

JANET GROSULAK
HISTORY OF ALASKA
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
DECEMBER 2, 1991

JANET GROSULAK, INTERVIEWER
NOVEMBER 23, 1991

INTERVIEW WITH LINDA MULLAN
AT KODIAK, ALASKA

JG: When did your family come to Alaska?

LM: It all started with my grandpa on my dad's side. He came up on a whaling ship and met my grandma and they got married and settled in Afognak. As far as I know that's what happened.

JG: Your grandpa came up on a whaling ship from where?

LM: The East Coast I think. He's Irish; full-blooded Irishman.

JG: So your dad's family is Irish and came up from down south up to Afognak.

LM: And my grandpa-my dad's dad or his father, came across from Ireland and we don't have a good history because we don't know where grandpa was raised or anything because he died when he was young and my dad was 19 I think.

JG: So what year approximately, do you know, when your grandfather got up here?

LM: No-my one sister does-what is it called_when you dig-genealogy-she has more information than I do but she cannot find my grandpa on my dad's side...Mullan.

JG: So he came to Afognak on a whaling ship and met your mother there-was she already there-your grandmother?

LM: Yeah-she was raised there I guess.

JG: Was she born there as far as you know?

LM: As far as I know.

JG: So they married then at Afognak?

LM: Uh huh.

JG: And he stayed there and fished?

LM: Probably whaled and fished and what not.

JG:: So your dad was born on Afognak?

LM: My dad was.

JG: Okay. And your mother?

LM: Afognak.

JG: And you mother is full Aleut?

LM: Aleut and Russian.

JG: And they got married. Do you know approximately when they got married?

LM: My mother and father?

JG: Yes.

LM: About...I think it will be 48 years they've been married.

JG: Do they...no, they don't still live on Afognak do they?

LM: No they lived in Port Lions—they moved to Port Lions after the tidal wave and then they live here in Kodiak now.

JG: So your dad was raised in Afognak and fished?

LM: Yes...and my mother was raised in Afognak.

JG: So were you born then in Afognak?

LM: No. I was born in the old hospital here in Kodiak and we lived here back and forth until I was in first or second grade, I don't remember, and then we lived in the village until I graduated from the eighth grade.

JG: So you were born here and lived part of the time here and part there?

LM: I can remember going to Kindergarten here and I can remember living out the road going to Base—the Base Road we used to call it and that's about all I remember about living here.

JG: So most of your memories growing up are from Afognak?

LM: From Afognak...I can remember my mother telling that the year I was born—I was born right before Christmas in 1947—she asked the doctor who was Dr. Bob...not this Dr. Bob the old man his father...she asked if she could go home for Christmas and he said only if your husband carries you up the stairs and you stay on the couch. Well I was born eight days before Christmas and she asked Dad to go get a tree and decorate the tree and he got a pine tree to stand on the table and got great big ornaments—silver—there's four ornaments now. Eight kids later there's four ornaments left. I have them.

JG: Are they? Neat. Your dad fished. Was your dad involved in WWII at all?

LM: Yeah, he joined the Army-him and my uncles joined the Army and he wanted to be sent over seas. Well Alaska's over seas so he was sent down the chain. He was on one of the islands on the chain and that's where he learned to drive. He ran fire truck over there.

JG: You don't know which island it was?

LM: No I don't.

JG: But it was on the chain.

LM: Yeah, he has pictures. Most of them are silly with mops hanging over their heads and squatted down in the picture with my mother on his knee.

JG: So has he told you any stories about what it was like during WWII on the chain?

LM: No. I don't even think he was around where they fought case he was just in the fire department.

JG: Were any of you children born during that time or not? Were you the oldest?

LM: No there's three older than me.

JG: Okay, so the war ended, what in '45...

LM: '45 and I have a sister born in '45 and there's one older brother.

JG: Tell me about growing up in Afognak.

LM: I enjoyed it. It was fun. It was hard work but fun too-we made fun out of it. Didn't have running water of course, unless you ran down to the creek to get it and then you had to run it back. We didn't have bathtubs or showers and we didn't have toilets of course. We had a little honey bucket that sat in the closet behind the curtain and we used that and emptied it in the morning and we had an outhouse and what we used for bathing was a steam bath.

