

## KODIAK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH TIM ROUTZAHN  
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KODIAK, ALASKA

INTERVIEWER: VIRGINIA M. SAGUE

VS: Now we are going to talk to Tim, about what brought him here to Kodiak, and also about his life before that.

TR: To begin with, I was born in 1913, some few years ago. I have Navy parentage and the usual experiences with that sort of service and childhood. I was born in Washington, D.C., my father was on duty at the time at the Naval Radio Station. About a year and a half later we were in San Juan, Puerto Rico and my sister was born there. Then back to the states, and subsequently he retired and eventually I joined the Navy, I enlisted in about 1932, and served on various ships until 1942 when I was commissioned. Eventually, in 1954 I was ordered to Kodiak, on the staff of the Commander of the Alaskan Sea Frontier and the Commandant of the 17th Naval District.

At that point, I had been ordered up here as assistant chief of staff for personnel, but that billet had been taken just before I got here by another person. So, I became the district ordinance officer responsible for the equipment for the guns, the personnel throughout the district from Adak to Juneau. That lasted for about a year, at which time I moved over and became the officer for the control of Naval Shipping. This job was very interesting in that at this particular time all of the Alaska sea frontier was under Naval control and all vessels, civilian and military, entering the district, immediately came under the control of the commandant. That lasted for another year and a half and then we were transferred and I went back to California, the Ordinance Station at Port Chicago-later the Naval Weapons Facility at Concord. That lasted about 30 months and we were ordered back to Alaska, to the same staff. I arrived in late October 1954, to be followed by the family in early 1955. In preparation for the family's coming up, one of the more interesting aspects was a search for a house. I arrived up here, and at that particular time Aleutian Homes had just appeared. I went into the manager of the homes and said, "I understand there are places available." He said, "Yes, there are some 153 of them out there." I said, "How do I apply for one?" He said, "You just walk around and take the one you want." None of them were being utilized at that point. So, that is how we came to live here. At that time, as Billye has related, quarters on the base

were dependent on the job you had. Certain jobs required living on the base, whereas others, quarters were not an entitlement, so you had to find a place in town.

But anyhow, that went on, very interesting tours of duty and as Billye had said before, the orientation as far as disasters were concerned on the naval base at the time, were mostly toward the danger of an A-bomb. People didn't even think of tsunamis. So, all of the evacuation plans, and so forth, were centered around protecting the people from a very terrible blast. One of the areas they had at that time, was to take the families out toward what used to be the ski chalet, to an ammunition storage area. Those were actually very heavily made, steel corrugated structures which had been earth covered. Time went on, and I might say that as far as the command posts were concerned, on the nearly twice a year exercises we had with the Alaskan Command, we would have to establish a command post. One of the command posts which was very well established is now located on the shore side right over the hill from Boy Scout Lake. There is an entire underground command post there which has been completely earth covered. At the time that the Navy left here, around 1972, they pushed some more earth up all around it, and pretty well disguised it. But there were other command posts here. Number one, the one we know about in Ft. Abercrombie, and then one in Chiniak, which is also a very fine command post. So between those three, and also utilizing the communications facility at Holiday Beach, the command directed its activities during these exercises.

After 1962, when I retired, I was thinking I would like nothing to do for a while. This wore pretty thin after a while. I had a good friend, whose name was Emil Knudsen, who had a shop in town, near Kraft's, prior to the tidal wave. I went to work for him, managing his photography and outdoor store that he had there. That lasted until about June of the next year when he finally retired and sold out. Subsequently, I then went to work for a logistics company, as the manager of a contract that they had to logistically support the Air Force station at Chiniak. That facility was originally built as a part of the DEW Line, but then had fallen into disuse and wasn't used as that sort of station. It was offered to the Navy at one time, but the Navy declined to use it. Although adjacent to it, they already had a station that was a low frequency direction finder station. It would have seemed they would have taken advantage of that, but for some reason they didn't. So, the Air Force then took it over because it was ideally located to track the new missiles that were being fired in that orientation over the earth. So I was out there for a year. This was during the period when the tidal wave occurred.

VS: How big of an operation was that? How many people were involved?

TR: There was a total of 80 people out there. Approximately 60 of them were technical people. The technical aspects of tracking the missiles were controlled either by Lockheed or Philco,

depending on who had the contract at the time. The logistic support for the place, and that was maintenance of buildings and grounds, power generation, food service and all that sort of thing was bid annually by the Air Force. That's where I came in, because my company had bid into it and needed someone out there. But anyhow, during the year that I was there, the tidal wave occurred and it was an extremely interesting time out there. The building was very well protected, but it just shook furiously. It shook so much we couldn't keep the circuit breakers in, the power plant, and of course we lost electricity. Now, one of the things people see when they approach a tracking station is these big domes or vaults. Well, those things are simply coverings for the tracking implements which track the missiles which go by, or whatever they need. These things are inflated by air, they are not permanent. So when you lose power, you lose compressors and the air ceases to flow. These things would gently but firmly collapse. In about 45 minutes they were totally collapsed and almost impossible to raise again without an extreme amount of pressure. It was quite a session out there, the time when we had to get the power back on and get the compressors going and although they sort of flattened out in certain areas, we still kept them inflated. The building is well constructed, and the only problems we had of course was in the examination for fire hazard where we had lights knocked over in the billeting area.

