

GARY STEVENS, INTERVIEWER

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**INTERVIEW WITH CARL W. PAJOMAN
AT KODIAK, ALASKA**

GS: Could we talk about the beginning of Rotary? You had mentioned earlier that there were several charter members of Rotary including yourself, Larry Wodlinger, Gene Dawson, Charlie Madsen, Dr. A. Holmes Johnson, Ray Martin, and Roy Snider.

CP: Roy Snider owned the Mecca. He built it the same time I built my store and he had cabs. Ray Martin owned a liquor store.

GS: Now, that's seven charter members. You had mentioned ten earlier. Is that right, were there ten original members of Rotary here in Kodiak.

CP: That's right, approximately. I don't remember the exact number but there was just a handful of us anyway. There was just a very few.

GS: That was in?

CP: 1941 I think.

GS: They had started constructing the naval station by that time?

CP: Yes, there were four hundred families building the base. They intended to fight the Soviets, the Russians. They had no idea of the Japanese. It was a surprise, Pearl Harbor and all that. Of course we immediately had black outs.

GS: That was in 1941. Were there members of Rotary who were from the military, early on.

CP: No. No, I don't remember any military. They were too busy out there, you know, and of course we had all these families out there so they had a commissary and everything. So, we didn't see much of them to start with because they weren't used to dealing with the stores here, you know. They wanted to buy Safeway style you know where they could go and pick and check out.

GS: You mentioned that you were born in Afognak and that your father had a grocery store there.

CP: Yes, he had a general merchandise store, a little of everything, outing flannel, kerosine, wedding rings, groceries, medical, you know aspirins.

GS: What was your father's name?

CP: Charles Pajoman.

GS: Could you just give me a little bit of history of the family?

CP: My mother's name was Mattie Salamara. Her father was a Russian priest born at Sitka. He was a Tlinkit or something like that. I don't know much about his background. Her mother was from Siberia, blue-eyed, blond. She was one of the prisoner's daughters that was sent by the Tzar of Russia to the coal mines or salt mines or whatever they had in those days. And of course she came over to Alaska with Shelikov or Baranof or one of those fellows. She was a school teacher. She went to college at the Western State Normal College in Bellingham (Washington). Then she was a teacher in Afognak. My dad came up on a sailing ships. In the olden days, you know they would load tin (salmon cans) in England and sail these big four masters all the way to Karluk and anchor them out of Karluk and use they for warehouses. As they would can salmon they would load the ship and when the ship was loaded about September, they would sail all the way back to England, unload the salmon and load it with tin to make these cans and they would sail all the way back to Karluk. There were two thousand Chinamen making cans by hand in Larson Bay and Uyak and that part of the country. And my dad did that for seven years. Of course, during the summer, the sailors on the sailing ships were fishermen at Karluk Spit, on the beach there. I have a picture somewhere of where there was 92,000 red salmon in one beach seine. The tide went out, they were six feet deep, dry you know, and they were loading them in scows and towing them across of Uyak cannery. So after about seven years of that he (Charles Pajoman) started wintering in Afognak like all the other Scandinavians of that day. They wintered in Afognak. He met my mother there.

GS: Where was he from:

CJ: Estonia, that's from the Baltic provinces on the Baltic Sea, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

GS: About what year did he get to Afognak?

CJ: Oh, in the 1890s. The exact year I wouldn't know but in the 1890s.

GS: And he met your mother there?

CJ: Yes, she was a teacher in Afognak and after seven years of their marriage I came to this country. A Doctor Silverman was a doctor here in Kodiak and he was married to Mrs. Kraft, Otto Kraft's second wife (the parents of Ben, Kraft).

GS: So, Silverman was probably the only doctor in Kodiak.

CJ: Yes, he was the only doctor. And of course I had an uncle here too, my father's brother John and he was the mail man between Afognak and Kodiak. So, he came over (to Kodiak from Afognak) to get the doctor you know and they took me off the kitchen table I guess and put me in bed then.

GS: You were born on the kitchen table?

