

Call number: 94-13-15 SIDE B

Name and place: Barbara Lindberg interviewed by Margaret van Cleave

Date: April 27th, 1994. Lindberg's home, Fairbanks, Alaska

Summary created by: Varpu Lotvonen

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Margaret continues the interview by asking if the high school where Barbara went to was the Old Main [school] on Cushman Street, and Barbara says it was. After she graduated, additions like the new gymnasium were built. Barbara graduated in 1935.

Margaret asks what she did after graduating, and Barbara tells that she continued onto University of Alaska that fall. Margaret and Barbara agree that everyone was relieved when the name of the college was shortened from Alaska Agricultural College and the School of Mines to University of Alaska.

Margaret asks if Barbara commuted by the rail car. Barbara tells that by her time the commute was by bus, but that she had gone up to University with the rail car too. There was a place to get off and people walked up the hill. At the time Barbara's sister started, Paul Greimann was running the bus. Paul waited for people if they were late. Sometimes he couldn't drive the bus up the hill [that leads to campus] and they had to walk.

3:04 Margaret asks if there was a stair case there, and Barbara tells that there was. It just came down to the road, but they used to slide down instead of walking. Barbara tells that she had a mouton fur coat that was long. Her father had bought it too big because he was sure she would grow. She had people sit on her lap when they slid down the hill.

4:17 Margaret asks about Barbara's recollections of Dr. Bunnell. Barbara says that all the town girls had probably the same recollection. Dr. Bunnell's office was across the hall from girls' dressing room and they went there in winter to take

their ski pants off. Dr. Bunnell wouldn't let them go to class with pants on. Sometimes they sneaked by and if Dr. Bunnell noticed pants, he urged the girl to go back to get her skirt. There was a spare skirt and it didn't matter how cold it was. The girls wore slacks underneath or heavy leggings.

The bus wasn't warm in the morning because it sat outside all night and only warmed up after a couple of trips. Margaret remembers the same thing from when she went to school and only her children's generation overcame the requirement for a dress and they always wore pants.

6:43 Margaret asks who were some of Barbara's professors and what she majored in in College. She tells that she started out by taking lots of science and math but when Lindy and she decided to get married while she was still in College, she knew that she couldn't teach although she had a teaching license because she was married and couldn't get a job.

She finished and practiced teaching and home economics and it was with Holson [sp? unclear] who married a man named Wooden and Judge Bunnell made a big joke about her taking Wooden money from there on. Margaret says that Lola Tilly is the only one of their professors who still lives in Fairbanks, and says that LaDessa Nordale taught too. Barbara says she taught in High School but that she might have taught in College too.

Margaret asks if Barbara had LaDessa as a teacher, and she indicates that she did. She had Lola Tilly too.

9:12 Margaret asks if Barbara also worked for Dr. Bunnell when she was going to school but she says that she didn't. When she went to College, she didn't work. In the summertime she worked a bit. One year she went to Paxton Lodge to wait tables and there were lots of tourists who came in and were astounded that they spoke English. Barbara and the other employees taught people about Alaska.

Barbara graduated from the University in 1939 and got married that summer. She worked at the Base for a while during the WW-2. She started out by doing filing at the quartermaster's office and later became the secretary there. The

quartermaster's name was Bill Hammond and there was Desero [sp?]. Then Barbara changed to Auditing Office where she audited books.

11:45 Margaret asks about Dale Gaffney who was the commander at the Base. Barbara tells that she talked with Gaffney many times when he used to come to quartermaster's office.

Margaret asks Barbara to tell a story about one of her bosses, Desero. Barbara tells that Desero was in the office next to Hammond and he didn't like Hammond.

Hammond liked to go on hunting trips and they were coming back [from a hunting trip?] when they were ordered to bail out because they had engine trouble. It was the middle of winter and they had oxfords, which are dress shoes, on and their parachutes were on the plane. Two of the men jumped from the plane. The pilot got the engine running again and the rest of them didn't have to jump but they had to go look for the people who had jumped so they wouldn't freeze. They flew around looking for the men who jumped. They had jumped near the Alaska Railroad. Train went by once a week and they were picked up in 15-20 minutes by the train that took them to Fairbanks. They were already at the base when the plane with Desero landed. Desero came into the quartermaster office with a parachute and he told that the two men hadn't come back. The crew at the office knew that the men had come back but wouldn't tell about it to Desero right away. Desero said he'd never again go on a hunting trip.

