PRIEST HERE AT EYAK AND TATITLEK ON A REGULAR BASIS?

Yes, Father Innocent has been here for some time. He comes from Juneau.

I HAVE SEEN HIM HERE FOR SEVERAL FUNERALS, AND ALSO HE HAS BEEN HERE QUARTERLY JUST AS A VISITOR.

He tries to get here once every month, but his travel schedule is quite extensive. He was here in November.

WHEN YOU ARE AGAIN A FULL PRIEST WITH THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO SERVE?

That depends upon where the Bishop wants to send me. He has the final say.

IS THERE A SEMINARY HERE IN ALASKA, IN KODIAK, ST. HERMANS?

It is a fully accredited seminary.

Are there any further questions that anyone would have?

I WOULD LIKE TO ASK IF THE SONGS SUNG IN THE SERVICE ARE TRADITIONALLY OF RUSSIAN ORIGIN, AND THEN HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED INTO THE EYAK-ALEUT LANGUAGE? THEY ORIGINATED IN THE RUSSIAN TONGUE?

Yes. The first one is a song of the cannons, sung at an evening service. It is Christ is risen, Christ is born, Glorify His name, Christ is here on earth. The second one on this list is one of the main songs of the holiday. The third one is the day the Virgin gives birth to the Child.

BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THE THIRD SONG I NOTICED THAT THE GROUP STOPPED.

We sing Glory to the Father. The fourth one is Glory to God in the Highest. That is in Russian. Russian is the Slavonic language of the church. It is not a dialect. The books are written in the Slavonic language. The first four are in the Slavonci language, Russian. Number five is in Aleut, number six also. Number five is an Aleut song, I don't know about it's origin. It has been a tradition that has been passed down through the generations. UGH NA PALK is the same as number three but in Russian. Number six is in Aleut. Number seven is an Aleut song that has been passed down, Russian mixed with Aleut, it might have been composed by a Russian priest after talking with the local people. It is the same song they sing up in the Kuskokwim area. I have a tape of Slavonic and they sang the same old songs. Dnes Kristos, the day of Christ's Birth. Then is Rod Rit Za Maria. It is again a mixture of Russian and Aleut. Sung a little bit different in Port Graham and English Bay. They have a different start, part of a church song of their Combine service. What we have here, I don't know who composed it. When I was a kid, about ten to twelve years old, the last two verses were not in it. I know for a fact that last one was composed by Judy Vlasoff, a reader. Christ is born on earth, show Him your love. I know that number five and six verse were not sung when I was small. I grew up, and when I began going slavicing, when five was added, six was added later on - probably twenty years later.

THIS WRITING IS ALEUT? IS THIS PHOENETIC? THE WAY WE HEAR IT? I HAVE SEEN SOME OF THE LADIES WHO HAVE THIER CHURCH HYMN BOOKS AND IT IS WRITTEN A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT.

We have an Aleut dictionary and alphabet. Somebody in Port Graham wrote it.

Our Aleut is not like the Aleutian Pribilof. Ours is a soup-stew Aleut. A soup-stew Aleut. We can understand some Eskimo words, but we cannot understand the Aleutian Island people. We can understand the Kodiak.

YOU THINK THERE WAS NEVER A CONNECTION BETWEEN YOUR GROUP OF PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLE THAT LIVED ON THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS?

There may have been, but there was a mixture. I always thought there was Aleut until I read Frederica De Laguna, Chugach Prehistory. She called the people Eskimo.

CHUCACHAMUTES?

Yes, Chugach Eskimos.

ARE THERE LEGENDS AMONG THE OLD PEOPLE THAT WOULD THROW LIGHT ON THE ORIGIN OF THE CHUCACHAMUTE PEOPLE?

There are many legends I have heard. Before the Russian Priests came around there was no method of keeping records. There were no records of anything. Each village had one man they called a *opr-ech-guk*, story teller, and they were passed down to his son. He would know all the families, and who they were related to, and where they originated, and this is the only way they kept records.

HAVE ANY OF THESE STORIES BEEN WRITTEN DOWN AND RECORDED?

Yes, we have a gentleman, Sunshine is his name. Ted Chimovisky has gone to Fairbanks at the University and translated stories from the Aleut language into the English. He recently returned from three or four intense days at the University to make sure that some of the history was written down.

WHO DOES HE TALK TO, TO GET THIS INFORMATION?

Well, he is old enough and has been here. He told me the other day that he is going to be seventy this year. He's well known in the community. He visits everybody, knows the stories. I wouldn't be surprised that he probably came from a line of family record keepers. I wouldn't be surprised if he isn't one of those. I don't know for sure.