CJ: No, that's a joke. No, I don't know where I was born. I don't remember that. Well, anyway, when I was eight years old my mother was Postmistress after she got through teaching school, she was the Postmistress. The Post Office was right in our store in Afognak. And she was in the middle of signing a letter to the Postmaster in Kodiak here, who was Arthur Marzan at that time. He was waiting for her letter and she had a massive heart attack and dropped right in the middle of writing the letter right in the store.

GS: How old was she and you when she died?

CJ: I was eight years old and she must have been just about 50 because she was 42 when I was born, the one and only. So I was the cutest of the bunch. And my uncle drowned in a wreck right off here at Mill Bay rocks, John Pajoman. It was in February and there were two women and another man with him, a sailing boat with a little engine in it, a two masted schooner. That must have been, he was

coming here, he was supposed to be best man for Ben Kraft's wedding and Ben Kraft was going to marry Walter Kraft's mother. I was pretty young then and it must have been about 1918 or something like that.

GS: What caused the wreck?

CJ: In the middle of the night he was coming around in a storm, snow. It was February. From Afognak to Kodiak and he had all these furs that were being sent to Funston Brothers who were the fur brokers in Seattle. He saved all the furs. They were all up on the beach and he was found in a swimming position, frozen to death. They found the other man but the two women were never found out here. One was my wife's Aunt and the other was her cousin. They were coming to Kodiak.

GS: What about your father? He had the store in Afognak?

CJ: Yes, he had the store in Afognak.

GS: And he raised you after your mother died?

CJ: Oh, yes. In 1911 he went back to Europe. You know these old-country people they always want to go back home to where they were born, just like me, I come up here. And that was when I was three years old, in 1911. And he brought back my aunt, the only Pajoman girl. There were three or four brothers but only one Pajoman girl, and she was a widow, about forty years old. So, she wanted to come to America, so he brought her up to Afognak and shortly after that her son, who was Fritz Lorenson, Rudy Lorenson's father. He brought her and Emil Norton's wife is also his daughter (Frieda Norton, daughter of Fritz Lorenson). So, he brought her back to this country and he had a fox farm on Bear Island by Port Bailey and so my aunt actually brought be up when my mother died. My day was a bachelor for years. So, finally he started corresponding with someone he met back in Europe in 1911. The next thing I knew, she arrived in America and they were married here in Kodiak and that was Oh, heck. . . . I went to school in San Francisco. . . I spent five years in San Francisco . . . went to high school and a couple of years of college . . . and they were married during that time. Then we built a cannery. First we had a sawmill in Raspberry Straights, Tiger Cape, Tiger Lou and that bunch. We built a sawmill in Raspberry Straights, and pretty soon we had a little hand cannery

there in the 20s - 1924 or '25. I was in the State's then going to school. And after 1925 we built Iron Creek Salmon Cannery and part of the cannery we leased to a herring concern, Wakefield, on Raspberry Island on Raspberry Straights. And then we sold. Then my dad went back to Europe for a trip in 1936. We leased to this herring company with a four year option for them to maybe buy us out. So he went to Europe and never came back. He went for a month's trip and of course the Russians came through that country, the Germans one day, the Russians, right in the middle of their war. My dad live in Alaska, a nice peaceful country, one of the most peaceful countries in the world, I guess at that time, the Territory of Alaska. So, he went out in the yard to pick a pear off the tree. He had finally bought a house and he was there for years. And finally bought a home there knowing he couldn't come back. He was an American citizen but they considered him a Russian subject and she was Estonian so she was right at home. You see she was from Estonia. So they lived there and got this heart attack in 1944. He was only 77. This was back in '44. So, I've already outlived him - I'm 84. Well, in the meantime this company that had a lease on our cannery exercised their option so I sold it to them. I still had the Afognak place, the store and the house and everything there so while I was still at Iron Creek, a year or two after they bought it, I was still around there because they wanted, you know, a lot of things. There was a bear hunter came up there with two horses, a palomino and a brown. So, when they left they didn't want to take the horses back with them and I bought the horses from them, shoeing outfit, saddles, all of it for \$75, two horses, the saddle outfits, the whole works. One was a young horse and one was a little older horse. Well, when winter came along I didn't want to leave them on Raspberry Island. I was afraid the bears might get them or they would starve to death or something. I was going to take them to Afognak. That's 15 miles from Iron Creek to Afognak. We had to cross from Raspberry Island to Afognak Island. It goes dry there and when the tide comes in there it comes in from both ways and just raises quick. So, another kid and myself decided to ride them. We didn't have boats, skiffs, to take a couple of horse so we were going to ride them all the way into Afognak. Which I did. We rode them to Afognak and on they way crossing from Raspberry Island, right about where Mike Mullen and Enola had their place and sold it for a million dollars (to the Russian Old Believers). Well, we crossed right there and as we were going across quite a spell, the tide was coming in and by the time we got three quarters of the way across the tide was such that we had to swim the rest of the way hanging onto the