JG: Banya?

LM: Banya...but we didn't have one in our yard or our house so we had to walk to Grandma's and Afognak was sort of split up-we lived...when I first can start remembering...we lived in what was called the church house. It was built for when the priests came to the village and it was right in the church yard so we lived right by the church but we used to live there and we had a wood stove there for heat and I can remember carrying in wood and then my Dad bought this bigger house because of all the kids and then we had

this bigger house and it was right in the center of the village. There was Aleut Town where my grandma lived and there was another big part of town where the store was and all my relatives lived along there. It was about three miles long so we were right in the center. So we used to walk to my Grandmas. I don't know where we went when we lived in the church house to wash but we used to go to my grandma's and that was a long mile walk.

JG: Every day?

LM: No. We only washed once a week, Jan.

JG: Oh!

LM: We were not very clean!

JG: Well, if you had to walk a mile...

LM: Yeah, and it would be night time and I remember there was an old, old, old grave yard on one side of the road and on the other side of the road there was the beach and mom never spotted our flashlight on the road...it was always in the graveyard or on the beach. It was scary...Afognak was a spooky village at night. They had a lot of...they told us stories, the old-timers used to tell us stories and my father wouldn't allow people to tell us stories in the house cause he didn't want us growing up scared of the dark.

JG: What kind of stories?

LM: They told about these little oolaks-they called them oolaks-they were little hairy guys that just had two feet and you know, arms and but they were little short hairy guys that ran around in the woods and they used to hang around above the school and you know we used to go to the school and, you know, Afognak used to be Afognak Territory School. I can remember this was before we became a state. But they say don't go up in the woods and play because there are oolaks up there and it was pretty scary at night time too and we'd go up to grandma's and she lived by the woods by there. I never saw one but the old-timers said they'd seen them.

JG: So they believed that these were...

LM: Real things, yeah, but I don't know, and they say that if you were walking alone at night time you could here footsteps following you so...Mom's favorite thing when we'd be going to Banya she'd be loitering along and I'd be scared that all these little people would be following me and I'd be wanting to run home.

JG: So it sounds like they might of disciplined the kids with the use of the threat of the oolak?

LM: I guess so and all these scary little things also that people...and I think that this is mostly alcohol involved here

people would hear voices like somebody calling them and they would follow the voice you know, where they would hear it and they would go to the voice and actually they would wake up the next day and they would be out in the middle of the woods wherever just from following that voice. Afognak was really spooky.

JG: And you think it was alcohol related. Was there a lot of alcohol in the village?

LM: Mom and Dad and Grandma says there was no alcohol except for once a year when the salmon season was over and they had...they used to have little potato gardens and each house used to have, if they did, their own vegetable gardens...they said the only time they ever had alcohol was when they made their own and this was long long time ago before my time. They, after the gardens were in they had a big party—a big dance and what not and they had home brew, but when the Russians came they brought alcohol that they used more frequently, you know, but before that they didn't use it. They were too busy, so it was introduced to them by the Russians on a daily type of thing.

JG: So it was a scary place to grow up...

LM: It was spooky night time but not during the day and not if a whole bunch of you were together or something. We used to do a lot of ice skating. It used to be frozen like before Thanksgiving...frozen solid so a bunch of us kids would go out ice skating and build bon fires and you used to be able to just leave your house and find patches of ice and ice skate all the way to the lake. We'd play a game called Crack The Whip and we'd play Dare Base and we used to have sleds...in fact I bought an old sled at a garage sale the other day...and we used to play this game called teekeling...it was a way to get to school...we used to get on the lake and short cut on the lake to get to school. My dad or older brother or my uncles would cut a broom in half and put a nail inside of it and we'd sit and use it with a nail in the end of it and sit on your sled and you'd push yourself like that...you'd have two, you know, and then you'd just sit and your books would be there and off you'd go to school and we used to have teekel races and what not...

JG: Teekel...how do you spell teekel?