RUSSIAN CHRISTMAS SONGS

1. KRIS TOS DI YET SEE SLA VI TI/ KRIS TOS NE VES RA SEE IS/
KRIS TOS NA ZEM LE Y NA SEE TE SA/ POY TE HOS SPOT TE/
VE SA AH AH ZEM LE/ EVE VE SEE NE YA/ WOS SPODI LOO D I YA
KOP RA STA YET SA/

2. ROS ZES TAO TWA YA KRIS TE BOZ ZI NAS/ WA SEE AH ME RA VES
RIA DA AH ZOO MA/ NE WOY VE SUM SO SA SEE AH/ SVEZ DAY YOU
OH CHA AH KO CHA/ TE BE KRO NE PE EL SOL SUN SEE PRA AH AV
DE/ ET TE BE WET TE SOO SVET TE VAS STA AH KA/ WOS SPODI
SLAWA TE BE/

3. DE VAT NE SPREE SO SVET DE NA WAR AS DIA/ E ZEM LE VER DEM
NE PRE STO NA WA PRE NO SE/ UN GALEE SPA SER NE SLAVA SLAVA/
Y VES DO ZY VES DO YOU POO TO SEE NO YOU/ NAZ BAVRA DI RA
DIL SA/ OT RO CHAM LA AH DA PRE VES NE BOK/

4. SLA AH AH VA VES NE BOAH/ E NA ZEM LE ME E ERE NE/ NE E E
VEF LE EMLE VEF LE EM SEE DA SLA VA PRES NA SOO OH SEE/
NE EZ ON GILL LE VLA DEN SA ROS DEL NA WO BOAH HO LEM NA
SLA VA SLA AH AH VE/ SLA AH AH WA VES NE BOAH HO/ E NA ZEM
LE ME E ERE NE/ CHEL LA VEK SE BLA AH WO WE LE NE YA/

5. TA AH GOO WHA GOO EH SCALE NEK PA MA GEN KE LA AHL MEK/ OE
OE GNU EA LEST DA WHA ONK KOO DA/ OE OE GNA LA OE GNA LA
AHL MONG/ CHA AH LE EL GNA ULK TA AH NELG ME/ CHA AH LE E
GOO WHA PE SHOO PE/ AH SKA/ TA MA GUN AHL ELG COME KOON SO
OE ELK HOOS PA DALK/

6. UGH NA PALK/ AHL EGH KAN SOO WHA GA CHA NA STE TAM AH/ YEM
DE MUM TA/ KAHL KAHL KI KOON NA/ CHA LE ME TALM AH GALK TOO
AH KRES STOO OOH OOH SALK/ MA JAKL TOWE KOO NOON KEEN KOO
NOON EL OON NOON TAH NEJL ME/ PEE GUE OU TELK SHLO POH GLES
RAL NA SLON WEL GNOOZ NA YA GNA LEET PE DUK SCLEO GEE OOK
HA KOO CHELK TON REE E MA LE PA STOO WHA TING WHO MA KE CHA
CHALK NA SCHLLON/ ON GIL LA NOON LA DOON LA NOON CHA AN BOAH
OH LANOON NUN HOW GEK PA MA NE AHGAH OTE ME/

7. NOO DA WA YOU GEE LA KU DO/ KI LOON EH NA PAK EL NOOK KI KOO
NAM KOO LE NE/ ME TAK PEEK NA AH NA NEE LON NOOM AH KU NE SKA/
ME TAK PEEK NA AH NA NE LON NOOM AH KU NE SKA/ NA KE KRE STOO
SA MA LA/ AH EH KA ME KOO AH SKA/ CHA LE WHA OOMA AH OO MA LO
ME AHIUNE KOO SO NE/ CHA LE WHA OOMA AH OO MA LO NE AHIUNE
KOO SO NE/ PA STOO HOT LOO TOE ME CHOO ME CHA LA AH SKA/ PA
STOO HOT LOO TOE ME CHOO ME CHA LA AH SKA/ CHA LE WA CHE SKOO
OO MEK LOO DA/ AH I UTE MEN NA YA AH SKA/ NA NE AH I UKE KA
PA SHOO AGHI MOON SOO NA PET/ NA NE AH I UKE KA PA SHOO AGHI
MOON SOO NA PET/

