

Interview of Perry Green by Mike Dunham

Transcript

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Mike Dunham: My name is Mike Dunham. I'm interviewing Perry Green of Anchorage, at the David Green & Sons store on 4th Avenue. The date is June 11, 2013. Uh, Perry, the purpose for this filming is to record personal memories of histories of Anchorage. With the idea that it will be accessible to the public at some point in time. It remains confidential until you give your approval. And you're under no obligation to answer any questions that I might ask, and when we get tired we're done.

Perry Green: Fine.

MD: Very good. Uh, if we could start with your- with your background. When were you born and where?

PG: I was born in Seattle, Washington, March 17, 1936.

MD: And tell me about your parents.

PG: My parents, um, are Ruth and David Green, my father came to Alaska at about seventeen years old and came to- first he came to Ketchikan and Cordova, and, uh, uh, we were in Fairbanks and Juneau and finally in Anchorage in about 1950.

MD: Mmhmm. What was the city like in 1950?

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PG: Well, I, uh, in about 1952 as I can earliest recall, I was, uh, working out in front of my store at 411 E Street, which was right behind the wooden National Bank of Alaska. And I was sweeping the front off, and a car drove up, and when he drove up he said, uh, "Where's downtown?" and I said "Sir you've just dr- you've just driven through it." And with that, with his California license plate, he, he went down- took a right, went down, uh, 4th Avenue. And it didn't change much, uh, y'know, we're sitting here right between A and B on 4th Avenue, um, and virtually the same thing happened about 1955 or '56. A car drove up and said, uh,- he had come right down 4th Avenue, all the way from where I don't know, and, uh, right in front of the store said, uh, "Where's downtown?" I said "Sir you've just driven through it." And of course I realize that, uh, the highway really didn't open up very much until about

1946. And I remember 4th Avenue back, uh, in the early days, um, I remember Dicey Hayes had a little sewing shop down on 4th Avenue, beh- on D Street. Her son later became Speaker of the House, Joe Hayes. And, um, served many years. And of course we had the union club down there, where the guys who were union were working down there. Across street was a bar, and another bar, and another bar. And of course we had, uh, Koslosky and Sons Menswear, the old Dykes Building down there. We had the, uh, Anchorage Grill, and we had the, uh, y'know it was just- 4th Avenue was the center of the town.

MD: What was social life like in Anchorage?

PG: Well social life was, um, pretty much we had the 4th Avenue Theater and later the Denali Theater, uh, um, uh, and the Denali Theater was where the Matanuska Bank became, uh, down there. And there was a Denali Theater also, at the corner of 4th and B, prior to the, uh, earthquake, when it fell during the earthquake.

MD: And your lifelong career has really been mana- helping to manage the family business as a furrier.

PG: Mmhmm.

MD: And, um, what were your first responsibilities?

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PG: Well my first responsibility was to, uh, vacuum the store and sweep the sidewalk, as you very well know, but having worked on the Alaska Railroad as a Gandy dancer on Hurricane, Sherman and Chulitna, and Gold Creek and, uh, during the summer time as an 18 year old kid, I- I learned a lot about working and responsibility, and, uh, but my- if- my, my actual first job was taking these little, um, nails that you used to- when you stretch skins you'd wet skins and you'd stretch 'em- and then, uh, the nailers would pound the nails into the- all around the, uh out, outer wall- outer perimeter of the skin, and when they bent one they'd throw it over their shoulder. Well, my brother and I, um, at the end of 2 or 3 days we had to, uh, take a, uh, push broom, sweep 'em up, take 'em, and bend 'em back. And in the old days in Anchorage, y'know, we didn't have all the duct tape and all the tapes that you have today. When we'd get a package sent in from Outside we'd take the, um, the cord that you wrapped it with, we would untie it, uh, we would take the tissue paper inside, we'd stretch it out, and we would, uh,- then when we had a box that we had, we would then, uh, take that same box, put the tissue back in the box, take that cord, wrap it and send it to the post office, because that's the way, uh, you did things. Every dollar counted, every penny counted, and even though those, um, little nails that we had to straighten out when we were kids; they were like ten for a penny. But, uh, that's how you build a business.

MD: How did you go about, um, acquiring the furs?