horse. Then we rode all the way to Afognak in November . . . cold. I got tonsillitis and it turned into rheumatic fever and Dr. Johnson came over on a little charter boat to take care of me.

GS: This is Dr. Bob Johnson's father, A. Holmes Johnson?

CP: Yeah. I was in bed for a month and I couldn't move. Rheumatic fever is a terrible thing. So, that's when I decided, I had this property here in Kodiak which we leased from the Russian Church in 1919 for \$10 a year. We had a 99 year lease, my Dad had. Well, anyway I decided to come to Kodiak and build something I could rent and go back to Afognak, of course.

GS: Could you tell me a little about Afognak. When did people leave.

CP: Afognak was not evacuated until the tidal wave. But at one time Afognak had eight more people than Kodiak. We had three stores there and a dance hall and a church, no restaurants or hotels or anything else. There was a post office, a church, a dance hall and three general merchandise stores and my father owned one of them. The population was in the 200s. I left there in the 30s. You see, there was no payroll of any kind. The only payroll in Afognak was when the freight came. Boats would anchor way out there and they would go out to the ships with a skiff, load the freight on, and they'd come into town and, no harbor you know, just the open ocean and rough, reefs and rocks, and the only payroll was somebody building a dory for somebody or building a house for somebody or carrying the freight up to the stores. Nobody hired clerks or anything. They would just need one person.

GS: Father Gerasim was there?

CP: Yeah.

GS: It was quite a beautiful church I understand.

CP: Yeah, as big as the original one here (in Kodiak), seems like it was a bigger church than this church now. I mean it held a lot of people. An he had his parish next door to it.

GS: Were you Russian Orthodox then?

CP: Yeah, I was christened there. Yes, my mother was Orthodox and her father was a Russian priest.

GS: And you said you were married there by Father Gerasim.

CP: Yes, in 1933, a three day wedding. A whole bunch from Kodiak came over and then we came back over here and had another party. That was a big deal in those days. Everybody in town was invited to the wedding, you know. They had pirok (fish pie) and gorka (when the crowd shout "gorka" the newly married couple have to kiss).

GS: For the record, what was your wife's name?

CP: My wife's name was Rika Larsen. That was a big family. Martin Larsen was the webman for Kodiak fisheries in the summertime. In the wintertime they went out hunting silver fox, land otter and weasels you know and panned gold, dug clams and codfished out in the bay. They made about \$350 the whole season. They raised a family of eight and nine kids on that. They had a shotgun and a lot of ammunition. They shot ducks. There were no deer or anything there at that time . . . seals, sea lions, things like that. You know, spareribs from seals, the livers. All the people had a cow or two, cattle. Everybody had their own milk, some of them made their own butter. In the Larsen family was eight or nine children and I was the only one (the only child in the Pajomen family). Our first child was born when we were still operating our cannery in Iron Creek. Our first child was born in Seward, Alaska. I sent her to Seward, the nearest doctor. My second one was born here in Kodiak. And my third one was my son, the two girls and my last one my son who just turned 50. He was born in the first hospital built downtown here (Griffin Memorial Hospital). He (Ronald) was the second kid born there in 1941. The first kid born in this hospital was Farmer.

GS: Your daughter's names then are?

CP: Darleen and Carla, and the son is Ronald.