- NA VE RA DA SPA SEE ME REE NE NA YA VILL SA/ BOAH SLA SLA VE OD
 DE VE MARE VE TE RO OH DILL SA TA MO ON GILL LE NANE BE ZE ZE
 8. LA DI VIAT SA/ ZEM NO ROD NE CHE LA VE KE OD TA VE SE RIAT SA/
 BUSTI RE SNO ETROO VE SAGLAZ NA ZI RI UTE/ OD VER SI TE OD VA
 STA KAM CHA RI PRE NO DIAT/ NAM RA DIN NO MOOM LA DIN SA KRIS
 STA BOAH DA RI PRE NO SIAT/ VIVAT VIVAT VIVAT NAM MNO GUY A LE TA/
- TA AH GOO HA GOO EL LE NOON PA MA GEN KE LA AH NEK/ OO GNOOAH LE
 9. STEM DA WHA ANG KOO DA OO GNA LA OO GNA LA AH LA AH MEN/ CHA
 AH LE GNOOK TO NE EM CHA AH LE E GOOK AH PE CHOO PIA AH SKA/ TA
 YA MA GEN AGH EL KAH KOON SO WA AH AH AH SPA DALK/
- DNES KRES STOS VE EF LE EMY VE EF LE EMY/ DNES KRE STOS/ RAZ
 DA YET SA OH OH OH DAY VE/ RAZ DA YET SA OH OH OH DAY AYA AY AY
 AY VE/ KNES BEZ NA CHAL NE NA CHE NA AH NA/ ET SLAVA ET SLAVA/
 VO PLO CHA YET SA/ VO PLO CHA YET SA/ SE LE NE BES/ NE YA
 RA AH DO YET SA/ SE LE NE BES NE YA RA DO YET SA/ E ZEM LA/
 10. E ZEM LA/ CHE LA VE KE/ CHE LA VE KE/ VE SE LEETSA VE SE LEET
 AS E ZEM LA/ CHA LA VEK VE SE LEET SA/ VE SE LEET SA/ VOLS
 VE VLA DE CHE DA RE PRE NO SIAT/ PA STO RE ROZ ERN NA MO
 DE VAT SA/ ME ZE NE PRE STA/ NO VO PE YEM/ SLA AH AH AH AH AH
 VA VO VE SNE BO HO/ SLA VA VESH NE VO VE VO VESH NE BO HO/
 ENA ZEM LE MEER/ E NA ZEM LE MEER/ CHE LA VE SHE/ BLA AH OH
 VO VE LE NE YA/ CHE LA VE CHE/ BLA AH OH VO LE NE YA/ BLA OH O
 LE NE YA/
- ROD RIT ZA/ MARIA/ ROD RIT AZ/ PRIS NOT EVE/ ONLY KLE NE ROZ
 IS TA TWA YA/
1. O MARIA BOAH MA TE MAL YA SE SA NA
 2. OMLA DINSA PE LE NA ME VA VE RIOT SA
 11. 3. NAT VEL TE PA VE RE GOOG RI IS WES DA
 4. NA ZEM LE SVE TE SO LO TE YA
 5. UN GA LEE PY OOT NA NE BE SE VE SE YOOT SA
 6. KRIS TAS WAS DI UTE NE NA ZEM LE LUDI VE SE UTE SA

6

DNES KRE STOS

DNES KRES STOS VE EF LE EMY VE EF LE EMY/DSNE KRE STOS/
 RAZ DA YET SA OH OH OH DAY VE/
 RAZ DA YET SA OH OH OH DAY AYA AY AY AY YE/
 DNES BEZ NA CHAL NE NA CHE NA AH/NA
 VO PLO CHA YET SA/ SEELE NE BES/NE YA RA AH DO YET SA/
 SE LE NE BES NE YA RA DO YET SA/E ZEM LA/
 CHE LA VE KE/CHE LA VE KE/VE SE LEETSA VE SE LEET AS E ZEM LA/
 CHA LA VEK VE SE LEET SA/VE SE LEET SA/
 VOLS VE VLA DE CHE DA RE PRE NO SIAT/
 PA STO RE ROZ ERN NA MOC DE VAT SA/
 ME ZE NE PRE STA/NO VO PE YEM/
 SLA AH AH AH AH AH VA VO VE SNE BO HO/
 SLA VA VESH NE VO VE VO VESH NE BO HO
 ENA ZEM LE MEER/E NA ZEMLE MEER
 CHE LA VE SHE/BLA AH ON VO VE LE NE YA/CHE LA VE CHE/
 BLA AH OH VO LE NE YA/BLA OH O LR NE YA/

7

NOO DA WA YOU GEE LA KU DO/KI LOON EH NA PAK EL NOOK KI KOO NAM
KOO LE NE/ME TAK PEEK NA AH NA LOM NOON AH KU NE SKA/
TWICE

NA KE KRE STOO SA MA LA/AH EH KA ME KOO AH SKA/
CHA LE WHA OOMA LO NE AHIUNE KOO SO KE/ TWICE
PA STOO HOT LOO TOE ME DHOO ME DHA LA SJA / TWICE
CHA LE EMA CHE SKOO WO ME LOO DA AH I UTE MEN NA YA AH SKA/
NA NE AH I UKE KA PA SHOO AGHI MOON SOO NA PET.