PG: Well, uh, actually, uh, the trappers used to come in and during Fur Rendezvous time they came in and my father, uh, had a great reputation, and prior to that he, uh, would go out and seek them. But I, um, about 1964, uh, started to go out on my own. I had Anchorage Fur Trading Company at the time, and I traveled the Alaska Highway, and, um, I picked up the furs going up all the way to Tok and into Canada, near Snag, and when up to Fairbanks and back down the highway, and then later went, uh, via planes with Don Sheldon and, uh, various bush pilots, probably bush pilots if I were to take my all my fingers and my toes and add 'em all together, about 98% of those bush pilots are gone.

I remember vividly being up in, um, Barrow one time and, um- no, actually it was in, um- I remember being in Bethel one time, I was with Fort Yukon Air Service, and I had refused a flight with Jules Thibedeau and Jules Thibedeau- every time I was out on something, it would- Jules Thibedeau went down in the Arctic, and there was, uh, he says "But don't worry, I'm walking in, I'm 90 miles out on the icepack but I'm walking in". And then when I went to, uh, Fort Yukon Air Service and Al Wright couldn't take me, and he says "But I got a pilot for ya" and I say "Who is it?" And he says "Well its Jules Thibedeau". I say, "I'm not going! And then I was- I had gone down the Kobuk an the Yukon River and I'm finally, uh, in Bethel, and we get the news that, um, Jules Thibedeau had gone to Glennallen to pick up a couple of kids- they used to have a Catholic school up there, where the Native children used to come in, and, uh, uh, he was missing and they found him six months later, uh, and I didn't, uh, I didn't fly with him that time.

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MD: What were some of the trappers like? What were these guys like?

PG: The trappers were as tough as anybody in the world. They were as independent as can be, the Natives were very resourceful, very intelligent, um, in fact its always been a wonder to my why everybody thinks that just because you have a degree from a university that you're considered, uh, educated. You might be educated, but you're not as smart as some of these trappers. I remember out in a village one time, and I would go out with a bag full of cash. And I would take my cash out in the village, and I would then- in order to have a record of it, I would sign- have 'em sign a check for the amount that it was, and I would always ask 'em "Can you sign your name?" And they'd be so proud, and they would sign their name with an X, but I never ever denigrated that person, because that person made a living ever before there was a Bureau of Indian Affairs that started to take care of 'em. In fact, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs came into the villages, one of the problems was that the people who were productive, and who had built a little better hut or home, if you were not gainfully a trapper or a resource person, they would come in and they would take care of you, and when the people who were struggling for their families and their existence and to do something- when they saw that they quit being productive, because they said, "Why am I working hard, why am I doing it when for

nothing, you can become something?", and that's why sometimes I feel so much government has really ruined Alaska. Changed Alaska. Even though at that time, uh, I remember the early days, when we had to go from Seattle to, uh, Anchorage, we had to show 'em a passport to get in and out of the United States.

MD: Hmm. How did you travel between Seat- or, Seattle and, uh, and Alaska? PG: Well my father basically was, uh, he came up with steamships and all, but I came later, back to Alaska with the DC-3s and the DC-4s, and the old Western Airlines, and the old, uh, which later merged into, uh, Delta Airlines, and all. And, uh, it was a long trip in those, the Lockheed Electric- Electras were the airplane of the day as I remember as well.

MD: About how long did it take?

PG: You know, I think it took about five and a half, six hours. I mean, when, uh, Northwest came up here they brought what was called a Stratocruiser. And I think that might have been, I don't know, 1949 or '50, that was huge, that was a, a big thing. And that cut the, uh, cut it down- maybe it was six hours, I don't know. Y'know, its- time, uh, dulls your memory.

MD: The, um, what were politics like in Anchorage? I mean, downtown is kind of the core of the city, as you said, and you father was on the city council?

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PG: Well, my father was on the city council with, uh, I think it was Joe Turinsky and Chet Hostetler, and, uh, the mayor at that time was, uh, the, um, Elmer Rasmuson, who my father called the, uh, most intelligent and, uh, brightest man who ever was in Alaska. He was very, uh, even though he opposed him on many issues, he had the utmost respect for him, and about 15 years after my father had passed away, Elmer passed me on the street, even though they were enemies on the city council, he stopped me and he said "Y'know, Perry, of everybody I've ever served with on the city council, I had the most respect for your father, David Green". I said "I appreciate you saying that, and he said the same about you."