I think one of the more interesting aspects of this was that as in every other military organization, evacuation plans are nearly always extant. So the Air Force had a very fine evacuation plan which called for all of the dependents in Kodiak to be taken to that Air Force facility in Chiniak. Well, the plans were very well laid. The Navy had what we call the R-5E's, the Air Force called them C-54's at that time. They were a fine Douglas airplane. The Navy flew all of the dependents out to the landing strip that's near Chiniak and they subsequently came on up to the facility. You can imagine, this facility is equipped for approximately 80 people and we had rooms and all sorts of other necessary facilities for that number. When all those dependents had arrived with all the children, we were populated by something like 220 people. The difference between the 80 and 220 was of course either babies or wives, and suddenly they discovered they had forgotten certain things in their operational plan. They hadn't provided for any babies or the necessary things that women might need. So we had quite a time getting all that in. It was finally flown in two or three days later and everything settled down. They were there for about ten days and then when the earthquake was over and everything subsided, they were flown back in again, and came back to Kodiak as I did. But it was a very interesting period of time here. You can imagine about 80 men and all the various female types around a building of that sort, all sorts of things were going on. We had wall-to-wall mattresses, as a matter of fact. Fortunately food was no problem, because the operational plan had called for a minimum of 3 months supply of food for 80 people.

But then after that was over, the company that I was working for lost the contract in July of that year. The tidal wave was in March and the contract ended in July. So I gracefully accepted another rest period, which wore thin after awhile. And then Sealand came into Kodiak in September of 1964. Then in 1965 I was hired by Sealand. It was a very pleasant job for me simply because Capt. James D. Fulp who had been my commanding officer when, he had been the Chief of Staff and I was his assistant; when we were both on duty at Commander AK Sea Frontier before I retired. He approached me and asked if I wanted to go back to work. And I said well certainly. So that was the beginning. I was hired May 17, 1965, and I stayed with Sealand until late in 1987. It was a very fine 2nd or 3rd career, whatever you want to call it.

VS: Did you do a lot with the start-up, and their coming into Kodiak? What kinds of things were you involved in?

TR: I'm glad you asked that question! That is a very interesting aspect of it all, the beginning. When Fulp was hired, he was hired by them without any supporting personnel at all. We know that it is necessary to move vans around and have trucks and all this sort of thing. Well that was accomplished by letting the contract to a local company who had a trucking capability and that outfit was Felton and Tenney. Felton was a local man and his partner was Gene Tenney. They had this trucking firm that would haul for anybody. Well, Sealand offered them and they accepted the contract to move vans. So that was no problem.

However, I'll call him J.D., Fulp was extremely busy. He had retired after 30 some odd years in the Naval service and he was not only required to take care of the customer services and the claims and operational aspect, the loading of the equipment aboard ships and so forth. He was pretty well worn down by a job that was about 24 hours a day. Knowing him as well as I did, I was very happy to go to work to give him a hand. Sealand came into Kodiak following Alaska Steam. Now Alaska Steam was essentially a freight bulk carrier, in that they didn't use containers. They loaded freight in the hold and so forth. Well, when Sealand came in they had this container concept where the containers were moved around and loaded and then loaded on the ships. One of the more interesting aspects of this was that the fishing industry in Kodiak was oriented primarily to refrigeration, for a product that had to be refrigerated. That was fine, Sealand had the equipment, however, the power generation in Kodiak at that time was 220V. Sealand came in with refrigeration equipment that required 440V. But they had a power pack on these units that would run by propane. It was a little Onan engine, all you had to do was hang a propane bottle on it and then tend the thing. This became very interesting, because sometimes the propane ran out. I can remember J.D. very well. He was not given any sort of a vehicle by the company at that

time. He had an old Ford station wagon and he used to load those big 150 gallon propane tanks on his station wagon and go around and hang them on the various equipment. Soon after this the company gave us the equipment to haul these things around, but it became almost a 24 hour a day thing, because the propane would run out, the engine would stop, the canneries would complain, and we'd have to go back down and start the thing up again. That was fine.

We didn't have any terminal in town. So J.D. had made an arrangement with the Naval Station that Sealand would equip a building on Nyman's Peninsula, at that time building S-12. It was wired for 440V, and we could back the vans in there waiting for the ships to come in. The ships came in at Nyman's Peninsula at the old cargo pier that's now pretty well washed out. At this particular time, it was great, up until the tidal wave occurred.

Billye Routzahn: This was after the tidal wave, wasn't it.

TR: No, before.

VS: They loaded it right on the cargo pier? Containers?

TR: That's right, containers?

VS: How did they do that?

TR: The ship came along the cargo dock, that's where that big blue building is down there now. What happened at the time of the tidal wave, all of the refrigerated vans that we couldn't keep on the 12 plug-ins we had at S-12, they were parked down on the end of Nyman's Peninsula, and we kept them on propane. When the wave came in, it just washed all of them off Nyman's Peninsula and the propane bottles were washed away and the vans stopped and so forth, we had to wait for the tide, before we could go down and re-service them. But this was all accomplished, no product was lost, and finally we got everything going, the ships continued to come on in and we loaded them up. Sealand after that time grew, primarily through the efforts of the sales people in Anchorage who came down and offered a step-up transformer to the canneries, to step the voltage up from 220 to 440 so they could use the vans - a sales move. We put them all over town-I think we had something like 18 transformers at the time we were supplied. We put a couple of them at the Naval Station at the time. But then it grew, and Alaska Steam finally called it quits-they had a couple of disasters just prior to this time which didn't help them a bit-a vessel running aground somewhere up on the Alaska Peninsula. Eventually, in 1987 I finally retired from Sealand.