LM: I guess teekel...but it used to be fun.

JG: Yeah! Well tell me about the school.

LM: Oh the school was a three-room school...first, second, third/fourth, fifth, and sixth in the second room, seventh and eighth in the third room. So one teacher taught three classes.

JG: There was one teacher for each room, or just one teacher for

the whole school?

LM: One teacher for each room.

JG: So there were three teachers.

LM: Three teachers, yeah, and they lived right in the school building. And we had toilets out there so we could go bathroom during the day and that's the way I can remember that, and we had recess a couple times a day...and Christmas was a big thing because the Coast Guard used to come over and parachute...they would parachute things to us and of course, being poor natives in the village we got boxes...I remember these boxes...they were Red Cross boxes and they had toothpaste and toothbrushes and soap and I don't know what else too, but they dropped those off to us and uh clothes...probably clothes from the Mission and all that, you know, they would parachute them down...the plane would fly over the school and that was an exciting day for us. And we used to get these malted milk tablets from...I just called my mother to check on this, but they were from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and I guess they were just to supplement our diet because we didn't get enough milk...they tasted just like malted milk balls do now-a-days and we were supposed to take one a day or two a day or something, I don't remember, but usually managed to eat my whole bottle full by the time I got home from school because they were so good. But those were good memories back then.

JG: So you went grade one...or you went the first couple of grades here (Kodiak) and then you spent until eighth grade in Afognak?

LM: Yeah. I graduated from eighth grade in Afognak...and in fact we got a class ring for graduation and I still have mine.

JG: From eighth grade...and then where did you go? Where did most of the village kids go?

LM: If they wanted to go on to high school they went away to a government school and what the government did was to send you papers to tell you where you were going to go and it was either Wrangel, Alaska; Mount Edgecumbe which is down across from Sitka, or Chimawa Oregon. And for some reason...I don't know how they decided who was going where but I went to Mount Edgecumbe, and I have an older brother-he's a year older than I am, and he went to the same school. And we were sent away in the end of August or September, which ever day they decided we needed to go and we stayed in school until it was over in the Spring time, so we came back home in May.

JG: So it was like a boarding school?

LM: It was...actually what it was...Mount Edgecumbe is a little island and it was an old Army or Navy base, and where we lived was

in the barracks--the old barracks that they had redone, so there was eight of us girls in one little room. I don't know feet or anything but it wasn't very big, and they had four bunks. So we were in there and we had to share dressers and what not, and it was real regimental and I think that's where I get...I have to do everything just so. We had to get up real early in the morning and a whole bunch of us had to get in the showers at the same time--they had a whole bunch of showers in a row. So we'd get up and do that, and we had to make our beds just perfectly--everything had to be done perfectly or else we would be punished where we couldn't go across to Sitka and shop or couldn't go to activities and all. And we had our classrooms and those were all in like--some of my classrooms were in hangers--old airplane hangers upstairs, and they had the shops below them, like they mechanic shops for the guys or the girls if they wanted to take them, but back then the girls didn't want to do that much of the guy's stuff. Some of my classes were in the old office buildings, you know, where they had offices and all.

JG: And that was through twelfth grade?

LM: No, it was real segregated there--it was just natives from all over the state of Alaska, which is nice now, because if I go to some big doing or something I know a lot of people...but at that time I didn't like it because we were segregated and we were allowed to go across to town which was a ferry at that time, they didn't have a bridge built then, if you behaved yourself and didn't get into trouble and I got into trouble a lot because I'm so mischievous that get up on my top bunk and be dancing after everybody went to sleep--I'd be up dancing with my girlfriend or something. I was constantly getting into trouble. And they had a dorm council for us and it was very nice. We had to stand in line for a long time. They had great big lines for everything...we had to stand in line when we ate, we had this great big...what was the dining hall in the barracks for the guys when they were in the Army So there were great big long tables with the benches that were attached to them and all and we ate institution food. It wasn't very good food...I went up two sizes in high school. And we stayed down there the whole year and I didn't like it because it was so segregated--it was all natives, so my sophomore year towards the end I told my dad that I wouldn't go back there--that I was either going to drop out of school or he'd have to send me someplace else. And at that time they didn't have a boarding program here in Kodiak where the kids could stay in a dorm here in Kodiak. And we did have relatives but Dad didn't want me to stay with relatives here in town and I don't know if it was because of the drinking or what But what he did was he enrolled me in Sheldon Jackson--Sheldon Jackson is a junior college now. Back then it was a high school and a junior college so my last two years of high school I went to Sheldon Jackson.