14:51 Margaret asks if Barbara's husband was stationed at Ladd Field during the war. Barbara tells that when he first went in, they told that he wouldn't be stationed at Ladd Field. He did boot training at Ladd Field and never had to leave. In addition, he was able to live with Barbara. He worked in different places like the PX, and had worked at post office downtown. When he first went to the Army, Barbara was working at the post office but she started working at the base and her husband started at the post office. He worked at the PX for quite a while.

Barbara's sister's husband was stationed in Canada.

16:58 Margaret asks if Barbara lived in their house for the duration of the war, but Barbara tells that they lived in a house at Wembley Street which was built by

the same man who built their current house. They bought the house in which they live now because it was close to Barbara's father's house. He needed assistance. They changed his heating from wood to oil and electricity but there were power outages, just as Barbara's father suspected when he opposed putting in electricity. Taking care of Barbara's father was a lot when they lived at Wembley Street.

They bought their current house when their first child was born and her father had died about a month before they moved in, so they didn't get to live next door to him, but Barbara's mother still lived there. Eventually, she moved in with Barbara's family.

20:11 Margaret asks her about Lindy's stores, like Piggly Wiggly's. When Lindy got out of the army, he worked a short time for Alaska Market, after which they bought a small store from 4th and Cushman. Later, they bought the building on Barnette Street, which was Lindy's Grocery Store. Margaret says they opened in 1947 or so, and Barbara corrects that it was in 1946.

21:44 They didn't have children at the time and Kay was born the first year when they owned the town store and Jen was old enough to remember when they bought the College store. They did lots of bush orders. People would write their orders but later when the villages got phones, they called in. Barbara would pack and send the goods with a bush plane. Margaret asks about payments, and Barbara explains that until they got to know some people and gave them accounts, they sent money with their order.

Northern Commercial Company had a store, Nordstrom's, and when they went out of grocery business, they gave Lindberg's their accounts so they had a good reference with their clients.

23:32 Margaret asks what villages they served, and Barbara lists Beaver, Fort Yukon, Anaktuvuk Pass. She has a map somewhere where they marked all the places they serviced. She went to very few villages herself. They were invited, but couldn't leave easily. They had employees, like Mr. Joe Fuller who worked for

them for years, and Don Krestchner who was raised in the house “on the corner here.”

24:38 Margaret asks how they got into selling Anaktuvik Pass masks along with groceries. Barbara tells that lots of the people up there had money problems “as all of us” and they used to buy masks for groceries.

One of the mask makers had come to town and seen artificial eye lashes which they bought and attached to masks, but it wasn't what Lindbergs wanted. Barbara explained the mask makers that they would rather have caribou – just like masks had always been done.

Margaret says she heard that mask making started recently, and Barbara tells that it was some teacher who started that. Barbara tells that they sold a lot of masks at the store but in later years they quit because the masks were stolen too often. [Break in the recording.]

27:19 Margaret asks about supplying people who were coming from Outside and going to work in a bush. Barbara tells that they supplied a Disney crew for several summers and even in winter, sending them food. As per Disney's rules, they weren't allowed to kill animals for dog food so they had to buy everything. Barbara doesn't know when this was, but it was pre-1960. Disney made several movies in Alaska and Lindbergs supplied them.

Shipping supplies continued with the pipeline deal. With Disney, they used to drop things off of a plane and even the eggs didn't break. Lindy was very good at packing as was Don Krestchner who also worked for them. Don did a lot of packing, which was done at the basement at the store. Their packing was done downtown and their store at College catered to people who lived there.

31:11 Margaret asks if their daughters helped with the store, and Barbara tells that they used to help her with books when they were going to college. Barbara had a bookkeeping machine at her house. Their girls had summer jobs at the store and they did everything except for unloading freight which was left for men.

They got whatever jobs were open at the time when they got out of school.

34:12 Margaret asks how long they continued operating the stores. Barbara tells that she closed the stores in 1989 after Lindy passed away in December, 1988. They had sold the College store in 1985 when Lindy was still alive, and Barbara kept the other store open to get rid of the stock. They were in business from 1946 to 1989.

35:28 Barbara says she'll tell a story that could never happen now. One night somebody left their door open and when they got to work that morning, there was a sheet of paper on the counter that spelled out what somebody had taken and the money was on the side. The paper explained that the door had been open and the person had figured that the shop keepers would be coming in soon.

They had a break in in the store once. A man went to the window and evidently felt that the plywood that they put on top of the freezers at night would be a good place to jump down from the window. The man landed on the plywood which threw him into the ketchup shelves and there was ketchup all over the store. In the morning Barbara's girls went into the store and thought the ketchup was blood. The man had also broken into the warehouse but couldn't get out so he was pounding on the door of the warehouse until the police let him out.

Margaret thanks for the interview.

[End of the recording.]