VS: I assume the canneries were happy to have Sealand come in. Were they instrumental in bringing Sealand in?

TR: I'm not too sure that they were instrumental in bringing them in but they were happy to see another service, simply from the real basic standpoint that competition is always good. However there were certain attendant problems with Sealand coming in. They stemmed primarily from the fact that Alaska Steam finally decided that they would use some containers and they came in with a little 25 foot container, which was small, and many of the canneries in town at that time were small. That size container fitted their cannery operations very well. So when Sealand came in with the larger 35 foot containers it presented a problem. It was a container that they couldn't even fill in an acceptable demurrage time. When you talk about containers and railroad cars you must get into a demurrage thing; which means that you, as a customer, can have a certain container, to fill it within a certain amount of time, beyond that time you are charged a penalty for holding it. So it took them a lot longer to begin with to adapt to a bigger container. Then as the seafood processors began to grow, they began to generate this additional freight and it became less and less a problem.

VS: Was Alaska Steam a locally owned company?

TR: At that time, as far as I know, most of the canneries were not owned locally, but probably owned by a company in Seattle. The financial aspects of who owned what, I don't know.

VS: What I'm getting at, was there pretty stiff going in the beginning between the two of them?

TR: Oh yes, there was a great deal of competition between the two shipping companies. When Alaska Steam phased out, Sealand enjoyed there for quite some time, a monopoly, until an outfit called Tote came in. Tote didn't come into Kodiak but did cut into Sealand's operations in Anchorage and other places on the mainland of Alaska. It was quite some time later before the President Lines came in.

But in any case, I finally retired and since 1987 I have enjoyed being very busy keeping things going and enjoying simply what I like to do.

VS: I'd like to go back, maybe and talk about when you were here in the early '50s. What sort of relationship was there between the Naval Base and the town of Kodiak--in what you were doing? Was there any civilian involvement at all in the projects you worked on for the Navy?

TR: Let's go back a little before then, 1954. My relationship, in my job, any relationship was almost nil. I just didn't have that sort of a job. However, the relationship between the Navy and the town, depended primarily on the personalities involved, both in town and the senior officers on the base. It varied, of course from very good to not very bad, but sort of, on the fence. It was more of a personality sort of thing. As far as the influence or impact of the hiring local people was concerned, one had to remember that the Naval Station at that time, as far as its' civilian personnel was concerned, was primarily civil service. As such, they were hired outside the local area. Certainly, there were certain jobs that were available and were filled by local people, but the civil service people, being of a different means of recruiting, they were normally done from outside. They were hired from Seattle and sent up here. One has to really understand the workings of civil service employment to understand this sort of thing. It's sort of complicated! But the relationship, on the whole, was extremely friendly and very good--very supportive as far as both areas were concerned. There were certain aspects which were of an understandably frictional nature. For instance, when we first arrived here there was a Seabee battalion on the base. They were used here in Kodiak, and other places in Alaska, primarily the Aleutian Chain, to clean-up certain aspects. They became targets of a union problem. Before that came to an end, the Seabees used, particularly here in Kodiak, they used Kodiak as a training area for their construction effort, roads, buildings and all that sort of thing they were doing. There was a period of time where they were involved--they paved the first road to town. And they did other work out through the chain that was required. The aspect of a military organization doing work that could be done by civilians operating in denier, came into being. So eventually the Navy department was required to remove the Seabees from Kodiak and the Alaska theatre. Depending upon one's aspect, that's a very good thing. The construction people are doing what they should be doing now, building roads; and the Seabees are training for what they should be doing, and everybody is extremely happy about it except maybe for a few Seabees who used to have a lot of fun!

One of the things the Seabees did while they were here in addition to their other duties--they had what they called an R & R program. They always maintained the road to Saltry Cove. Usually they would divide themselves into 4 watches and 1/4 of the people would be off doing extraneous things like maintaining the road to Saltry Cove and along with that they would fish and catch and smoke salmon. Their goal was that every man in the

battalion would have at least one case of smoked, canned salmon to take home with him. But they did an awful lot of good as far as keeping things open. They also maintained the road out as far as Chiniak, too.

(unintelligible comments from Mrs. Routzahn)

TR: Well that's away from Seabees, but that's an interesting little anecdote. When we first arrived, there were 4 gates one had to pass through to leave the base. One of them, which probably drew the most attention was the gate that was at the foot of what is now known as Marine Hill, all the way around the end of Women's Bay when you go up. Everybody that left base had to check out. They were required to leave name and all that sort of thing, where you were going, when you expected to return; all which was made a matter of log. When it came time for "so-and-so" to come back in and they weren't checked in, they inquired where are they? and how are they? and this eventually led to searches. The findings were oft times compromising!!! These were the times when you could go out on the road system, leave your car and not have anything to worry about, or have a little cabin out there and not have anything to worry about as far as it was concerned. Normally, it could sit there for 3 or 4 weeks and eventually the big concern was, where and how is the owner? Not will we blow this car away and steal all the tires and do other things?