JG: Where is Sheldon Jackson?

LM: It's right across from Mount Edgecumbe-it's across from Sitka itself and it's a private Presbyterian school much smaller than Mount Edgecumbe. Mount Edgecumbe had a lot of students.

JG: And not segregated?

LM: And it wasn't segregated. There was kids from stateside and from all over the state. There was whites and blacks and it was a smaller school and a lot more fun. Everybody got along and of course there was the popular group. If you went a dance everybody danced and we just had fun on our day off. And we had chapel and we had chores to do in the kitchen and dorm but it was a lot more fun than Mount Edgecumbe. So I graduated from Sheldon Jackson

JG: Do you think...was a great majority of the native kids going to the designated native schools or were you the exception...

LM: No...we didn't have a choice. We went to the government schools or else they came, you know, to the city.

JG: City being Kodiak?

LM: Kodiak, or Anchorage or where ever...the biggest city that was closest to your village, so I went to Mount Edgecumbe.

JG: But most of the village children did go on past the eighth grade?

LM: No.

JG: No. Most of them quit?

LM: Yeah. There parents didn't want them to go. I know my sister, my oldest sister didn't get to go because my mom was expecting another baby and my dad wanted her to stay home and help Mom, and I think that happened a lot. About that time there was a lot of older kids that went but not that many...education was not pushed that much. They were needed at home.

JG: How do you feel about the fact that a lot of the native children are, now today, are encouraged to go out of their village to get educated and get jobs and there's a big move of the children out of the villages...how do you feel about that? Do you feel that's a good thing or do you feel that most of them are coming back and putting back into their villages or...do you have any feelings on that?

LM: Here on Kodiak there's such a big difference between the mainland natives and us down here...we have a lot more money down here and most of our villages now have running water, they have electricity and they are like little cities. And most of the kids that do leave the villages and here in Kodiak the natives leave and

it seems like they are not finishing their education. There is still not a great majority that leave and then do something...get educated and then can apply it...most of the guys around here can make more money fishing so they feel why should they go on. And I find that their parents feel the same way...so they're not pushed to go to school. There is quite a drop out rate among native kids even in high school...they struggle to get through high school.

JG: So were you away at school when the earthquake...the tsunami and earthquake in 1964 hit?

LM: Uh huh. I was at a dance the night it hit, and they let us know and I remember we all had to go home from the dance...I was at Mount Edgecumbe in 1964 during my sophomore year and we all had to go home and listen to the news and see what was happening. It was...I was really scared because I had heard that Kodiak Island had sunk so there was my whole family and then my family had heard that we had a lot of damage down there and phones were out so we couldn't communicate back and forth and it wasn't until a few days later that my folks called and said that they were all right and they wanted to find out and make sure that we were okay.

JG: Were your folks in Afognak Village at that time?

LM: No. My sophomore year my folks moved from Afognak up to Port Wakefield, and Port Wakefield is a little tiny town...a cannery town...it's a cannery. There was about seventy people living there.

JG: Is it on the island?

LM: No. I don't know which island it's on...but anyway, they were living there when the earthquake hit and I know my dad's boat was tied up by the dock and he had my oldest brother take the boat out—he and another guy took the boat out towards the middle so that the wave wouldn't hurt the boat. Mom and Dad and which ever kids were home...there was three little ones home then...and the rest of the people from Port Wakefield went underneath the dam so that if the earthquake brought the dam down they'd be gone by the dam water busting rather than the tidal wave. But the house in Afognak I think that's just being washed away by the water now, that and the graveyard behind us—that's being washed away...cause most of our houses were right along the beach.