GS: So, it sounds like Afognak was a real going concern, and you owned a store there.

CP: My father built a store there or bought out the old North American Trading Company. Kraft at the same time bought the branch here. Eskine's was the old AC or Alaska Commercial Company.

So, my dad built there and, of course, we bought furs and I have the old gold scale that we used to buy gold dust.

GS: It sounds like your father was quite an entrepreneur.

CP: Oh, yeah. He was involved in a lot of things. We had foxes on Marmot Island. For years he leased Marmot Island and planted twelve pair of silver foxes and let them propagate for about ten years before we went out to pelt them. I used to go out there with the hunters and some of the Kodiak guys used to go out hunting with me. There were marmots, and fish and ducks on the beaches. We'd shoot a seal or something and let them drift in for the foxes.

GS: Could you give me some information on the charter members of the Kodiak Rotary Club, like Charlie Madsen?

CP: We sawed the lumber that built Charlie Madsen's Hotel.

GS: The Sunbeam Hotel?

CP: Yeah, the very original hotel. Well, not the original, the old Kodiak Hotel burned down years before. That was in the 20s. Charlie ran the hotel before he started bear guiding. He was Danish and he came from way up north (Nome) and he had a boat called the "Lester," a two masted sailing boat. He came down here from Nome and he was a good friend of my father's. He was a kind of a burly, red-faced Madsen.

GS: What about Gene Dawson.

CP: Gene Dawson was a newspaper man. He started the Mirror. I built the building for him to start the Mirror in and as a result I had the back page of the paper for my grocery ads. I wish I could find one of those old papers. Well, during the war he sold to . . . I forget who now . . . then he moved down to Seattle and of course I had the store here for years and then I moved to Seattle in '42 . . . took the family down for the duration. We figured we would lick the Japanese next Wednesday afternoon and we'd be back. Well, five years later there was still a war. Well, in the meantime I had managers running the stores here. But I used to go down to buy . . . it's hard to buy refrigerators and tires and things . . . they were all triple A priorities but with the base why I had triple A priorities. I'd stay with the family for a month, I'd come up here for two weeks

and then back down there and pretty soon I got a IA classification (from the Draft Board). Here I'm 37 years old with a business and three kids. I didn't feel I should go. I was offered a commission in the Navy because I knew the Aleutians, I had been out there many times. I didn't see my way clear and they said, "well either that or get a defense job." So, I went with the warshipping administration in Seattle. Speaking several languages, I spoke German, Russian, and Spanish, a little bit of English and a little bit of Aleut because in the stores in Afognak we had to talk Aleut. So, I worked with them all through the war years, from 1942 until the war was over. In Seattle. I'd meet the United Nations vessels. I'd go out with the pilot boat and they'd put me on board the ship coming in and by the time we got into Seattle with the ship I'd have all their orders already phoned in, everything from lifeboats, engine rags, you name it, groceries, medical supplies, and they'd transport about 7,000 soldiers on board to the South Pacific, so it took a lot of supplies. Of course, they were only in town for three days and in that time we had everything there. That's what I did all through the war years. But when the war was over, here my kids are taking tap dancing, piano lessons, and in athletic clubs and stuff and I couldn't bring them back up here. So, I still kept shuttling and I think in 1963, Wodlinger wanted to buy me out and I was so settled there, I had gotten in the real estate business, so I sold and then the tidal wave came a month or two after I sold. And since the tidal wave I was here just ten years ago, in 1981, for a two week visit like this, and I wanted to go to Afognak but the weather and all the fellows who had boats were out fishing but now George Magnason is going to take me the first nice day.

GS: What about A. Holmes Johnson.

CP: He was one of the originals (in Rotary). He was the only doctor. He was a pretty good doctor. He saved my neck.

GS: Larry Wodlinger, you mentioned him.

CP: He was a druggist. He didn't build the drug store. He bought it from Frank Herman.

GS: What about Ray Martin?

CP: He had a liquor store and airline agency here.

GS: Roy Snider?

CP: He built the Mecca Bar and then he sold it to somebody and moved to Vashon Island.