I know that on one occasion I was bear hunting, my partner and I were over at Eagle Harbor on the other side of Ugak Bay and we were supposed to be back and we had left our vehicle parked at Pasagshak. We were supposed to be back a couple of days ahead of that time and we weren't. So unmistakably, we heard the sound of a chopper coming in, it was one of our good friends who was the pilot. A Coast Guard captain by the name of Paul Breed. Paul parked his chopper near our tent, he came on in, and neither of us knew what he was there for. We said, "Come on in, Paul and have a cup of coffee". And he did. We had all been hunting buddies before. Paul had his cup of coffee and he got up and said, "I've got to go back guys, which one of you are coming with me?" We had found out, between my wife Billye, and my partner's wife Marty Gundersen, somebody had pushed the panic button and thought we were in trouble. So they had sent the rescue out after us. Of course Paul was entirely correct, because he had to bring somebody back!!! It was a very nice trip coming back, it was one of those very foggy days. We would've sat over there a couple more days waiting for the fog to go but Paul and I flew back on that chopper and I swear the fog was so low on the ground I could have dragged my foot all the way back. But we got back okay and everybody was relieved.

VS: Were you restricted as far as where you could go on the island? In relation to what you said about checking in and out?

TR: It was just a matter of checking out and checking back in at the time to keep track. As far as restriction was concerned it was quite lax, you could go almost anywhere you wanted. At that particular time in order to be able to hunt, the only requirement was that you had to be here a year. Where you went was your own business. You didn't have to hire a guide at the time. Rational people always went at least two people together and that was the case with where we were.

(unintelligible remarks from Billye)

TR: Oh, that's a nice one! As the ordinance officer for the frontier command, I had one very interesting and amusing experience, and he later turned out to be a very good friend of mine. This man's name was Joe Zentner. He was a homesteader and his house was at Pasagshak, where the Park area is now. Joe was an interesting character. He lived alone and he flew a little Piper airplane. He was a rancher and in addition to that he owned the flats there at Pasagshak and he had a certain amount of growing that he did as far as feed for his cattle. His ranch extended from what is now almost Kalsin Bay all the way back to the fence that runs across the road on the way to the Narrow Cape Ranch. It was quite extensive and he grazed cattle all the way over as far as Portage at Saltry. Beyond his, over toward the bear preserve, there was another rancher. My first acquaintance with Joe came when one of the gunners came into my office and said, "I'd like to have you come in here, we have a slight problem, and a very interesting thing going on with a rancher that lives out at Pasagshak." I said fine let's go. So I came on in and I met Joe Zentner. Now Joe Zentner's problem was very simple. He, being a rancher, had a problem with bears and his cattle. This was his income and he hated bears with a passion. So somewhere along the line, Joe had acquired a Durand weapon. But what he was more interested in was how he could account for these bear. His object was, he was seeking some advice on how to mount a 50 caliber machine gun on the top wing of his Piper J-3. Well, you had to understand Joe's aspect about this thing. In the first place, the bear were killing his cattle and he just couldn't put up with that. In the second place, Joe was probably the oldest student pilot in Alaska. Joe was a very capable pilot but he never, as far as any of us knew, he never sat for or passed his final examination to become a rated aviator. As you drive out toward Pasagshak today, when you come down the long hill and onto the bridge, you see to the right the structure that's almost gone. If you look at it closely, you find it looks like a hangar, and it is. That is Joe Zentner's hangar. He kept his J-3 in there and that roadway from the bridge toward the hill going out toward Pasagshak, that was his runway, his airport. That particular stretch of road happened to be in a good wind direction so he didn't have too much of a problem. But anyhow, he wanted us to tell him how he could mount a 50 caliber machine gun on the wing of his airplane? Well finally, it took about 2 hours of time, we finally convinced Joe that the 50 caliber on his J-3 was just too much, the plane wouldn't support it over

any length of time. We finally satisfied him because later on after I was ordered back to California, I picked up either Field and Stream or Outdoor Life Magazine, and it had this great article about this cattle rancher in Kodiak who was having problems with Federal Fish and Wildlife officials over killing bears with his airplane. What he had done was to find a way to mount his Durand rifle on the J-3 airplane. As you know, the Durand rifle has the capability of going into full automatic. Typically a World War I sort of thing. He had the rifle mounted up there and this wire going down into the cockpit where he could pull it and make this thing go. He was actually strafing the bear. This is where he got a foul off the Fish and Wildlife people. They didn't think that was just the way to hunt bear. They may not have known it, but Joe was after bear in many, other ways. One year I hunted bear up toward Portage Bay and he had a little shack out there, and he said, why don't you guys just go out there and you can use it. One of the party was after beaver hides and the other three were after bear. So we went out there and the man that I hunted with, for bear, I didn't know him, but he had been pretty well beaten up in a motorcycle accident. One day we were climbing over a mountain and he happened to step in a hole. A knee injury reoccurred. This was somewhere about three o'clock in the afternoon and we only had a couple of miles to go to get back to the cabin. It was an extreme amount of courage-climbing over hills and what-not by this man. We finally arrived at this cabin around three o'clock in the morning. That was the end of the hunt as far as he was concerned except for one thing. A couple days later Joe came by just to check on us and see how we were doing. Joe had a pack horse along, and he had an old Army packsaddle along. I don't know if anybody knows what an old Army packsaddle is like. It was a crude sort of thing. It's made of wood. Emblems crossed this way in the front and in the back and then horizontal strength members that go this way. Beyond that, it's designed simply to tie packs onto. Absolutely not designed for riding. This partner of mine who had the knee injury decided he'd ride back with Joe. So after the hunt was over, and he got back, he said, I wish I'd stayed. He said, "There was more pain to riding back in that saddle, than there would have been to walking back with that knee." You can just imagine riding in that saddle. Joe thought it was great, he thought it was a ball.