JG: Are they doing anything to preserve what's in the graveyard...the remains?

LM: No, there's nothing being done. Also the church...I was real disappointed when I was there and I went walking through the church—it was a Russian Orthodox church and someone had set up a little camp in there...they had a little stove and things in the church which to me was really sacrilegious, I thought they should

have a little more respect...I have no idea. Some of the people did try to go back and some of the people stay in one of the houses they had fixed up just to spend a few days there and fish and enjoy.

JG: This is the original site?

LM: UH huh.

JG: Then they moved it to Port Lions...

LM: They moved it to Port Lions I can remember the year I graduated from high school, which was '66...going back and we were still in Port Wakefield, and in Port Wakefield the water just coming up and the people working in the canneries...in the canneries during high tide there would be like a foot of water in the cannery. So they relocated old Port Wakefield with Port Lions so part of Port Lions is Port Lions and then you go across a bridge and (there used to be a bridge, now they have a road all the way around it) and that's Port Wakefield side. It was in 1966 that they moved Port Wakefield...the homes in Port Wakefield...they took them down to Port Lions.

JG: And your family relocated in Port Lions?

LM: Yeah. We had a house built...so when we relocated to Port Lions I know the Mennonites I think from Pennsylvania came down and helped and there's government houses. There's two different types of houses there in Port Lions...actually three now cause they've added a lot more houses to the village. And it's not a village anymore...we have running water and we have electricity and it's just like a little tiny city now. They have Tribal Council and a city council and we never had that in Afognak. In Afognak when roads needed repair all the guys that had trucks got together and they went down to the beach and filled their trucks with gravel and went and filled the potholes. It was more of a community-more fun.

JG: More closely knit?

LM: Yeah, closeness in Afognak...everybody got along and in Port Lions it's getting cliquish and people don't visit. I can remember in Afognak every weekend we had to clean our house and one of us girls had to bake bread and the other girl had to bake pies or cakes or whatever for Sunday, because after church and in the afternoons people used to visit back and forth. And I can remember my parents playing a lot of Pinochle-most everybody in the village played Pinochle and they'd get together in the winter time and play Pinochle and just have a lot of fun. My family used to play Chinese Checkers and cards and we did more things as a family. You went out fishing as a family, and in the summer time the guys would all be out commercial fishing and the girls and women and the older

men would be home and we'd fish right on the beaches on Afognak for subsistence...what they call it now...so we'd be home. Never saw any bears and I guess what the men did before they started fishing is they'd go out and if there was bears around they'd go out and shoot them. Christmas was always a big thing too...the school had a great big program-all the classes got together and put on a program and the families, if we were interchanging gifts among the villagers and all the relatives we would bring those gifts and then we'd teekel or we'd walk across the lake from our houses-that's when we moved to the bigger house-we would all have our program there...all the kids. I can remember I sang "All I Want For Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth" and I would say if I knew Santa was going to bring such big teeth I wouldn't have sang the song. But I can remember that and another play we had-we would talk to Santa at the North Pole...I think I was the bossiest kid at school cause I always had to be the radio operator-that's what we all wanted. And we would exchange gifts and we'd sing Christmas carols too and there'd be gifts for the villagers too that they were exchanging. We would enjoy that-we looked forward to that.

JG: So Santa was a part of the village life...

LM: Yeah. Santa would come...I don't know where he came from either...probably from the North Pole.

JG: Probably.

LM: yeah. But another thing I remember too is when Spring came we would play a game called Lacher-it's like baseball. We had two teams and we would choose teams and take turns batting and run from one base and back to the other one...except when you got hit with the ball...if you got hit with the ball you were out. That was our baseball-we played Lacher, and in school we would play golf using a baseball bat and a baseball and just go across the grass or find a little hole and that would be our baseball...I mean our golf. And we played Dare Base with two different bases and two different prisons and if you were caught you had to go to prison and we always loved that. And before the tidal wave in Afognak there used to be a big sandbar...there used to be razor clams too, but now that's gone...but we used to go down there and play Dare Base when the tide was low which was, oh, just nice in that sand. I remember playing a game with the priests when they lived in the church house called Potechka...everybody would hide and one person would pound on a tree or a bench or whatever and I remember the priest doing this-I don't remember which priest it was-and if you found somebody you'd have to run back to the base and grab the stick that whoever had and then you'd yell "potechka, potechka, I found so and so...I don't know what potechka means but it was a fun game. A lot of fun family things...and there was no alcohol...of course my folks didn't drink so there was no alcohol involved. There may have been in the other homes but not in mine, and I was lucky...really lucky.