PG: The, uh- what were the issues that they were facing?

PG: Well, it was always, um, growing pains, and um, how to best grow the city, and, uh, who to allow certain things to, um, what it was, y'know. Uh, Anchorage was a city that was fortunate indeed to be geographically uh, become the crossroads of the world. What really built Alaska was the, uh, initially it was the fur traders who had the interest to buy Alaska and purchase Alaska, but alter on it was the military that, uh, kept it up, kept up our Alaska communication system. Y'know, we use to listen to all radio, and when we listened to radio, if it was a sporting event we had, uh, Rubin Gaines giving us a delayed broadcast of how it was gong. Well, they got the ticker

tape, and that's how radio was in Alaska. And then of course we had, um, some of the early pioneers, uh, the fellow who started Kenai TV, um, we had, um, um...

MD: Augie?

PG: Augie Hiebert, out at channel 11. I remember back about 1953 or '54, we did a live television show of our furs on television on Thanksgiving. I mean it was just a half hour, and people watched it with- it was- the next day we were inundated with customers, uh, about things they had seen on TV, and we did it every year for five or six years after that. And it was, it was the biggest hit in Anchorage television. (laughs) Its kinda like the reality shows of today.

MD: Was, um, did you go to their studios to do that?

PG: Well, we went to, uh, channel 11 at that time was at the end of 4th Avenue here, in the, uh, two buildings that were built during the reconstruction days. The I Street building, and, um, they were supposed to be hotel apartment- hotels or apartments at that time, they were built by a very forward thinking contractor in those days. And it was in the basement.

MD: What we now call the MacKay Building.

PG: MacKay Building, right. Then it was the State Offices Building later.

MD: Right. Um, what do you recall about statehood, the time around, the era around statehood. What were people saying and doing?

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PG: Well I remember that, uh, statehood was a hotly contested issue, uh, we had, um, the biggest proponent for statehood was Bob Atwood, and the biggest, uh, the other- he was on the Republican side, and the other big proponent for it was our former territorial governor, um, was- Bill Egan, speaker of the- he was the speaker when we, uh, uh, had the- when we became a state. Uh, and, uh, Bill Egan was a, uh, fabulous individual, Bob Atwood was fabulous, uh, the Chamber of Commerce in those days was a chamber that was pro business. And pro-business, uh, that's why Anchorage grew and other cities didn't grow. We had a great Chamber of Commerce. We had a, our town was a small town, you know our city hall was on 4th Avenue where the, uh, Alaska, uh, Visitor's Bureau is today, uh, y'know, we had our little jail, we had our magistrate there, and then of course the jail moved up to, uh, 6th and C. Uh, we had MacKay (?) park at the corner of 6th And C, where we played baseball at, and we had the Alaska Baseball League, and it was a, it was pretty, pretty, pretty impressive.

MD: Did you attend any schools in Alaska? Either grade of high school.

PG: Well, I- I, really uh, I mostly went outside to school. And I attended the Anchorage Community College and later came back and actually taught at Anchorage Community College, but what did I teach? I taught poker. (laughs)

MD: How did you get interested in, uh, in games of skill and chance?

PG: Well, in about 1964, 60- no, about 1968 or '69, the Value Mart opened over here at corner of Benson and the, uh, Seward Highway, and they had a great big box and you put your name in there. You could win a round trip to, uh, Las Vegas for two. And, uh, I was shopping there as everybody was just to look at it, and so I put my mother's name and my wife's name and my name into this great big box, and that night- evening I went out to Elmendorf Air Force Base for a reception, and, uh, when I um came home, my kids said "Guess what, guess what?" I said "Well, we won a trip to Las Vegas". Well, that was the beginning of a little career that I didn't think much about, because I had played a little Poker, but. But I went down there with 1,800 dollars, and I gave my wife 900, and I only had two nights and three days at the, uh, at the hotel, and at the end a fella had told me to go downtown, there's a, uh, poker game that is lowball, and that he knew I was a good lowball player 'cause I had played at the Elks Club here in Anchorage. And I went downstairs and my wife called me and she says "Honey we've had to move out of the hotel because you only got two nights and three days", and I said, "Well that's ok, come down in your nicest fur coat 'cause I'm just having the most wonderful time". She says, "Are you drinking?" He says, "You know better than that, I don't drink". He said, "Well come on down here, its called the Horseshoe". I didn't even know where downtown was.