VS: You mentioned the Seabees doing a lot of cleanup along the chain and all that, wasn't there a lot of cleanup that your group did here, as far as the guns and things?

TR: Yes. This came under the aspect of my office. Munitions were stored in the various islands and there were some munitions that were either dropped or fired and they were at certain locations or simply scattered around. They were a bad hazard as far as people walking around out here. A great concern to everybody because they were just flat dangerous. Even here in Kodiak there were minor problems. It was not unusual to have some child, 10, 12 or even 15 or 16, come in and say, "Hey, Mom,

Look What I Got!!" and have an unexploded grenade or a whole belt of machine gun bullets. These things were just a part of what was left over. Out in the chain, some of them were even worse. There were certain islands out there where we had off limits. People were not allowed on because of the hazards. These were the things the Seabees went in and took care of. Near Kodiak there were three large magazine areas. But they were pretty well taken care of by the ordinance department. There were some problems on what we used to call the Old Burma Road. That's the one that goes up between Woman's Mt. and Barometer. When the Navy was here, we used that area to detonate and otherwise destroy ammunition of various types. In the ordinance game or the ammunition game, ammunition is manufactured and controlled by lot numbers and these lot numbers are continually monitored to the point where they become either unreliable or hazardous. At this time they are destroyed. The destruction of them requires a certain area that is isolated. We used to use that area up there that we called the Burma Road to do that. When the Navy left here in 1972, before they left they had to send in a special team to sweep that whole area up through there to be sure that there was nothing left that was hazardous.

VS: What about all the installations along Ft. Abercrombie and Chiniak and all those places. When were they all decommissioned or shut down?

TR: They were originally decommissioned at the time the Army pulled out. Those installations were Army places. They were linked into a battery control of the guns that they had planted in various areas. For instance, there are two gun emplacements up from the canneries on Deadman's curve. You'll see an observation point as you go out toward Dead Man's curve. Coming toward town this way are two small gun emplacements and another small observations point. If you were to go through Dead Man's curve and about half way get off the road and walk up that hill there, you find more observation points. To the right of that is the command post. Compared to Chiniak and Abercrombie it's a small one. That one was the one that the Navy rehabilitated to use as an emergency command post if they needed it. It didn't take much rehabilitation, those places were well built. If you go out to Chiniak, after all these years, you'd be amazed after all these years, how well the paint has kept in those places.

VS: How much equipment was left when they closed those places?

TR: When the Army pulled out they did a very good job of closing down their own fortifications. In many cases just blowing them, like you see in Abercrombie, with those gun emplacements. Bill Bulen, at the Buskin River Inn got permission from somebody to bring one of those guns in from Chiniak when the Army blew them, and set it up there in a mock. But they did a thorough job of clearing things out. There were minor things left, such as foodstuffs and what-not, some first-aid equipment. For the person who doesn't wander or know where these places are, they are at

times very hard to find; those that are not sitting above ground where you can see them. Out at Boy Scout lake, there are several underground, you can go right by them and not know they are there. Or if you do find a hole and can crawl down through, you might say, gee I don't know what's down there, I don't think I should do it. Many of the place are extremely interesting. Little known is that around Buskin Lake, when you go out there you turn right by the CommSta. Originally, you could turn left and go up the other side of the lake. On the other side of the lake, up in the hills is another magazine area. Very few people get there today because the road is washed out and you have to go through the lake to get there. Somebody a few years back was walking up that old road and looked up and found a bear walking in their direction, and they decided they better not go any further.

Chiniak had quite a large contingent of Army troop up there. Most of the old quonsets are gone now, but you can still walk around out there and find the foundations. When we were first here, all those quonsets were used as a recreation area, under the control of the Navy. They were assigned, you could sign up for a quonset in this area and go out and fix it up or whatever you wanted to do with it. Most of the people that were interested and could do it would sign up and go out on holiday or weekends. It was a second place to go. They had a lot of fun out there, and lots of amusing things happened out there. Of course, one of the things we know not to do, and that is don't leave food and garbage around. Well the bear were very smart. The people would come out and leave all their trash about, and then they'd leave and go back to work on Sunday night. The bear would move in on Monday morning and finish up all the cleanup detail. The only time it got exciting was when several families would stay out over Monday or Tuesday and run into the bear at the same time. There were never any problems, but a few exciting moments.

