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Cliff and Orea Haydon are interviewed by Margaret Van Cleve

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Discussion continues: Margaret says it sounds like it [Badger's strawberry picking party] was quite an event. Margaret says it [Badger Road area] was a close community where people cooperated with one another even if they couldn't even see their next-door neighbors. Orea says there was a great community feeling and if any neighbor was in need, they tried to help them out. Haydons' son used to catch fish for Harry [Badger] all the time and Walter [Creek] really enjoyed the fish. It came right out of the slough.

Then there was a Norwegian fellow who lived down the road. They can't remember his name, but there were a few old-timers there. People started coming "in here" after the war.

[Unclear] Peede did bodywork and had a shop downtown. Finally he had a heart attack that took him. His wife Betty married an old-time miner by the name of Dwight [?]. They were both widows and they got one son together. The Peede family had 3 children: two were twins and the young one who passed away.

3:00 Pat had a body shop at Peede Road.

Betty didn't join in the garden club for a while. Margaret says that that was an important function for the women. Orea tells that they started the Country Garden Club and it covered the area all the way to the Old Richardson Highway. The first president was Jimmy Gilmore and Orea is the only original charter member left. It broke up when it moved closer to North Pole and "they" established the North Pole Club and took over a few of the members. Some of the other members started another club between [unclear] Garden Club. Orea belonged to the both of them until she joined Fairbanks Garden Club.

4:11 Orea was very active from the very beginning in the Alaska Federation of Garden Clubs in 1960-1961. She was always a chairman in some field such as scholarships. Cliff reminds Orea about a person who was looking after her with the garden clubs, Marge Haggland. [Cross talking.]

Margaret asks if they had to use a generator for lights when they first moved “here”. Orea tells that they used gas lamps before that. She can remember filling them and [unclear]. One just exploded when Orea went to light it. Another lady [standing besides Orea] burned her eye lashes and the front part of her hair. At that time they just had raw logs for walls and a wooden floor and they had a barrel stove. Orea grabbed a pan of water and just threw it on her. Cliff says that it’s unusual to put out gasoline fire with water. They all agree that one doesn’t have time to think in those kinds of situations.

6:06 After that, because of the fire, they got a big generator. They could just snap a light on and the generator would turn on. Cliff tells that he went in the following day and ordered a \$1,000 dollars’ worth of generating equipment. Lou Joy was the chief electrician for the Northern Commercial Company. He lived down the road on his homestead and he got a generator too.

Any time they turned on the light or anything over 100W, the generator by Cliff’s boathouse would automatically start. In wintertime, they would use 100 gallons of unleaded gasoline a month, and in summer they would use 50 gallons. That made 900 gallons of gasoline per year. Then Orea had a washing machine. Orea says she’s not sure if she did have one, but Cliff says that she did. They had a well with an electric pump.

8:42 Margaret wonders how they organized with the Golden Valley [Electric Association] and if they talked to some of their neighbors about it first. Cliff was one of the charter members of the GVEA. Cliff tells that he didn’t think, at the time, that the government would put in the money to bring REA [Rural Electrification Administration?] in.

Cliff was familiar with REA from the Lower-48, and they just kept working with it. It seemed to him like most of the people at the Department of Agriculture in Washington D.C. only wanted to have a free trip to Alaska.

9:59 They had one man who was a good politician and he was going to university besides his other work. They built a home close to University and when “these fellows” came up, they hosted them, never taking them to the bush. Everybody thought it [REA?] looked promising.

They said they’ll give Cliff a map and he has to mark where the potential customers are. Then Cliff happened to think about the GI-bill that said that one had 5 years to prove up on the homestead. Cliff’s friend, Tom Hunt from the Bureau of Land Management, saw Cliff going through the maps advised Cliff to not tell anybody because the Northern Commercial Company had just been notified by the city that they wouldn’t get any more contracts for furnishing the city with electricity.

12:48 Right from the start, when they mentioned the REA, the city fathers came. They were being honest and thought that it would never work, and suggested running “some short lines” out of the city. They were trying to guarantee that they had all the power potential for the area. Cliff just said he’d like to wait and see. They laughed at Cliff and his maps.

Then he [who? Tom Hunt?] came back to town “with these other fellows.” They called Cliff at his job and asked him to come to a hotel down town. Cliff went down town to meet them. The man from the Department of Agriculture was nice to him, but told that he had gone around with Mr. Eiden, John Gilmore and Tilly Brockman and they couldn’t find any of the places that Cliff had marked as potential customers.