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PG: And she came down and she saw I had, like, uh, 18 or 20 black chips in front of me. And she says, "Are black chips the same as in our hotel?" "Yes, they're a hundred dollars chips." And I said "and these are mine too, and I went 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7", I had seven boxes of, uh black chips filled. I had taken that 800 dollars and I had about- almost 80,000 dollars, and I said "I don't know what, but I owe Crittendon, Casetta, Wiram, and Jacobs, I owe them 10,000". I was trying- I owned some property at the corner of, um, 15th and C, all the way to where Mackay ballpark was, I owned the section there. And I said they were designing me a, a architect's rendering, uh, for a building, and so I said "Well take this box of chips down to the bank, and send 10,000 off to him", before I lose it back. So she takes it and walks down the streets of Las Vegas with 10,000 dollars worth of black chips, comes back about twenty minutes later and says "They don't take 'em down there", and I said "Gee, I guess you gotta cash 'em in here, I don't know. So she found out and we cashed 'em in there, and I left Vegas, and, uh, it was a great trip. And that's what began a Poker career that's even- I'm leaving tomorrow for Las Vegas. (laughs)

MD: And you participated in the World Championships?

PG: Yes, he won three World Championships, been 2nd in the main event and 5th in the main event, and placed, uh, numerous times. But, uh, I just played for the fun of it.

MD: And you, um, you said it helped you build you house.

PG: Well, in 1981, I got 2nd in the world, and, um, I had enough left over after paying my taxes and everything that I built my house on Lake Otis and, uh, been there ever since.

MD: the, uh- when you first came to Anchorage, when your family first came here, where did you live?

PG: We lived, um, actually we lived above the store, and then I lived, during my army years, I lived uh, in a couple of basements, and then I got Alaska Housing Authority, I lived over at 9th and C, across from the house [Hahn?] apartments. I lived actually at the corner of 3rd and B; there was a duplex down there. But, uh, during the earthquake all that pretty much disappeared. It has disappeared.

MD: What- what were your years in the army?

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PG: I was in the army- I left Alaska in 1956 and went down to Seattle to, um, I went- left in 1955, in fact, that was the year we had the great big snow, and I'm in, uh, the Empress Theater in Seattle, and I see the great big snow in Alaska, in Anchorage, and the cars, and there is our store. And we were at 411 E Street at that time, which was in back of the National Bank of Alaska. And, uh, there was great- we had a big old man, uh, fur sign; it was whistling snow, you know, blowing snow. And it was one of the first, um, neon signs, so to speak. And they put that on the screen and I said- that was really amazing. In fact I took off, uh, in 1955 from, uh, Northwest Airlines left from Elmendorf, because the Anchorage Airport was closed down at the time. We didn't have all the snow equipment we have today to handle it.

MD: And, um, and then you enlisted? Or were drafted.

PG: I enlisted; I served three and a half proud years.

MD: And what were you doing during the earthquake?

PG: Well that's an interesting story. I, uh-we had Arctic Fur And Leather between D and E Street, and, uh, I had just, uh, my, my oldest son and oldest daughter were there, they had just gone to a movie at the 4th Avenue Theater with the Kofflan girls, Craig Kofflan and his wife, uh he was the dentist, Craig Kofflan, and their father-in-law was Ray Wolfe, who used to be the Mayor of Anchorage. And they were in the

store, and, uh, I took my son down to the Dykes Building, which was a wooden building between D and E street. And this wooden building, I'm took my son by the hand, and said "are you ready to get a haircut?" and he starts shaking his head. First haircut. And he starts shaking his hair, "no, no, no". And just then we had a little shake, and we had a lotta shakes in Anchorage in those days. And it kept shaking and shaking, and finally he jumped down the chair and I grabbed him, and just at that time, its Chattanooga's Barber Shop, the barber grabbed my daughter, and just at that time the window snapped and broke, and, um, and, cut- the shard of glass cut him in the hand, and we said "Do you think we ought to go outside?"