The end of Women's Bay was a good example. When we first arrived here, there were Navy families living in quonsets out at the end of Woman's Bay. There were some very large warehouses out there and they were open and anyone could go in. I was a great wanderer at that time. I used to wander around out in that area. I know I went into one of them and from what I could ascertain, there was the complete woodwork for a chapel. Then later on, after the families were moved out of there and population of the base decreased, there was an incident where they had ordered a number of household appliances, washing machines, driers, refrigerators, etc., and they had never arrived as far as anybody knew. In those winters we had very heavy snowfalls, in 1955-56 the snow fell down and buildings were old and suddenly we found all these appliances. Whoever had done the receiving at the time, had simply received the stuff and moved it out to the warehouses and had it stored very neatly and beautifully and the only trouble was that the person got transferred and nobody knew what he'd done! So the snow bashed in the roof and there they all were.

VS: Another question about the Chiniak installation. When you were out there with the contractor, how long did that place operate?

TR: I don't know exactly when they activated that place, but it wasn't closed down until about, I left in 1964, and it wasn't closed down till three years later. Then the need for it as a tracking station didn't exist anymore. So it went into caretaker status for a while, and they closed it later. Are you interested in what happened to it later on??

VS: Yes, I was curious.

TR: What happened later on was that it was on caretaker status and then as the transfer of the land to the Navy proceeded, it came under the Bureau of Land Management, in an area that is now with the Navy. So on the deal end, the Navy sought to take it and use it as some sort of a training facility. The big problem was finances. It takes considerable money to maintain and operate something like that. It didn't really materialize. Then it came under the Department of Labor. They again had a sort of a caretaker's attitude. That finally folded and now the city has it and it is vandalized quite a bit. One of the ideas they had for utilizing it, was for some sort of correctional institution.

VS: What about the runway that is at the end at Chiniak, how long did it take them to put it in there? It was way before your time! How much more of a facility was it than it is now? That was one of those steel mesh things wasn't it?

TR: Specifically know as Marston Mat. It was still in good shape. It was an alternate runway if somebody got in trouble. As a matter of fact many of us private pilots used to fly in there. When it was really going outfit, it had not only the runway that you see, but if you were to wander around in the brush on either side of it, you would see that they had quite extensive plane parking areas that are completely Marston matted. Particularly as you approach it toward the left. Toward the right there were at least six pretty good-sized quonsets to house people and one to house a power generation unit. After a period of time the Marston mat rusted and deteriorated. At the time of the earthquake the planes bought all of the people out there. It was a pretty awesome sight to see the planes landing on it. The planes would come in and as they would be reduced in speed, the weight of the plane would cause a precursor wave of the Marston mats which were tied altogether. They would just roll up in front of the plane. But they all held together. After the people had left and the need for the runway was almost over, one of the jobs that they laid on my company was to repair the runway. So they shipped in some brand new Marston mat and we went down there and put it all back together then. I've flown in there since then and I've of course driven by it. It's in horrible shape. But those Marston mat runways require a good deal more preparation than most people think. They have to have

a bed of a certain aggregate under them. They have to be built up and leveled off and drained properly. Then the Marston mat is laid on top of it.

Unintelligible conversation between Mr. & Mrs. Routzahn

TR: If you have been to Chiniak and the end of the runway, there's sort of a lake or lagoon, and at the end of that there's a small island. That island can be approached by the same road that takes you into the command post, except as you approach the command post that's up on the hill you peel off to the right and you go down the side toward the beach and you find this little island down there. Originally, before the tidal wave, this island was connected by a causeway and you could drive along the causeway up to the island. There are three quite large, probable 30 x 50 feet concrete structures down there that are completely earth covered and these appear to be places where diesel generators were housed because they have the stacks that indicate a diffusion of exhaust smoke. It's covered now at high tide, I mean the causeway.

VS: The one thing I wanted to ask you was, totally different subject again, when you were involved with Sealand during the reconstruction after the wave, when did they build their present facility there with the cranes and all. Was that built after?

TR: Let me start this way. The present Pier 2 was the one that was constructed, and it was constructed, to my knowledge, with Sealand money and local funds. It was constructed as a pay per dock for not only Sealand but anyone else. At that time, the crane on it had not been considered. One of the reasons for this was that in the growth of Sealand at that time they had a contract with the military to supply Korea and Vietnam. In order to do this with no cranes anywhere they had constructed cranes on the vessels. It was a very simple device. They put rails up both sides of the ship that they could drive this crane structure along and then it had the boom and the equipment to pick up a van and set it up on the dock. So the vessels that came into Kodiak at that time didn't need a crane. They put the chassis on the dock. One of the problems of Pier 2, there were 2. First, it was fairly short. Second, from a ship-handling point of view, for a large ship, it is at an angle that makes approach difficult. However this is not insurmountable or a problem that would prohibit use of the pier. But placement of the crane, as far as the company was concerned, became a necessity. First, as I understand it, they looked at pier 2. That bought up the idea of extending it. They wanted to true it up a little more to the channel and then extend it. The information that I had was that they hired a company to investigate the feasibility of extending it into the slide area. What they found was what you might guess, that old slide area has been dribbling rock for quite a number of years so that there is quite an extensive flow of rock from the base of that which was so deep as to be prohibitive to

drive piles into it to support a dock. That is the reason they moved to Pier 3, on the outside of the slide area. Of course, then there was also the idea that it might not be too good an idea to build a structure right below where all the rock slides! They moved on up to the other area and put the pier in there. They had several construction problems with that, of a technical nature, corrected fairly soon after that. That's the history of Pier 2 and 3 in a nutshell!