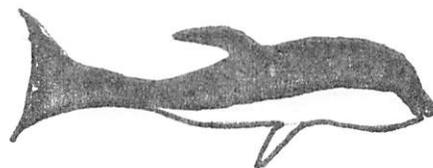
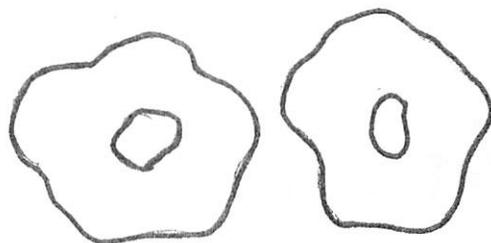
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NA VE RA DA SPA SEE ME REE NE NA YA WILL SA/
BOAH SLA SLA VE OD DE VE MA VE TE RO OH DILLSU TA MO ON GILL
LE NANE BE ZE ZE LA DI VIAT SA/
SEM NO ROD NE CHE LA VE KE OT TA VE SE RIAT SA/
BUSTI RE SNO ETROO VE SAGLAZ NA ZI RI UTE/
OT VER SEE TE OT VA STA KAM CHA RI PRE SHO DIAT/
NAM RA DIN NO MOOM LA DIN SA KRIS STA BOAH DA RI PRE NO SIAT/
VI VAT NAM NO GUT YALE TA

9

TA AH GOO HA GOO EL LE NOON PA MA GEN KE LA AH NEK/
OO GNAAH LE STEM DA WHA AHG KOO DA OO GNA LA OO GNA LA AH
LA AH MEN/ CHA AH LE GNOOK TA NE EM CHA AH LE E GOOK TA AH
NE ME CHA AH LEE E GOO HA PE CHOO PIA AH SKA/
TA MA MA GEN AGH AGM EL KAH KOON SO WA AH AH AH SPA DALK.

Clam Fritters
Fried Bread
Russian Pie
and Lutefisk



Jessie Tiedeman demonstrates her method of making clam fritters and fried bread as she compares old ways of cooking with modern methods.

We used to eat clams, plain and with bread. Now days we use crackers, eggs, onions, and seasons. Plus, I got 2 1/2 cups of soda crackers and crush them. The clams I grind up the night before I use them. The next morning when I get ready to make the fritters, I mix the ingredients. Sometimes for a change of flavor, I add flour or Krustez, about 1 cup, of course, will make a very good batter. The batter should be just thick enough that you can spoon it into the deep fry. At the same time, the grease is getting hot. It's time to prepare your bread for frying, if you're going to have fried bread with the clams. The recipe is used mostly on butter clams. It can also be used on razor clams, octopus, and shrimp.

In Aleut, the fried bread is called "Lapuska". As the kids get modern, the only name they use is fried bread. The fried bread is made from the same things that are used to make bread; warm water, some yeast, salt, sugar, and your flour. The bread mix needs to rise about an hour. Just set this fried bread, and then usually take about a spoon off. These clams sometimes they will splatter, but if I make the oil hot, it fries better. You know, deep fry, it's just like fried chicken.

Usually, before I cook the clams I clean them and drain them on a paper platter so they won't splatter. I cut them up with a sharp butter knife. That is what I prefer. We used ulus years ago but I forgot how to use mine. I just don't know how to use it anymore. I am trying to get back to it. I have one that was made by an "Oldtimer" out of an old saw. He makes them and sells them for twenty dollars apiece.

The oil for the clams has to be pretty hot. It fries better. You gotta make sure it's hot. When I cook, I cook everything at one time. I use Crisco because it seems to brown better. You can use lard. Years ago we fried bread in seal oil. I don't use it anymore. I use to use it with a lot of things. It is a little heavier than the vegetable oil. A lot of kids now days don't like the smell of it. The seal oil has a taste like cod liver oil.

It don't take long to fry. I usually try to cook everything at once. It takes about 18 butter clams to cook a good batch, but I froze them and, in fact, I took some out for chowder. See, here's whats they look like, when they're all cleaned out and ready to fry, and then you fry them according to how you like them. You can add green pepper in but usually I put half a green pepper if I have one.

We use to use it for lights, and skins for the clothing and for the bidarkas they made, oh there was a lot of use for seal, yeah, if I had a seal's guts I could braid it up, but now I don't have it, so that's that.

DO YOU LIKE SEAL OIL BETTER?