And so went out to the middle- we made out way out to the middle of 4th Avenue while it was still shaking and rumbling and rolling, and we're standing on 4th Avenue, and across the street was, um, it was just rolling like waves in an ocean. And they were pretty good. And every ten yards or so, the earth would open and close six inches, open and close six inches, every ten yards, and then finally it opened about 12 to 14 inches and it slammed shut, and when it slammed shut all the buildings on the other side of 4th Avenue tumbled down about 50-60 feet, 40-50 feet, all the, the, Anchorage Grill, everything that was over there. The only building left standing was the drugstore on the corner- Hewitt's Drug Store. And Hewitt's stayed, and I watched the old Westward Anchorage Hotel, uh, tipping back and forth and going back and forth, and um, I had noticed, uh, when I got out to the middle of the street I kinda walked, tried to get back to where I had left, uh, my wife and two of the kids, and, um, I noticed we had a linoleum floor in our Arctic Fur and Leather store. And we had a- we had a brown bear, and it was on a ten-inch pedestal, and it had wheels on it. And here's this brown bear with its claws up in the air, going back and forth, back and forth, and I would watch that with a little bit of glee and a little bit of, uh, amusement.

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But here huddled in the corner was my wife, two kids, and the lady that ran the store, while that bear was going back and forth. And then, while I was in the middle of the street, I had, uh, just prior to that I had known that my father had gone to the Anchorage Athletic Club, which, uh, had gone down. And, of course all the young men, with towels wrapped around their bodies, they were out, they were shaking and they were nervous, in the middle of 4th Avenue. And they were scared to death, all the guys with the big muscles. And the ladies with the gray hair were praying to their various denominations to God help them, and so I finally took my- two of my kids, uh, back to my wife, and I said "You'd better go home" and I said "But I saw my father had been down the street", down there, and the masseur had come out and, uh, Famous Amos was his name, and I went down the stairs, and the lockers were tumbled one over another, and there was nobody in there except my father, sitting on the massage table. And he was muttering to himself "The damn fools did it, the damn fools did it." I said, "Dad, what're you talking about?" He says, the Russians, they dropped the atomic bomb". "No, no they didn't. (laughs) Its an earthquake!" And he said "Run down and see how your mother is", and of course

mother lived above the store here. And it was Good Friday, and it was also the first, uh, night of Passover. And so my mother had baked a lot of food and everything, and then all her Passover dishes were sitting on the- we have special dishes for Passover- they were all sitting on the edge of her, uh, countertop, and they all fell on the floor. I said "Mother, come out here", so I induced her to come out here, and she saw well we had one little light that was hanging, and I said "But look across the street, the theater is down, the, uh, all the buildings on the other side of the street are down below", and she said "Oh my goodness, oh my god, oh its terrible. Go see how your father"- now she wants me to go see how my father is. But my father said its- y'know, when the water was cut off he says, "I finally get to brush my teeth with whisky", which was pretty much, uh, the feeling of Alaskans in the old days. They kept warm with whisky.

PG: The, uh- what was the Jewish community like in Anchorage at the time?

MD: Well, we had a very, uh, small but vibrant community. We had the Gottsteins and the Koslosky's, you know, the early fur traders were, uh, in all cities in Alaska, there were Jewish people all over Alaska. If it hadn't been for the Jewish fur traders, uh, Russia might have been sold to the English, or it might have been not bought at all, because they convinced Senator Cowles of California to talk to his childhood friend- who was secretary of state at the time, William H. Seward- that Alaska was not just a land of ice and snow, but that it was abundant in minerals and opportunity and uh, it was a wonderful investment And that proved extraordinary. So, uh, we have a lot to thank for, uh, with our fur heritage in Alaska.

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The Jewish heri- the Jewish community was, uh, very strong, very, uh, very united, we had a Jewish mayor years ago, and Zac Lousac, a character in his own right, uh, you could probably find them playing Panguingue which is a Filipino rummy game that's popular in Native villages, and you could always fund, um, the mayor when you needed him, when he was at his pharmacy, um, and you know, Phil Gordon was the main barber at the Anchorage Hotel, where our Sydney Lawrence used to trade his paintings. For a haircut and something to eat. Y'know, in the old days a Sydney Lawrence wasn't worth what it is today. You know, and the Gottstein family was a, y'know, started out just, uh, hauling, um, supplies and groceries and provisions up here, and was a purveyor to all the outlying villages, and they eventually partnered with Larry Carr and they became the Carr-Gottstein properties and, and grocery chain. Done a great deal for both Catholic, Jewish Charities and for Alaska in general.