Billye Routzahn talking about snowfall in that year, 189".

VS: That was the other question I wanted to ask you both. You've been here, what, 40 years? What can you tell me about how the weather has changed in that time? What were your early winters like?

Billye: The winters are so much more mild than they used to be. We had lots more snow. The summers are pretty much the same. I can remember having snow in June. We would have the Crab Festival and we'd be down working in the booths in snow showers.

VS: How did that kind of snow in the winter affect your work out in Chiniak, for instance? I imagine that pretty much drove things to a standstill.

TR: No. As far as the Navy was concerned, they had the equipment to keep the roads cleared. At that time the target range was at the end of Woman's Bay. Of course in keeping the proficiency of shooting up for troops, you have to train all the time. They had the big snowblowers and they'd keep everything clear and open. The ski chalet, which they maintained, that was up past the end of Buskin Lake as you go on up that hill. They would keep all that area clear as far as the roads were concerned, up to that. This was great as far as the skiers and shooters were concerned, but it was tough on the ranchers over on Anton Larson Bay. Because they had cattle over there they couldn't get through to and all sorts of other problems.

Billye talking about the workings of the ski chalet at the time.

VS: That's what I was getting at, you had more snow at the time to really utilize that facility.

Billye: That was really nice up there!

TR: Billye really liked that ski chalet!!!

Billye: In the Spring and the Summer, just beyond the ski chalet they had barns, and they had riding horses, for the people to go out and ride the horses all over. They had trails all over the place.

TR: The Navy really stretched as far as personnel were concerned. That ski chalet up there was probably a building about 40 feet wide and 60 feet long. It was an open structure. On one end it had just a huge fireplace. They had a minimal of cooking facilities up there. They also had, at the end of Woman's Bay, where the Junior Chamber of Commerce folks are located now, an experimental farm building set up. They used that area as a golf-driving range. They used the buildings that were there, they would assign a naval personnel to that building to take care of that facility. Same thing with the ski chalet. They would assign an able personnel. And generally speaking, it would be a fairly senior petty officer with his family. So it was a nice arrangement of quarters for them and they took care of the R & R facility for everybody else. At the same time they had a recreation area on Afognak. There were several cabins over there. They would close them down in the wintertime. But then they would detail a couple of senior people to go over and man them particularly during the fishing and hunting seasons. The two men that were sent over while we were here: they were two chief petty officers. One was named Conrey and the other was named Dibble. They were close friends. They went over one year to activate the place and they thought they'd take a walk after a while. So they were both armed with 270 rifles. Not in any way expecting a bear or anything else. They started walking away from this facility and they had gone about an hour or so and they turned around and saw this bear behind them. So they thought not a whole lot of it. They were pretty experienced outdoorsman. They walked on for a while and turned and looked again and the bear was still there, but a little closer. So they went on for a while and the bear kept getting closer and closer right up the back trail. Finally they decided they better do something about this to see what the bear's intentions were. They came to a knoll that had no alders on it. It was just bare. They went over the crest of the knoll and laid down and watched the bear. They let the bear come on in to about 50 yards. Then they finally decided they'd have to kill the bear. So they did. Knowing that the Fish and Wildlife people required the hide. So they skinned the bear out and brought the hide back. A Fish and Wildlife biologist by the name of Will Tyroer had the office down here at the time. They brought it back, it was a big hide! Will took a look at it. He said, "Boy, why didn't you bring the skull back?" So they said they never thought about that, only knew you had to bring the hide. Will said, "You better go back and get the skull because I think maybe you might have a record bear."

[this is where we flipped the tape, and the end of the story is missing. Mr. Routzahn told me again and the ending of the episode is as follows -- They went back to get the skull, it was a little dehydrated by then, but of a good size. Big enough to register, but not a record. What they did find was an abscessed tooth in the skull. This probably accounted for the bear being unable to eat, and being just generally cranky and miserable.]

TR: The Marines have a very fine security philosophy, they say put the security where it's needed. And pretty obviously it isn't needed on a main gate. If you go to one of the more secret bases we have in Albuquerque--it has a highway that almost drives through it, and they give a nice friendly wave and so forth. But don't try to get into anything else. Anyhow, the Marines had some very interesting things happen to them. On one occasion while we were here they had a sentry at a gate that was just on the road where the CommSta is now. If you're going out that road and you cross the bridge you go up there about a quarter of a mile to the antenna field, there was a sentry booth there. There was a sentry there one night, a young man. A man came through and said, I just wanted to warn you, I ran into a bear up here, and I wounded it, and I couldn't find it. You be on the lookout. The young man said, fine, thanks, and waved the fellow through. Then pretty quick, the alarm rang in the main guard on the base. About all petty officer could get out of the sentry out at the Buskin, was "Bear, Bear!" and the phone dropped. So they called out the whole Marine guard and they went charging out there in their vehicles and as they approached the place, they found this sentry and he was just charging down the road. He'd abandoned his post, rifle and everything and he went running down the road frantically. They stopped him and all he could say was "Bear!" So they surrounded the whole sentry post and they closed in and they found one poor old, lonesome horse. What had happened was that this young man after being duly alarmed by this hunter and his bear story, had turned around and looked out the window in the booth and he'd seen this animal. And it was a horse that had his nose pressed up against the window and that's all there was!! All you could see was the whites of his eyes and the white teeth.