15:00 Cliff invited them to come with him to the land office where he asked Tom Hunt to get out the maps of the area. He showed all the little numbers and x’s on the map, and he had Hunt explain that they were homesteads for people who were out of the service. Then Cliff explained that they had only 5 years to come back.

Cliff asked for \$90,000 dollars but the man gave them \$270,000. That’s the only worthwhile thing Cliff thinks he has done for the REA. [Cross talking.]

16:40 It was John Lou Joy who got Cliff into REA. He homesteaded in the area too. He was a president of the school board for so long that nobody even remembers when he started. He asked Cliff, who was single and didn't have any

ulterior motives, to suggest that the School District should be extended to 9 mile Badger Road. He was hesitant because it might mean more taxes for the people.

Cliff talked about it around. Mrs. Nordale and Hjalmar [Nordale] were all for it, as well as Art Brown down at Brown's Quarry Hill [?], and so Cliff got everybody to back it.

18:28 Orea tells that when their son got to be old enough to go to school, there weren't enough children out there. Cliff says that there were only 5 children at Badger Road area. Orea continues telling that an agreement was made with the Base that if they took children from the base into the school in town, the school bus from Base would also pick up children from North Pole area.

Cliff tells that he was GI even in high school. He was in the only ROTC junior unit in the State of Washington, in Walla Walla. He was suggested a military career and Cliff was into everything military after that. Once he decided to work for the services, the training he had got helped him tremendously. He knew how to talk.

20:50 Cliff tells that once the war started, he couldn't imagine anybody not wanting their husbands to be in service. Orea says that they only went out one night when they were dating, after which they just ran off and got married. There's a picture of RENI [not sure what this is]. She had a fur coat and Cliff had a flying jacket.

22:13 If people had any experience with firing steam boilers or anything like that, or even if they had a high school education with mechanical aptitude, they would be qualified to work at the power plant. They were trying to keep them at the Ladd Base [now known as Fort Wainwright] with good housing, good food, and opportunities to learn even more about power plants.

Margaret clarifies that Cliff talked himself into a job. The guys who worked under him would do anything for him, like work double shifts.

24:53 Cliff retired from service due to old age. Gaffney was "here" only a few days after Cliff got out. He was a general in Alaska and Yukon Command, shipping airplanes to Russia. His headquarters were in Edmonton. Margaret clarifies that Gaffney left Fairbanks, and Cliff explains that he would come and go and visit every now and then, but his headquarters were in Edmonton.

Margaret tells that Cliff's power plant job turned into a civilian job. Cliff says that he wrote himself a three day pass, after which he went back to work. Somebody called him since Gaffney was getting ready to retire. [Unclear story.] They hired KPs [what are those?] who did a good job. They learned, and good many of them made a career out of it and even stayed over.

When Cliff was ready to get his first paycheck, his personnel called and asked Cliff to come over. Cliff went and received a promotion from Gaffney. Before he had left the field the last time, he had signed papers that promoted Gaffney from lieutenant's equivalency rating to a major. If Cliff had wanted to, he could have had housing and priority on everything.

28:37 Cliff remembers that he never asked Gaffney for anything, but only suggested a few things. Gaffney always asked people to do things and he never yelled at anybody, and Cliff tried to model him. He was a good boss.

Gaffney asked his commanders to put in a bulletin that said that there were positions available to anyone who wanted to apply. They didn't want to lose anyone who worked at the powerplant. Margaret asks if they were civilian, military, or both. Cliff explains that they were just military since no civilians wanted to do it. There were a few who would, like some of the old miners who worked with boilers and such, but some of them would work only on wintertime and then go back to their claims.

Cliff dealt with anybody who worked at the power plants but his main job at Ladd Air Force base was to work with the military that they got to work on the power plant. He treated everybody the same.

31:31 Margaret asks if Cliff continued with that job until he retired in 1973, and asks what it was like during the flood. She wonders how it was to be on duty then.

Cliff wants to talk first about going to work when it was -72 below. Orea and their daughters were staying Downtown since one of the daughters had eye trouble and couldn't ride the bus. Regardless of why they were in the Fairview Manor, they had a dog named Tramp. Tram and Cliff were working, and they visited the family occasionally. It was January of 1961. It got a little colder and colder all the time. Cliff had an old GMC pick-up and he had put it in a shed without anything but a

big headbolt heater and a circulator. The engine started right up and they were able to start driving, but the wheels “went clunk clunk” [due to tires that freeze underneath the weight of the car]. Cliff had put as much air in them as possible without blowing them up. Neighbors told Orea that Cliff had made it to work since they heard him go “clunk clunk” on the road. He got in front of the power plant and was driving really slowly, but he accidentally drove over a curb and the tire broke. It looked like somebody had hit a windshield with a hammer. It was shattered.