And as far as early Alaskan politics, you would have law firms that were both Republican and Democrat, you would have, um, consensus always about what is best for Alaska, they may fought, they might fight for the election, but the politicians, much like Ted Stevens and, and, uh, they always had Alaska as its focal point. What's good for Alaska. And, uh, y'know, I remember, um, Rivers was our first

congressman, I remember Mr. Pollack was our second congressman, I remember every gubernatorial candidate, I remember the, y'know, people would go to, uh, individual businessmen, try to raise money. Uh, labor was interested in politics, um, and, I remember, uh, E.L Bartlett got 5,000 dollars one time from Bumblebee Tuna, and that was a big amount of donation in those days. It- it was like 25,000 dollars to elect a US Senator. And Bob Bartlett was one of those kind of guys, when he ran for office, uh, he didn't forget the little people. When he came back to the Westward Hotel he conversed with the maid, he conversed with the bartender, that was the same about, uh, the uh, governor Egan, or, y'know, um, people didn't have PR the way they do today. Uh, when we lost to Earnest Gruening, through a very slick, uh, PR campaign, that was the end of American politics and statesmen. We don't elect Statesmen today, we elect people who have the best PR campaign, who look good for the cameras, and who they say "oh, those are my issues". They create the issues and they take polls. There was no polling in the, in the old days. You were really based, you were elected upon your record. And your record spoke, and that's why- how you got reelected.

MD: What was- what were people- let's talk about some of these guys. Earnest Gruening. What were some of your personal impressions?

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PG: Well, Earnest Gruening was probably the most- the brightest guy coming out of the, uh, y'know, he was a territorial governor, and, uh, did a lot for Alaska, he had a big connection because during the FDR years it was Franklin Delano Roosevelt who I think might have nominated him to come to Alaska. Uh, because he was part of the brain trust that got this country- and I don't just mean Alaska, but the United States, working again, and, uh, they started the CCC core, the Civilian Conservation Corps, that got people working in Idaho, and building trails and fixing up National Parks, the systems we have today. We had a very great thing. And, uh, Earnest Gruening, had it not been for the Tonkin Resolution, would have gone on to be, uh, better remembered than he really, uh, was in Alaska, because The Tonkin Resolution probably was the thing that has really hurt America, the- America's future. We've been involved in so much, uh, warfare because of the Tonkin and the Tonkin Resolution. We spent a lot of our manpower in an area where we had no economic, uh, understanding. It was really Kennedy's war, it really was. It started under Kennedy. And that's what started me- I used to be a staunch Democrat, even went to the 1972 Democratic Convention. But I walked out and I said, "You know? I'm no longer a Democrat."

MD: Did you meet Mr. McGovern?

PG: I, uh, was actually a Jackson supporter, because I remember, during the earthquake it was Magnuson and Jackson, and, uh, the, uh, the congressman from Arizona that came up here, and it was, uh, Earnest Gruening that, uh, I will give the

Kennedy White House credit- the, uh, small business administration was giving out loans within about 48 hours to people. If you wanted 3,000 dollars you could get 3,000 dollars right away with no interest. If you wanted more than that, uh, you got the 3,000 but then you had to pay- start paying interest after one year. And then, uh, but- they, a lot of people really built this place up after that, and I know that, um, Dan Cuddy was responsible- he, he built his big bank building right after the '64, and the rebuilding here was incredible, incredible.

MD: The, um, what was Bill Egan like, personally?

PG: Bill Egan could, if he met you once, he could remember you, and if he met you more than once he'd know your wife's name, your children's name, and, and, almost their birthdates. And it was just remarkable. I met Bill Egan when I was at Tielke Roadhouse, and, uh, even before he was the Tennessee Plan Senator, or whatever he was back in Washington D.C. when they lobbied for statehood, and finally got it under the Eisenhower administration he, uh, uh, he just remembered everybody. He was, he was a fine businessman, because he ran a grocery store and he knew everybody. And- the grocery people in those days, the [Barret Lash?], you know, Larry Carr, lots of people are familiar with Carr's grocery store. I remember Carr's grocery store starting out, I remember Larry Carr himself, he was about six foot six and he was reaching up to the highest part of the store. You know, we had Mori Reese with the C Street Food Land right at the store- "right on the corner and right on your way home", that was his slogan. Everybody in town knew everybody, so everybody had everybody's interests at heart. The banker had your interest, the worker had your interest, and, um, uh, I remember that in the old days, children used to come to our store and we used to have summer employment. We didn't have McDonald's, we didn't have the, uh, the little places where teenagers like to go to work, uh, but today too many teenagers don't know how to work when they come into the workforce, and we don't have a workforce anymore. And other nations are passing us by, both educationally and, uh, productively.