But you see there was quite an attraction. As you crossed the Buskin bridge going in just past the airport, off to the right as you go off, there is a long building. That building used to be number A-711. Behind that building was an earth-filled area. That was where all the trash and garbage and everything else was dumped. A great many times, there were just some really choice things that animals would like. For instance, all the residue of bones and fat from the butcher shop, and the messes and so forth, would be dumped out there. In those days there wasn't a great attempt like today, to cover that, it would be just dumped out there. One day, one night, there was, I guess you'd call them a herd. If you call about 7 or 8 bear a herd. They invaded the dump. They had quite a time with them. They called out the Marines, which they probably shouldn't have done! But they came out and they killed all but about 2, and wounded them. Finally they had to get a professional hunter. He's still alive, Johnny Morton, right out here. Johnny went out with somebody else, and finally tracked down the wounded bear and killed them. But when we hear stories about bear in Nemetz Park and stories about bears by Boy Scout Lake, this isn't anything new! There are probably more bears seen people than people have seen bear up through there.

Billye: I think one of the best recent bear stories told by Dean Jones Public Affairs. Dean lived in where you turned to go into the Captain's quarters, or go up to government hill. He lived in the first little house on the left as you went up the hill. He and Barbara had heard this noise and they looked out and there was a bear at the back door. The bear walked around to the front of the house and walked across the street and was headed down toward the Captain's quarters. When he walked across the street, instead of going down the street this way, he turned around and backed down the hill. I asked him, why he didn't take a picture of it. He said he'd had all his photography equipment, but he didn't even think about it. He said he was so fascinated, watching this bear turn around and back down the hill!

TR: I think one of the funniest bear stories, told by a man by the name of John Powell. No relation to the actor! John was a supply officer at Adak. He always hunted alone, and he hunted just about everything he could think of to hunt in Alaska during his period here. So he decided he wanted a Kodiak Bear. He flew into Kodiak, and he went up to, in these days you didn't have to take a guide, you just went off by yourself and did your thing. He was down toward Karluk, somewhere, and he ran into this hunter who had a group of clients, and he asked him where was a fairly decent place to find a bear? The hunter pointed out and described an area for him. So John went on up and he walking along and sure enough, on the side of the hill, he spotted a bear stand up behind some salmonberry bushes. The bear looked all around and went down again and John thought wow, sure enough I got my bear. So he raised his rifle in the general direction and the bear stood up again, and before he could pull the trigger, the bear got down again. So he waited awhile and the bear stood up again, but this time the bear was off a little to the left. Again, John didn't get a good shot. So he waited and the bear stood up again this time the bear was a little to the right. This time John shot, the bear fell down, and then all other 4 bears stood up. John didn't even bother to see if he'd killed the bear. He beat a hasty retreat back down the hill, and he ran into this professional, and the professional said they'd go see. So he took him and his clients all back, and all of them got bear that day!!!

Billye: When we first came here we lived over on Thorsheim , Just up where Park Terrace is, where you start up Pillar Mt. there is a reservoir there and there was a gate across the road. Ed Dauchess, who was a Lcdr. for supply, who lived across the street from us. He and his dog were going hunting one Sunday morning and he left and pretty soon we heard this "yipe, yipe, yipe!" and here comes the dog down the hill with his tail between his legs and he is hell bent for election on getting out of there right now! Pretty soon here comes Ed. Well he got up to the gate and there was a bear standing on the other side, right there, that's how close he was. And he was like the dog, put his tail between his legs and he ran!!! Ed's dog was a big St. Bernard.

TR: When we lived in Aleutian Homes, we lived higher up on a hill and down about where the police station is now, there was a bakery. It was Naughton's bakery. Even today, Ed Naughton bakes the finest Russian Rye bread around anywhere! They had the family bakery there and we figured out pretty quick; we had a big sled for the kids and we had all the kids tucked in, and before the bakery closed we'd go up the hill. I'd go all the way up the top, Billye would be about 50 yards down. I'd bellyflop and come on down, and she'd pile on and we could go all the way down to Naughton's bakery. So we'd been doing this for quite some time. We knew Ed Dauchess and his dog's name was Princess, or something of the sort. I petted the dog, a friendly old St. Bernard, I thought. Anyhow, I was wearing a down parka, I had the sled, walked up the hill to where I bellyflopped, and here was this big St. Bernard, just sitting there. I spoke to the dog, turned around, hopped on the sled, and just about the time Billye piled on, I felt this tug at my boot. So I kicked her, and I said "Stop kicking!" and then I get another tug, and I rolled off the sled and unceremoniously rolled her off too!! I got up and turned around and here is this silly dog, and he had bitten all the way through my boot and half an inch into my calf. [VS: He thought you were a bear!?] That's the only reconstruction I could make. I went up the hill and had this great big parka on. He thought probably I was a bear, or at least I wasn't friendly.

Billye: When we got down to the bakery and got everything we needed, we were about to leave and Ed came in and we told him what happened. Ed was sorry! There was no problem....

Mixed comments and laughter, too much merriment to sort out!!

VS: I think we've been round the bush here quite a bit,

TR: Not only round the bush but considerably far afield!!

VS: I'm going to turn this off right now!

This file is part of the Kodiak History Project.

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