GS: Do you remember what the club was up to in the early days, if there were any projects.

CP: Not too much. Because it was really just a few months after we organized the club that I moved and then we didn't amount to very much. It was just a meeting we had now and then, and it was the same with the Chamber of Commerce. And I was on the first city council. Mr. Kraft (Edna) was the only one left that was on the first city council. And a fellow by the name of Chadwick was our first mayor. He was a good friend of Krilshimers, who were the owners of Kodiak Fisheries. They owned the cannery here.

GS: Were you every involved in Rotary after you left Kodiak.

CP: No. I visited several times in Seattle. I still have my old Rotary button, my original Rotary button. I've got that in my den.

GS: What was Kodiak like during the war years. It sounds like it was really booming. It had a population of around 500.

CP: Yeah. Something like that. I don't really remember the population but when the war broke out, right at Pearl Harbor, we had black outs. Everybody had to build little sheds in front of their front door so you couldn't have any light . . . shades on all our windows. You couldn't smoke a cigarette on the street. The MPs were in town from the base and everyday about 4 o'clock they would bring in thousands of soldiers and sailors from the base, you know. And they hit the bars and about 2 o'clock in the morning they'd load them like cordwood on the big trucks that came in to get them. They were sitting all over town.

GS: Your business must have really boomed?

CP: Oh, yes. I had two cars, two delivery trucks, one for town and one for the base. I had a man running steadily to the base. He would go out there and take their orders. Groceries mostly and of course I supplied the base with Ford parts. They'd come out and clean me out. They had priority and boy I couldn't refuse them. They'd come in and

want all the tires I had and all the car batteries and they'd ship them out to Dutch Harbor. There was no other Ford dealer in the vicinity and I just hated to have them come in. Then you waited six months for your money at a 10% markup.

GS: So, you were the first Ford dealer in Kodiak?

CP: That's right. I sold 41 taxicabs in 1941 here. Can you imagine. Everybody and his brother had a taxicab. I sold the first fire engines, the first buses. There were no other agencies here.

GS: From that you expanded into refrigerators and appliances, right?

CP: Oh, yes. Firestone tires and Pennsylvania vacuum cup tires, they had these little buttons like on an octopus, you know, to hold the road. They don't make them any more. They'd last about 2,000 miles here, crushed rock all the way to the base, only three miles of one way dirt road. I've got a plaque at home where I sold more cars on the shortest one way road in the nation from Ford Motor Company.

GS: At the time, of course, everything came in by boat.

CP: Oh, yes. Alaska Steam . . . the old Curaceau, the Denali, those old boats. Then we sold those ships to the Japanese, sent the scrap there and then they shot it all back at us.

GS: What about the road?

CP: All dirt roads, and crooked you know. The Chiniak highway was built during the war and we could only go as far as Potato Patch area, where the Beachcombers is now. That was as far as you could go. There weren't many people living past that. Dr. Johnson had a spot out there. I think they still have it.

GS: So the town was really booming as the war effort increased. Were you on the city council then?

CP: The original. We incorporated the city in 1940. I was on the first council. I appointed the first chief of police, the first fire chief. Charlie Cook was our first chief of police. I drove the volunteer fire truck. I had badge number seven. And the siren was on top of my roof. Boy, I tell you it would vibrate the whole building when the siren went off when there was a fire. We didn't have many

fires but we did have a few and all we had was water that was in this hand drawn truck to start with and then we got a fire engine. But, anyway, when there was a fire, they burnt to the ground, we couldn't stop it, especially in the winter.

GS: It must be a surprise to see all the changes that have occurred in Kodiak.