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MD: Uh, we were talking about the Anchorage Jewish community in the early days- where did you guys meet? For services.

PG: Well, we, uh, we were fortunate to have, uh, Jewish chaplains in those days, and we went to Fort Rich or Elmendorf. If it was an Army Jewish chaplain it was at Fort Rich, if it was an army Air Force Jewish chaplain it was at, uh, Elmendorf.

MD: Was there any security going in and off the base?

PG: Uh, I think you had to go through, but there wasn't the security you'd have today to get on, you didn't have to have a pass or anything. You'd just say "I'm going to the

chapel" or "I'm going to chapel 3". Uh, and it was, it was a lot less stringent. Or, that's what it was.

MD: Um, how did people in Anchorage feel about having this base with the sidewalks and everything? At the time they didn't have pavement in town.

PG: Well, we didn't have much pavement in town. In fact, interesting story, we had a Mayor at the time who owned an asphalt company, and, uh, Ken Hinchey was his name, and Ken said "What? I can't sell asphalt to the city?" "No, well, now you're mayor." So he resigned from mayor, and he had his asphalt company, 'cause that was, y'know, he had to make a living. Because the mayor only paid about 300 dollars a month. And he had a big family, he had to get along. He had, uh, you know, and that's the way it was. And, but, uh, Hewitt Lounsbury, who was a surveyor at the time, he didn't get any city contracts, he had to do territorial contracts or he had to do, uh, Federal contracts, and, but, that's the way the city was.

MD: Um, how- how did the pipeline change things?

PG: I think it brought a lot of people with, uh, who didn't understand Alaska, didn't understand the Native population, didn't understand, uh, what Alaska really is. I think the pipeline focused- I think people got, uh, used to, uh, they let government-state government, federal government, city government, municipal government- uh, balloon itself without increasing the educational opportunities. Now there's greater colleges, there's greater universities, but it costs so much more than it did when we only had the University of Alaska in the old days. And, um, with all the wealth that has come out of the pipeline, we've not used it to build a really functional infrastructure in Alaska, which would have aided us a lot. We've taken and created a dependency with out, uh, permanent fund, that people think its their money- and it is their money, but, uh, I think the permanent fund in the beginning might have been a smart idea, but too many people have come to Alaska just for the welfare and the permanent fund benefits that Alaska has to offer. And that's what's changed the beautiful part that I remember about growing up in Alaska.

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MD: What do you- what did you most like about Alaska in your youth? The beautiful part.

PG: PG: Oh, I think the lack of government, the fact that a person like Carl Brady could go to then Mayor Sullivan- Carl Brady Junior could go to,-he was head of the boy's club of Alaska, they didn't have much of a place. We closed down three schools about 1979 or 1989, he went to the mayor, and on the back of the napkin he, uh, agreed on behalf of the Boy's Club of Alaska to take over, repair the Woodland Park School and, um, make it into the Boy's Club facility for a dollar a year, and he even wrote it on the back of a napkin what they agreed to, got a 20 year lease, fix up the school, and you can't do that today, you have rules and regulations and EPAs and

people looking at you, and it- today we have thousands of kids who are the beneficiaries of Carl Brady Jr. and George Sullivan making that deal. And I remember, I, I- had a, I was a, had an underground contract with the city, I was partners in FFG construction, and I had a contract, we were low bidder. And we knew the ground was bad, and we bid the fill in there at two dollars and fifty cents a yard for gravel, and everybody else just didn't think there was a lot. Well it turns out needed 60,000 yards of gravel, and so our bid became really the high bid, and the department didn't want to pay it. And so I went to George Sullivan and I said "you know, we bid it in good faith, we were low bidders, we didn't know, maybe it only would have taken 6,000, but it took 65,000". Well, and the engineering department didn't want to pay, so I went to the city council, and George Sullivan said, "You made a deal, you honor it." And I never forgot George Sullivan to this day, and I love the man for that, and I stood there at...but I was out...I remember the old days, we had, um, uh, the utility company, the Spenard Utility Companies. And I did all the underground for Spenard Utilities, and I said "Well don't pay me, just pay me 8% interest and pay me at the start of next season, if you can". They said, "Ok", so they paid me the 8% interest and I had uh, had a job waiting for me at the end of the season. But then Spenard Utilities got sold to the city, and I said, "Well, I'm out of here".