35:04 Cliff had new tires on, but they had some kind of a warranty. He went to the tire shop where they promised to make that tire good, but said that if he broke another one, he’d have to pay for it.

Cliff went to feed the dog who was fine in his insulated fiberglass dog house and he had nice fur and a blanket over the door. The kids had trained the dog to pull the blanket on when he went into the dog house.

36:50 Otherwise, he stayed at the power plant. The first night when it was -72, Cliff was going around. They had agreed that the whole plant would be checked every half an hour. They had an extra man or two on the shift to do that. Cliff went on top of the power plant to look down the ice fog. A young man came there and asked if Cliff was afraid that they lose power since they had thousands of people depending on their heat. Cliff said it didn’t scare him, and asked if the young man knew his job description and what to do if something goes wrong. The man said yes, and Cliff told him that it was their responsibility to operate the power plant. The young man walked away, having realized that he was important.

All of them have 201 files that have their personal histories. A commander wrote them a note of appreciation for keeping things going.

39:04 Then in 1967, there was the flood. That was the year of the statehood. Cliff wasn’t for statehood.

One might have thought that water came down the little creek, but it didn’t. It came straight through the trees “over yonder,” and Cliff dashed home to see how Orea was doing. Orea says that all Cliff was interested in was to take pictures of the

rising water. [Laughter.] Orea continues that luckily their son came home with his wife at the time to see what they could do to help them.

Their house was on higher ground, but lights were out, so Orea went down to basement with a flashlight, but the only things she was able to save were clothes and some books. She didn't get everything out that she wanted because there was no way of getting everything out of there with just her and Melinda who was just a small girl of 12 year old at the time. They took what they could, but Cliff's tools and books were all ruined. All the pictures of Blanche and family got wet too.

41:10 Orea tells that Clifford and Jacqueline and one of the boys down the road moved all the furniture out of "this part of the house." They put everything in a trailer and moved it with a pickup into their yard where they left everything. Orea and others had to leave "this area" on a boat that was out in the boathouse. It took a long time to get out of the driveway by rowing their big boat out. It was difficult, but they finally got it to the driveway. Since that time, the whole house has been raised.

They drove into town and to friends of theirs' house. Their friends rented rooms, but when they were going to bed, they were told to evacuate because the town was getting flooded as well. They went to Lathrop High School. When Cliff got them all settled in, they had their little granddaughter with them. The boy, who was older, wasn't with Orea. The little granddaughter was only about 6 months old.

Cliff took off and came with one of the rigs. Water was so high downtown that it covered one's boots and one got soaked all the way through. They were sending 4x4 military rigs to transport people from home to school. Cliff left and Orea didn't see him for months.

43:28 Their daughter became ill and she had to be sent to Orea's sister's. Her sister was married at that time. Then when Orea came out, there was no place for her to stay, and no way could she cook food. Also, their whole basement had caved in. Orea slept in the car. She decided to take Melinda and go stay at Gloria's for a while and get Melinda settled in school. Melinda had had a lumbar pneumonia the winter before and the winters were too severe for her.

Orea took Melinda to a doctor in Spokane and she was to see the doctor every week. She was to study in Holy Names Academy. Orea stayed there for a month or a month-and-a-half. Cliff says it was longer than a month. Orea came back when Cliff got them quarters from the Base.

45:00 Margaret says that the aftermath of the flood was [unclear] major structural damage and wonders how they kept the power plant going during the flood. Cliff tells that he was at Lathrop and thought he better do something "around here". He didn't know in what shape the two supervisors were, but found out that they were both sick.

They had waited around in that cold water. Cliff went out and saw a big 6x6 with a rough looking sergeant there. The sergeant said that there were VIP commanding officers going to Wainwright. Cliff was pushed aside, but the first lieutenant was on a Walkie-Talkie so Cliff threw his voice up like a major and commanded the lieutenant to contact General Wheeler or the lieutenant colonel who was in charge of utilities. The man had had the talking button pressed down and the command post could hear Cliff so they asked to have Haydon there immediately. The first lieutenant pushed the sergeant aside and told him to help Cliff in.