CP: I came back here in 1981. I couldn't believe it. It wasn't like my Kodiak anymore. And now in the last ten years, I drove all over here already. Emil Norton drove me out to the head of Monashka Bay. There are beautiful three story homes. And I was way out to Chiniak as far as Naughton's Bakery and there are a lot of nice homes built along there. And, of course, Bell's Flats was nothing but a big swamp. Bell was out there living, he had a couple of cows. He and Ben Kraft used to go to the world series games together. They were baseball fans. I've got a picture of my old grocery store here, Kodiak Cash Market, was the name of it. And Mrs. Kraft's cow, Pansy, would be standing right in front of the store with a calf sucking so I always advertised fresh milk. But as far as Rotary, I don't remember what we got involved in or what we did because it was only a few months that I was in Rotary before we left. But, I tell you what I did see at one of the Rotary meetings. They had a movie picture that were taken through a Japanese periscope that was in Women's Bay taking a picture of the women and children being loaded on this evacuation ships. I saw that here in a movie in the Rotary Club in the 50s when I was here on one of my shuttle trips. We went on one of those boats there just about that time. We went on the convoys out into the Pacific here and back and forth and we had Canadian Corvettes with us and Coast Guard or Navy escorting the ships, with three or four Alaska Steamships going down, the big ones, the "Aleutian" and the "Alaskan" and all those big ships.

GS: It must have been frightening to think that the Japanese had attacked Dutch Harbor and they certainly could have attacked Kodiak.

CP: Oh, yeah. I understand they flew around here but they figured, oh, well, heck, there's just women and children in a little village. But we were afraid they would hit the base and we were so close that they could mistake the town for the base. They never did but they were out here. There was a red line up there on the hill above Kraft's store up on the highway. And they had three or four whore

houses, pardon the expression, but that's what they called them. And on both ends there was a prophylactic station when they came out of there. You'd see a row of white hats, sailors, you know these ships were going around the Coral Sea and around Dutch Harbor and they'd stop at Kodiak, here, Army, Navy and Marines. That was a busy place, people lined up. They had big waiting rooms like you have in a bus station. Five dollar bill in their hand, and move over and you're next, next, next. They'd give them two minutes to do their business. But, I'll tell you a little story. When I had this hardware store I had these oil stoves and one of the madams out there, she was a good customer in the grocery store all the time. She had eight or nine girls up there in her place alone. So, she decided to change, she had some old oil stoves that were pretty well shot, so she wanted new oil stoves. So she bought three stoves from me and they were the new models. So, we delivered the stoves up there and she had somebody off the street install them, like the old ones were. About two weeks later she comes busting into the store, "those darn stoves aren't any good, they're all carboned up and they just don't heat right any more. I'm sorry I bought them," and all that. So, I said, "Well, I'll send a plumber and a man that does good installing," see they had water coils and everything for hot water in them, to check them out. So, I went with him. It was one of the plumbers here in town, here. I went there with him and as soon as we looked at them, she'd never connected the fans. There was a little fan there for the draft you know and so we fixed them, I mean the plumber did and I came back home and about a week later she comes in the store and I said, "Well," her name was Sally, "how are your stoves working now?" "Oh," she said, "they're working fine. Gee, they're just great." "Well," I said, "you know, when you want something done like that you get a plumber to do your plumbing and you get a carpenter, you don't pick somebody off the street. She says, "Well, Carl, if you ever want anything in our line, don't go down the street, come up to our professionals." The store was full of people and everybody was haw-haw-haw. I had to stick my tail between my legs and crawl away. The fellow who was the plumber was Styer, he was married to Olga Styer. She was a local Kodiak girl.

GS: Do you have family here still?

CP: My wife has a cousin, Laura Olsen at Anton Larsen Bay. She is a cousin to my wife. Her father and Rika's father were brothers, Anton and Martin Larsen. And we are staying with Myrtle, she's got an apartment in the Kashevarof Villa building. And she's been going to

the island and staying there. Of course, when she comes to Seattle she's at our place. So she said, well you just take the apartment because I'm out there all the time. So that's where we are at.

GS: Who are some of the old-timers you might remember. Like in Afognak, do you remember the Von Sheele's.

CP: Oh, yeah. Real well. I went to see Eunice (Neseth) yesterday. I went to school with her, you know. We were kids together in Afognak, Tom Sheele and her, and Robert and Teddy Sheele, oh, there were a bunch of Sheele kids. But I guess Eunice and Enola, Mike Mullin's wife, we all went to school together. And she's the only one left that I went to school with. They're all dead, all of them. Most of the kids that I went to school with, Rudy Sundberg, Fred Sundberg, Johnny Potella, all gone. ;

GS: You had a school in Afognak that went through high school?