JG: Were the homes close together, like they are here?

LM: No. No, spread out—you had to walk...like walking to the store was probably a mile and a half and almost every day after school one of us would have to go to store and the other one would have to stay home and fix the potatoes...we always had potatoes for dinner.

JG: And you grew your own potatoes?

LM: Yeah we had our own potato garden—people got together and put their own potatoes in...we had one big garden together and we had a garden with vegetables in the backyard—in our backyard.

JG: You were telling me earlier about the Shamen?...

LM: Shamen (pronounced Sha-mons with the accent on the second syllable)...we called them Shamans and supposedly they were the ones that gave us our medical treatment or they could be bad and they could...but the Shamans were either good they could treat you medically, help you heal and all and they used grasses and leaves and whatever—berries—from the village and that. And but some of them could put a spell on you and would harm people if they had something against the person they would do that. And the only thing I can really remember about them is there's this big log in Aleut Town on the beach that supposedly was Shamened, and when we have big windstorms and when the tide came way up that log never moved...I've never noticed, I've never gone back to check if that log is still there.

JG: Did anybody ever try to move it?

LM: I think we must have when we were kids.

JG: Oh, that's kind of creepy.

LM: Kind of scary, but that's the only thing I can remember about that log and I know there's one guy in the village that supposedly was learning to be a Shamen but never finished.

JG: Did you personally know any Shamans when you were growing up?

LM: No. Of course we had Dr. Bob and you know, old man Johnson, and other doctors so...you know...I guess we're becoming modern. I do remember one thing when there would be a ship, and I don't remember the name of it, that would come around every year and we would have to go out on the ship and have x-rays taken and skin tests and if you were having problems at the time you would have those taken care of by a doctor, and we also had dental work done.

JG: On the ship?

LM: Uh huh. On the ship. And later on they would have, like they

do now, they would have doctors that would come around to the village every so often...but it was sort of fun going out because sometimes the weather would get pretty bad and it'd be scary . And that's how we got our groceries...we would order groceries by the case lot and they would be brought in by ship.

JG: So you couldn't go down to the store and buy your groceries then?

LM: You could but they didn't have, you know, enough of everything and we always made our own bread and...but they didn't have a lot so we would order-I know my mom and dad would every Fall they'd make out a big order for the winter time...canned vegetables, canned fruit, corned beef, and there was roast beef in a can that had gravy...

JG: Was it good?

LM: Yeah, I liked it. We ate a lot of fish, though...canned fish, pickled fish, smoked fish...we ate a lot of fish, and potatoes, and I still like potatoes and fish...and I like canned vegetables-I prefer canned vegetables over fresh vegetables...they have more taste. We didn't have fresh milk...we used to mix evaporated milk. Every night for dinner we had to have evaporated milk mixed with water and it was horrible. But I still use evaporated milk to put in fruit and if I'm having peaches or something I use evaporated milk and I prefer evaporated milk for my coffee, but that's because I grew up without fresh milk or fresh cream.

JG: So you either went by sled to school...I assume there were no vehicles...cars, trucks, snow machines? How did the village get around other than sled?