No, well, years ago when I was a young girl, I didn't have no choice in them days. We had to do with what we had, but now I can afford my Crisco, or what ever. Yes, I like to do things speedy.

Really, what are you taking pictures for? Oh, is that what it is for? Your mothers must make bread. If you wanted to make fried bread you can get that frozen bread and thaw it out, and you can do the same thing I'm doing here. It's real simple.

DO YOU USE AN ULU?

We used it years ago but I forgot how to use mine, but I have one that I bought last year, but I just don't know how to use it anymore, so I'm trying to get back to using it again. Do you want Koolaid with your lips (fried bread)? There's some Koolaid. Get some glasses, and those are ready for the kids to sample, or whatever you're going to do with them. I'll just go ahead and give your fried bread, the kids could start in, and you can set there too, I think I better put out another plate for you. I got more frying. I could of probably of made a cup of tea if you wanted a cup of tea. What is your first name? Roberta, would you prefer a cup of tea? It takes about an hour for a batch of bread to rise. You can fry butter clams whole if you wanted to. Just take them out of their shell, and roll them in flour, and fry them in deep fat like that, and it's really good. Yeah, I have some seal oil. Have you ever seen what seal oil looks like, Miss Roberta? No? Well, I made some about a week ago. It's regularly rendered out. It's rendered out on a stove like cod liver oil. I use it on fish when I boil a fish, you know. That's about the only time I use it. Just cut the blubber off the seal, then render it out on a frying pan or pot.

My name is Dorene S. Eleshansky. My birthplace is Tatitlek, Alaska. I also lived there before I came to Cordova, Alaska. I came to Cordova, Alaska in 1967. My occupation now, a housewife, in the past, a housewife. My grandparents birthplace is Tatitlek, Alaska, also.

I'm going to show the people how to make Russian Pie, that who don't know how to make Russian Pie now, when we use to make it in the past .

Here is my recipe for making Russian Pie. I do hope you enjoy the pie.

FISH PIE

2 cups red salmon fish
2 cups rice
2 sticks celery
2 tablespoons Lea & Perrin sauce
1 whole onion
1 pie pan

INGREDIENTS FOR DOUGH

2 cups flour
3/4 cups shortening
1/2 teaspoons salt
1/3 cups hot water

Steps

Chop up onions and celery, put in bowl, and add Lea & Perrin sauce. Mix all together. Set aside.

Cook rice for 15 minutes, add fish.

Mix onions, celery, Lea & Perrin sauce, rice, and fish all together in bowl. Set aside.

Roll out dough with rolling pin, 2 layers of dough, one for the bottom of mixed ingredients and the other layer top of the ingredients.

Put one layer on the pie pan, pour in mixed ingredients, put other layer on top. With fork, poke 4-5 holes on top of dough.

Set oven at 350, bake for an hour.

Set on rack, cool for about 1/2 hour.

Ready to eat.

Corrine Erickson's recipe for Lutefisk

Soaking of Swedish Lutefisk (Ling)

To every 2 1/2 pounds dried spring ling: 1/2 lb. soda
1/2 lb. slaked lime
water

Beredning av lutefisk

To get fish ready for Christmas Eve, begin December 9th.

Divide fish in 2 or 3 pieces and put in wooden tub. Add cold water to cover and place in a cool place, changing water every 4 days for 4 days. Then scrub fish on both sides and remove. Empty tub. Cover bottom with lime; arrange layer of fish, skin-side down on top. Cover with lime, add another layer of fish, skin side-up, cover with lime. Dissolve soda in a little warm water; add cold water. Pour slowly over fish until very well covered. Solution should always cover all of fish. Last of all, put light press over tub (board with large stone on top.)

Soak fish 5-7 days or until soft enough to let finger penetrate thickest part easily. Remove. Rinse tub, return fish and cover with fresh cold water. Change water every day first 3 days, later twice every week. Fish is ready to cook after 4-6 days in fresh water. Cook small piece first to test. Fish may be kept in water a long time but becomes hard if kept too long.

Boiled Lutefisk (Ling)

Kokt Lutefisk

3 lbs. soaked lutefisk (see recipe above)
salt, water

Skin and cut up fish. Place pieces close together in cheese-cloth and sprinkle with salt. Place on fish rack. Bring very slowly to boiling point and simmer 10-15 minutes. When ready, drain and remove to hot platter. Always serve with salt, black and white pepper and mustard, boiled potatoes, melted butter and white sauce. Lutefisk may also be served with green peas.

