

**Call number: 94-13-10 PT. 2**

**Name and place: Lola Colette interviewed by Margaret van Cleave**

**Date: February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1994. Fairbanks, Alaska**

**Summary created by: Varpu Lotvonen**

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**Series: Pioneer Tapes**

Margaret says that the tape is a continuation of the discussion with Lola Colette who will talk about the 1967 flood.

Lola continues her story of the flood days: Their neighbor [Beb Burklat, sp? as indicated later in the tape] from across the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue had 3 children and both her and Lola's husbands were at work. The neighbor carried the children across the street and brought them to Lola's house where they sat all night long and watched the debris floating by. Around 5am an air-boat came down the stream and Lola and her neighbor asked for a ride out of their house. The boat people promised to come back after rescuing some other people. The people were taken to the school so Lola and her neighbor went there too.

01:51 Beb Burklat and her children flew to Anchorage and Lola went back home with a friend of her son's. Their house was a mess. Then Lola took care of some boys next door who were alone because their mother was in the states and their father was a pilot.

Margaret asks if they actually stayed in their house and wonders if they didn't have water everywhere. Lola tells they didn't have water on the floor but it was just to the floor in the basement. Lola tells that they had trouble with sewage and they had empty beer bottles all around the basement. When the sewers started working again, the water was sucked from the basement. The flood left a mess, but they didn't have any structural damage to their house and many other people were much worse off. They, fortunately, had a good cement basement.

5:32 Lola did typing while watching the flood and wanted to mend clothes but they didn't have electricity so she couldn't. They had a little cook stove, and they ate

whatever they had in the freezer and refrigerator. The two boys from next door ate with Colettes. On Thursday, Lola's husband came to see that they were all right but he had to hurry back to work since he was working for the city, taking care of sewage. He turned the power back on at the house.

It took a while to get everything dried out, but fortunately they had good weather and hard freeze only came in the middle of October that year, which gave them time. People had all kinds of things out drying, the garbage man came every day and people kept busy.

7:39 Lola says that they still have silt in their basement and she wonders if they will ever get rid of it. She propped the doors open in the basement and wasn't smart enough to know that the beams that hold the door open will float off too.

Margaret says that that was the flood of five hundred years, and Lola says that it was tragic. Lots of people lost lots of things and some of the homes were beyond repair. Lola says they didn't have that problem but the house on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue didn't have a cement basement.

Margaret says that after people had to clean up at home, they had to clean up at work. Lola says that most of the washing machines didn't work after the flood so people had to wear their cleanest dirty clothes. Margaret says that "we" had to do with what "we" had and tells that she was living at campus at the time. Lola tells that lots of people evacuated at the campus. Margaret asks if most people from town located to Lathrop High School. Lola says that they did from the area she was living in. They took an airboat to the school and they went to the service station that was across the old main school. It was high enough so they couldn't drive the boat right next to it, but they got to the school somehow.

10:17 Jim Philios [sp?] was around, emptying waste baskets. He wasn't a maintenance man but an engineer, but he wanted to do something to keep himself busy.

Margaret talks about how the people, who had evacuated, had to sit at the school and wonder what would face them at home, which would have been very frustrating. Lola tells that one couple came to the high school and their house could

be seen from the school. The lady said she was just too lonesome over at her house.

They had had other floods but nothing that serious. There was ice jam down the river and it backed up but nothing that bad.

12:03 Margaret recaps some of Lola's experiences in Alaska. Lola says that she doesn't approve of all the progress that has happened, and Margaret says that change is inevitable. They talk briefly about weather and Margaret closes the interview.