LM: Well we walked...you know summer time and all...spring time when there was no ice we walked. And as I got older I know my dad had a truck and another guy had a truck so there was a few trucks in the village but otherwise we walked. And I can remember one time...I used to be real scared of this one dog so I used to go on the beach and this one winter-plus it was easier to walk on the beach winter time because the tide would go in and out and it would leave gravel instead of having to walk through snow or ice-and I had this fake fur brown coat-it was ugly-this brown coat I was wearing and I was walking along the beach so I wouldn't have to pass this dog, and the dog saw me and came down and bit me-I got a big bite on my leg and I can remember it was winter time and it was cold and my dad was in what we called Back Bay checking the boat and mom had gone with him too, for the walk, which was three miles, I think-round trip. And they got home-my older sister and brother were at the house and one of them went to get my aunt to take care of me cause my leg was bleeding a lot and mom and dad got home-matter of fact the other day I was asking Dad, "Did you take the sled or did you carry me all the way ?", cause him and mom had to

walk all the way back to Back Bay again and they had to row out to the boat and then they had to come into Kodiak which was three and a half-four hours back in those days. And it was blowing a good northeaster then and I remember being more scared of the boat flipping over and me drowning than I was of my leg, you know, bleeding or anything. But we did make it into town.

JG: So people generally came into town...into Kodiak for their medical care...

LM: For their medical care as I grew up-yeah I had a concussion one time and they brought me in on a stretcher on a plane one time. An we used to come in for dental work then after the ship stopped coming...and we came in to shop, and come in for a movie if there was a real good movie on.

JG: Okay, so you graduated from high school in Sitka and then did you go on, or did you come back to Kodiak, or back to the village, or...what did you do?

LM: Well, I went to Western Washington State College and...this is sort of funny because my dad had told me that if I did good in college he would pay all my expenses for me but if I flunked, I was on my own. So naturally, being the first time out of the state, being actually on my own without somebody not telling me what to do, I flunked all my classes except Speech and Swimming. And I went home for Christmas...first time in four years I'd gone home for Christmas...went back to the states, I had an older sister living down in Utah so I got on a bus in Seattle and went down to Utah...stayed with her-went to Brigham Young for as semester. Then I went back home-I stayed at home just until January, from May until January, and it had been the first time I'd been home for a winter. I left for Mount Edgecumbe when I was fourteen. And I got real bored with that...all we did was party or you could go visit and play cards. I did a lot of that...and we used to play cards until six-seven in the morning...on and on and on...marathon games. So I got accepted down in Haskel, it's a junior college-Indian junior college in-all Indian boarding school down in Kansas, so what they do is the government would fly you down to Seattle, and the first year I flew down to Kansas City and took a bus to Lawrence. But after that we had to take a bus from Seattle cause it was cheaper so it was like a three day bus ride from Seattle to Lawrence. And I was taking sewing down there...I had sewed ever since I was a little girl growing up so the Home Ec...Uh, one of my teachers told me to try nursing. So I tried that and that was more challenging-more interesting so I got my Licensed Practical Nurse down there...but our program was two years and I asked on of my instructors I says, "How come we have to go two years and I know the program up in Anchorage and other places is only one year for an LPN and she said it's because you Indians are dumber than white people", so that got me a little upset, so I tried really hard and

I did well in school. And since then I've been back in Kod...no, I worked in Anchorage, worked stateside, and then ten years ago I came back home and I've been working here...and there's been a lot of changes. Kodiak used to be really small and I remember having a variety store, and we used to have a soda fountain or whatever you want to call it-it was called The Polar Bear, and you could sit down at a booth or up at the counter and order hamburgers or order a banana split or whatever you wanted...we had the variety store. And of course we had Kraft's, and I remember there was a store right on the dock down where the ferry dock is now...it's all been rebuilt since the tidal wave. Had a store called Knutson's, a theater...

JG: Same theater we have now?

LM: No. It was a different one, and I don't remember where it was-and we used to have a bus system...cause we used to be able to get on a bus and go to school or go through town, or go along Mission Road, or something...we no longer have that. But it was prettier-it was a nice old, old town before the tidal wave. So there's really been a lot of changes and Kodiak is just another big city to me now...small to most of you, but big to me. I guess that's progress.

JG: Well I want to thank you, Linda, for allowing me to interview you. It's been real enjoyable.

LM: It has.

This file is part of the Kodiak History Project.

For an index of other recordings in this collection see the index:

96-49-01_I01.pdf