White sauce:

3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
2 1/2 cups milk or half milk and half cream, salt, white pepper

Melt butter. Add flour and stir until well blended. Add milk gradually while stirring. Cook slowly 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES,

Some of those who remember are of roots grown deep and wide in the rocky soil of Prince William Sound: Eyak Lake, Alaganik, Middleton Island, Egg Islands, Strawberry Point, Whitshed, Chenega, Minchinbrook Island, Nuchek, Port Etches, Hawkins Island, Makaka Point, Palugvik, and Tatitlek.

Later, they came from faraway places, Russia and Western European countries, on sailships in quest of discovery, adventure, wealth, and fame. Lower forty-eight midwestern states, primarily, are responsible for second and third generation Western Europeans and Scandinavians who came to Cordova for reasons as varied as themselves.

Further, our storytellers are representative of a wide spectrum of knowledge and skills, having been, or are still, involved in the following occupations:

Living off the land	Mortician
Railroading	Public Utilities
Mining	Homemaker
Fishing	Community Native Affairs
Canneries	F.A.A.
Boatman	Military Service
Harbor Master	Coast Guard
Trapping-Hunting	Navy
Furrier	Army
Dairying	Air Force
Bookkeeping	Missionary
Librarian	Priest
Museum Curator	University Professor

Diverse in heritage and kaleidoscopic in skills, Cordovans meld to produce a unique community, a veritable treasure-trove of rich and fascinating history.

CASSETTE TAPES

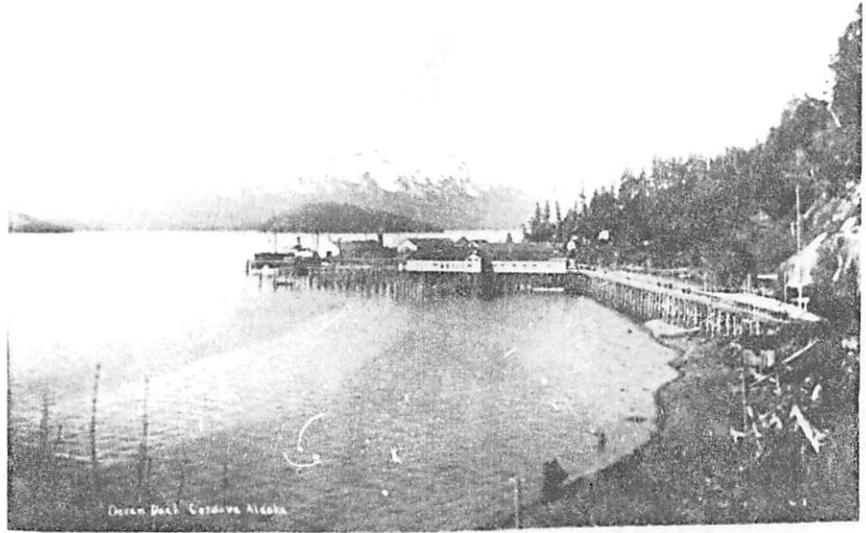
SOPHIE BORODKIN	PETE LOVESETH
ROSIE LANKARD	NORMAN SWANSON
JOHN KLASHINOFF	ASTRID SANDSTROM
ART TIEDEMAN	CORRINE ERICKSON
JESSIE TIEDEMAN	DAR GLASEN
AGNES NICHOLS	GLENN HAST
GILBERT OLSEN	LARRY KRITCHEN
HOLLIS HENRICHS	OSCAR BROWN
FRANK BURNS	ED HALTNESS
MRS. FRANK STEEN	RICHARD DAVIS
VINA YOUNG	NICKOLAS KOMPKOFF
DORIS WILLIAMS	

VIDEOTAPES

JOHN KLASHINOFF
JESSIE TIEDEMAN
FRANK BURNS
VINA YOUNG
PETE LOVESETH
DAR GLASEN
RICHARD DAVIS
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS SONGS
JOHN ANDERSON-GUITARIST

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. CORDOVA - EARLY PHOTOGRAPH
2. OCEAN DOCK - EARLY PHOTOGRAPH
3. CORDOVA - EARLY PHOTOGRAPH
4. CORDOVA - EARLY PHOTOGRAPH
5. CORDOVA - EARLY PHOTOGRAPH
6. CORDOVA - EARLY PHOTOGRAPH
7. ALONG THE IRON TRAIL - EARLY PHOTOGRAPH
8. CABOOSE 014 - WOODCUT AND PRINT BY LINDA LANKARD
9. SOPHIE BORODKIN
10. ROSIE LANKARD
11. JOHN KLASHINOFF
12. ART TIEDEMAN
13. HOLLIS HENRICHS
14. NORMAN SWANSON
15. GAIL STEEN
16. VINA YOUNG
17. FRANK BURNS
18. DORIS WILLIAMS
19. DAR GLASEN
20. GLENN MAST
21. CORRINE ERICKSON
22. ED HALTNESS
23. RICHARD DAVIS
24. OSCAR BROWN
25. NICKOLAS KOMPKOFF
26. DORENE ELESKANSKY
27. THE RED DRAGON