CP: No, eighth grade was it. That's where I graduated from eighth grade and that's when I went to California. There were three teachers. We had what they called a chart class that when you first go to school the first year or so they chart everything. They had charts they pulled down like window shades, A, B, C. They called that chart class and they had up to the eighth grade. We had a teacher that taught Spanish, Parrish, he was the principal he even taught Spanish on the side. There were three parts of Afognak. There was Derevnia, you've read that in that book (Derevnia's Daughter by Lola Harvey), that was where the Creoles, we called them Creoles, they were half Aleut and Russian's mixed. And then there was the center part of town which was white men, they called them, Scandinavian's and that. And then Aleut town, that was past the graveyards, out towards Litnik Bay. Yeah, it was scattered just along the beach. There was no double homes. Everybody was right along the beach, all the way along. It was bigger than Kodiak because it was longer and the only harbor was Back Bay. We had to walk there to tie our boats up. Because southwest wind was off shore but easterly or northerly or northeast, Oh Boy, we had breakers as big as Kawaii coming in.

GS: Do you remember the ice company.

CP: No, but I remember old Jack Blinn, Jess Blinn's father, he had an ice house here. They'd go out to the lake here and they'd saw the ice

into big blocks and put them in sawdust and it would keep practically all summer. They had icehouses and you had a little ice box at home that you bought a little ice for. He (Blinn) had a saloon here you know, and a dance hall. I used to play accordion at their dance hall here in the late 30s and 40s, Johnny Hubley and Noble, he was a bookkeeper for Erskine. He used to play the piano and one of the Anderson's, Blue-eyed Bill they called him, there was a Blue-eyed Bill and there was a Brown-eyed Bill. But Bill, he played a saxophone, such as the best he could. Oh, yeah, we used to have our hambo Scottishes, and Madsen (Charlie) used to dance there and even Alf Madsen and Magnason always won a prize, Mr. and Mrs. Magnason, George's dad.

GS: He used to run boats?

CP: Oh, yes. The Minnie B He brought the Minnie B up from Seattle and he ran the Minnie B for Kadiak Fisheries. Both Pete Magnason and George's father.

GS: So, when you started in business here with you grocery store, your main competition was Kraft's and Erskine?

CP: Oh, yes. Watkinson was the bookkeeper down there, you know, and he would come down and want to help me price my merchandise, my groceries. I said, "no, I know how to price merchandise." I had a lower price because I didn't have all the employees and all that. I had a serve yourself and I could cut the price, the percentage I would charge, whereas they would take a piece of merchandise and say, "I wonder how much I can get for this?" We had a Chamber of Commerce here, too, we started that. I still have my old card from that, about 1940 or '41. Once we incorporated the city then things really started. We bought the first electric plant, a Fairbanks-Morris diesel, one lung, you could hear it all over town. You couldn't use electric ranges, that was just more or less lights, that's all. DC current you know not AC. There were certain appliances you couldn't use and the lights would blink when you would overload it. Then they went into these Cats, Caterpillar engines.

GS: There must have been a big difference between 1937 when you opened your store and the war years. You said there were cows in the streets?

CP: Oh, yeah. We knew everybody's cat and dog in town. Oh, yeah, there was no restrictions of any kind. You'd have to shovel the crap off your front porch when the cows walked through. Someplaces had sidewalks and some didn't.

GS: Most people were Russian Orthodox?

CP: Oh, yeah, and about 1940 the first church was a Baptist Church, that was the first other church. I bought all the copper and the nails, bolts, screws, hinges for this church after the old one burned. You know those onions, on top of the church, all that copper I furnished from my store to the priest, the priest at that time he was a little guy and he'd come into the store and "we need this." And I'd say, "well, whatever you need, why fine." You see, I leased from the Church for only \$10 a year, so I felt the least I can do. I could easily have payed \$150 a month or whatever, you know. But \$10 a year! So, I gave him whatever I could and I ordered all the copper and gave it to them.

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