47:58 Then, much of the stuff was down in the basement so Cliff knew he had to wait for the water to go down quite a bit. They started with the old one [not sure what this refers to] and Cliff had to even blow the whistle every now and then.

Wheeler had only one steam electrical engineer. Cliff was one and the other engineers, steam engineers, were electrical. Cliff's boss was an electrical engineer. He knew something about steam but wasn't a steam engineer. He had worked for the NC-Company.

There was one other steam electrical engineer whose father had been a steam electrical engineer for some big outfit in Chicago. The son went through college and put a lot of time in it. Then he got a job from Anchorage Air Force, where Cliff was too at the time, and when he came through, they had a layover at Matsu [Matanuska and Susitna Rivers] plain for an hour or two and at Ladd Field he came to meet Cliff who happened to be on shift. He introduced himself and Cliff and him, Walter Bagley, became good friends.

51:20 They sent Walt to Wainwright to be an assistant to General Wheeler, or his advisor. Armed services do those kinds of things quite a bit. If they need an advisor, they get a person from the Navy or from the Air Force.

It wasn't too long after Cliff got steam up, that old Bob Huffman, who was with the Golden Valley at the time and a nice fellow, called Cliff up and said that he discovered that their diesel generators, where their headquarters are now, were up above the water in the building. He claimed that if he had some diesel, he could produce a lot of electricity for not only their people, but also for the Army. Cliff said okay and called fellows "up the hill" who had diesel. Cliff asked them to fill up a tank or two and send it to Huffman at Golden Valley.

Soon they had lots of electricity, but the utilidoors were still full of water and it was getting late in the season, so they were afraid that it would freeze. Everybody knew that if they won't do something radical quickly, the utilidoors will freeze alongside with piping and the rest of it. Walt talked about it with General Wheeler who advised against putting steam through the engines and said that they had to have another survey crew from Pentagon.

55:13 Walt told Wheeler that there was no sense in that since they had a man who knows a lot about the system – Cliff. Wheeler agreed, but said that if something goes wrong, he doesn't know Cliff. They didn't have time to wait for the civil defense since water was crusting [?] and three foot was coming over the runway. The next morning Cliff told Walt that he would take care of it and told that they need to pump in the steam very slowly.

57:05 The next morning they couldn't see it was daylight because of fog over Fort Wainwright. That steam warmed up water in the utilidoors and it was around 30 degrees outside. Cliff tells how he took a little nap in the office although he wasn't sleeping since he knew "they" were coming. There were sirens and a command guards and even Wheeler was there.

They asked who gave the order to put steam into utilidoors, and Cliff said he didn't know. He took the people into the boiler room to see the steam. Cliff [?] told them that they thought a line had broken and that they were just trying to keep up the steam.

After that was all over, they sent a general in from the Pentagon who said that they had done pretty good. They got credited for saving Fort Wainwright.

59:28 Cliff and Wheeler were friends. When it was Wheeler's time to retire, he called personnel and asked them to give Haydon lieutenant colonel's equivalency rating. The person said that Cliff's supervisor was a lieutenant colonel and that's why Cliff couldn't be promoted, but Wheeler told him to make Cliff's supervisor Carlson a colonel.

Carlson was born with a bad heart and he couldn't get into service. Then the flood hit and he was working there, shivering. After a few days at the hospital, they discovered that he was in really bad shape with diabetes.

Cliff begged Carlson to stay but it was too much for his health. He said he had had 25 years and that he was going to hang onto working at the power plant until he had 30 years of working. When Carlson retired, Cliff was promoted to a full colonel.

1:01:39 Margaret says that Cliff stayed there until 1973 when he retired. [Unclear, quiet talking.] Cliff says he had a job that he learned really well ever since he was young. On state side, one couldn't get a job like he had without a degree of steam electrical engineer.

Cliff tells that he also did a bunch of other stuff, like in Southeast [Alaska], but that he loved his job. Cliff says he knows it was hard on Orea.

Orea wants to tell about her work experience. She went to work for the city in 1966 and worked until just before the flood. Cliff had had a heart attack and Orea was contemplating on quitting, but after the flood, she knew she was needed and went to work for the Borough. That was the beginning of the Borough. She worked there for 7 years and from there she went to the North Star Council of Aging and worked as a secretary for a while. From there he worked at the University of Alaska in Marine Science. She has also taken classes through the years and she still is.