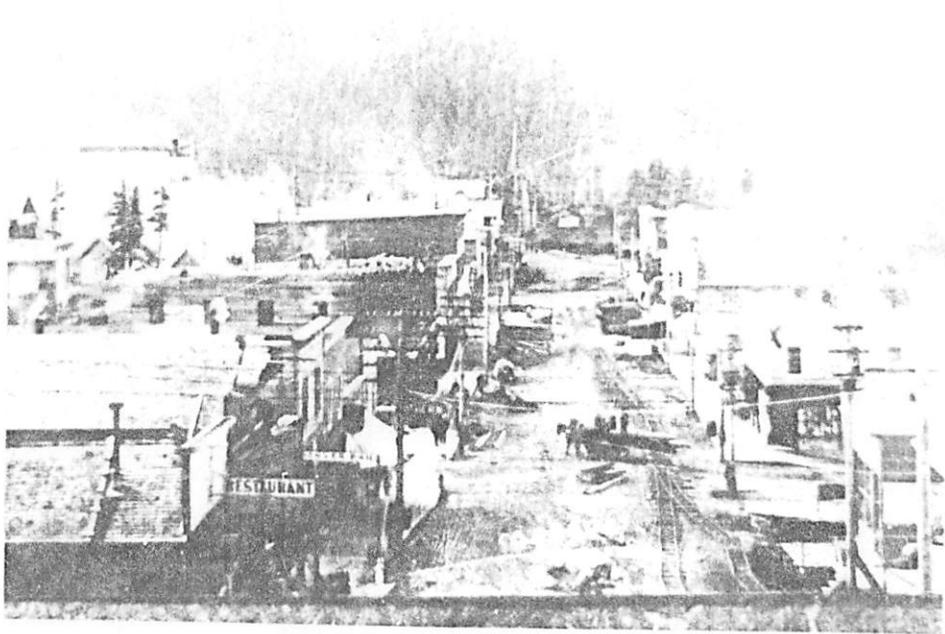
Docks, Cordova, Alaska

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29 - Broad View of Cordova, Alaska