MD: Where- where did you do the work in Spenard, what part?

PG: Well, uh, we did it in all the, um, subdivisions outside of the city. The city was very small at the time, and then all the subdivisions that are now incorporated within the city, uh, were all up for bid.

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MD: When they said Spenard, what- what territory did they mean? Not just Spenard Road.

PG: Well, it was Spenard Utilities, it was started by Ken Kido Sr., who was also- he started one of the, he started First Federal Savings and Loan, which used to be located here, which all the savings and loans went broke during the, uh, Keating days (?) or whatever they were called. Only- there's only one bank today that there's been- just like furriers in Alaska, if you didn't pay attention to your business you're gone, you're out of here. Like, David Green has seen a hundred furriers come and go. Well there's only one bank, basically, that is still- the only bank that's still in Anchorage, and that's the, used to be the First National Bank of Anchorage, and now I think its called First National Bank of Alaska. Since the national bank of Alaska merged with Wells Fargo.

MD: Right. Uh, Dan Cuddy's bank.

PG: Dan Cuddy's bank.

MD: Um, the 4th Avenue- now, before the earthquake, sitting where we are here on 4th Avenue, what would we have seen across the street?

MD: Well, we would have seen the bowling alley was across the street, the Coffee Cup was on the corner, uh, the, uh, there was a, uh, emporium that was owned by- oh, what was- he became the secretary of, uh, I can't think of his name. Uh...

MD: What did he sell?

PG: He just sold work clothes in those days. And uh, uh, we had a little hotel here at the corner of 4th and A, we had a little hotel over here, it was a working man's hotel, we had a corner of 4th and C, before we had the fire where Al- Albert Kaloa Jr. was burned up. He was head of the, uh, Indian Tribe over here at, uh, across Cook Inlet. We lost 3 or 4 people. But we had the Silver Dollar Loan that was owned by Al Getty and, um, then we had a Bill Bitner, um, I think that's Senior, owned a little pinball machine place with partners, and then we had Hustlin' Russ Meekins on 5th Avenue, you know, you had Austin Simon's later became Friendly Ford, then it became John Stepford, you know, everybody here, uh, who owned a car agency was an Alaskan. Today you have all these corporations that own- they own the big groceries, they own the big box stores. They own the, uh, places here. Here, um, everything was owned by somebody. Piggly Wiggly was Barrett and Les. You know, you had, um, the insurance companies were small and individual, you had Jack White and Romig and uh, then you...you just grew. That's what the pipeline brought. It brought prosperity, and big stores come to prosperity.

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MD: The-

Bob Curtis-Johnson: Can I stop you just a second? Perry, I just want to remind you that its ten after eleven.

PG: Yeah, I really have to leave.

MD: Ok, that's fine.

PG: No, we can do it another time, if you want more stories.

MD: Well, let's uh, if we can just, maybe-

PG: Wrap it up?

MD: Give me a summation- what do you- what do you see Anchorage becoming in the future?

PG: Well, uh, friends of mine have told me that they'll probably live long enough to see Wasilla being a, uh, larger city than Anchorage because Anchorage is running out of room. Well, Anchorage is one of the largest cities, but we are bordered by the Chugach Natural- National Park and we are limited, but uh, perhaps we'll see, uh, Anchorage reach out and annex more land here. I'd like to see, uh, some more development along the, uh, highway there, I would envision, uh, Wasilla growing to a, a large city, if we have forward thinking people, and we keep that agricultural base there, and that they allow for it, and, and, uh, understand that they'll need open spaces and that living in Alaska is wonderful, and that I'm glad I raised my children and my children's children here. And that I- there's a great future for Alaska, and its all because of those fur traders that prevailed on Senator Cowles in California to Senator- to the secretary of state, William H Seward, that Alaska was indeed, not a land of ice and snow, but of great future.

MD: Well thank you very much.

PG: Thank you.

MD: Good luck in Vegas.

PG: Thank you! I gotta really run, I'm sorry.

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