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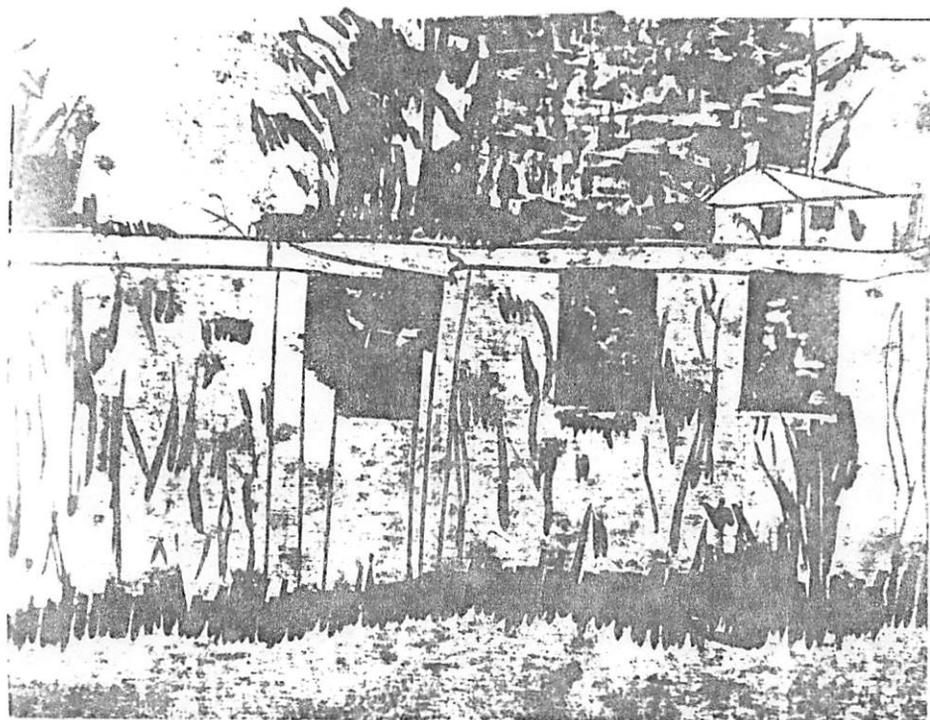
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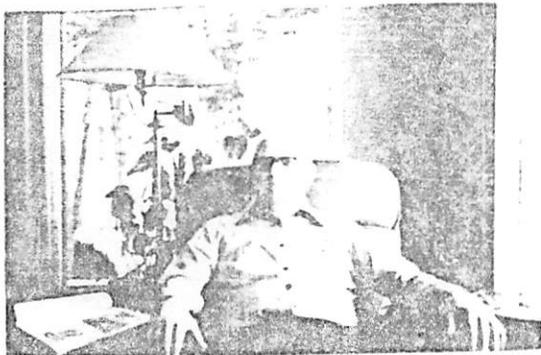
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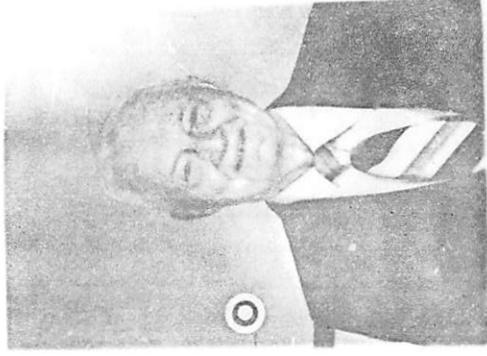
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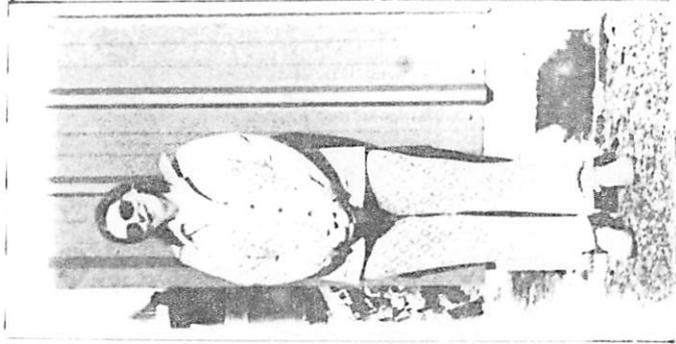
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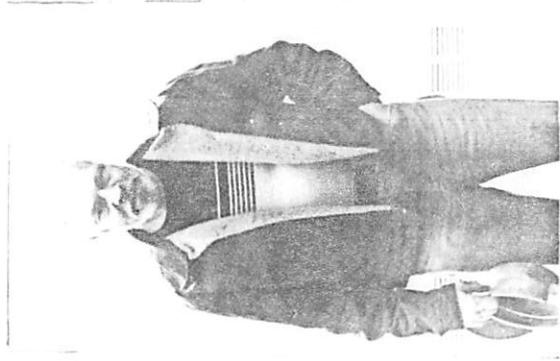
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978



THE RED DRAGON IN 1978—The Red Dragon is still in perfect shape, its exterior only slightly changed. During the last nine years six different families have lived in Cordova's oldest building.

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IT'S A WHOLE LOT DIFFERENT THEN THAN NOW
THE PLACE WAS FREE. THE PEOPLE WERE FRIENDLY
I WAS PART OF IT
THE RICHEST COPPER IN THE WORLD
200 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF COPPER FOR THE TIME OF OPERATION
A LETTER FOR TWO CENTS
I HEARD SOME ROARING AND CLANKING TEETH BEHIND US
THE FIRST TIME I HAD A RIDE IN A CAR I HELD ONTO THE SPARE TIRE ON
THE BACK END
DELIVERED HIS MILK BY DOG CART IN SUMMERTIME AND DOG SLED IN WINTERTIME
I DO KNOW THAT CORDOVA WAS A DELIGHTFUL PLACE TO GROW UP IN
THERE'S MANY THINGS A LOT MORE INTERESTING THAN I HAVE TOLD YOU, BUT
I DON'T WANT TO PUBLICIZE THEM
WHEN THE GROUND YOU ARE STANDING ON GOES, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK
"YOU HAVE MADE HER REST"
IT IS STILL THE RED DRAGON
TO RUN THE IGLOO
WELL, I GOT TO LITTLE DIOMEDE, AND I DIDN'T HAVE ANY COAL
AND WE TOOK OFF THAT EVENING, AND IT WAS BLOWING QUITE HARD. THE BOAT
WAS LOADED SO THE STERN WAS UNDER WATER
HERE COMES A SLOVENIAN BOAT
THEY REALLY EXPLOITED THE COUNTRY
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW IT RAINS IN CORDOVA
CORDOVA, WHEN YOU HAD TO RUN A BOAT OR FLY A PLANE TO GET THERE
CORDOVA'S BOUND TO HAVE A FUTURE. IT'S INESCAPABLE. BUT HOW OR WHEN
IT'S GOING TO COME ABOUT, I DON'T KNOW