

This is Mary Jane Pediangco interviewing Candy McGuire for the History of Alaska Oral History Project.

Candy tell me a little bit about yourself: how you came to Kodiak and how your family came?

Well I was born and raised in Kodiak. My mom and dad came up here separately. My mom came up with her first husband from Nebraska with my big brother. Her first husband died in a boat accident when they use to skiff back and forth from Bells Flats to town. He was a poker player and got caught out in a storm. He went down and they found his body in Gibson's Cove. My dad came up in the Navy and liked it so he came back and met my mom. He played the saxophone down at the old Beachcombers and my mom and him got together, got married, and had me and my little brother.

How old were you when the tidal wave hit Kodiak?

I was eleven.

What do you remember about it and the earthquake?

It was Good Friday and everybody was home for the holidays or Easter Holiday. We had Friday off so we were laying around relaxing. My nanny (the lady that babysat me), Reka, was over and my mom were sitting at the dining room table.

Our house overlooks Potato Patch Lake so we had a pretty good view of every thing that was happening. One side's the ocean, the other side is

Potato Patch Lake.

I was laying on the couch. My little brother was there somewhere. My dad was sitting in his chair watching T.V. and I thought there was a monster under the couch lifting me up. I jumped off the couch and looked at the couch like it was this monster because I was scared of monsters back then. There was nothing. By this time everybody else was looking around and every body started running for the door. It's a natural place that you go during earthquakes so you can look outside and hang on to the door. So there were my mom, my dad, Reka, me, and my little brother standing at the door looking out. I was in the back so I couldn't really see but I could peek out and see the tree tops swaying back and forth and I could see the parking lot and the cars. Our Corvair and our Volkswagen were almost touching. They were going in opposite directions and they would come to the middle and almost touch. I didn't see it, but my mom (I think was in front) saw the lake that had three to four feet deep ice in it crack and big chunks of it fly up in the air. It was really loud. It sounds like uh.. well if your could imagine everything around you moving. It's just very very loud, a loud roar. It lasted five minutes. Five minutes is a long time to have earth move underneath your feet and be terrified. And that's what we were. We were terrified. And then it was over and I can't remember exactly what happened right after, but I remember my dad's drink fell off the coffee table and one of our mirrors fell and broke. That's

about all that really happened at our house. We went outside. During an earthquake a lot of times water will be sucked out of an area and come back. Basically that's why there were chunks of dock floating down the channel. There happened to be one chunk of dock that had a small airplane and a man standing on it. He was yelling and screaming for someone to come and save him. There was a boat going out there to get him. I don't know. I think they tied it off and drug it somewhere to save the airplane. One of the neighbors from down below came running up and said their fence just went. And at this time we still didn't know that tidal waves came after earthquakes. We had no idea. We didn't know anything about it. We didn't really understand. The radio was telling every one to go to high ground. We didn't really know why. My mom and dad gathered up all of our paper work, canceled checks, different receipts. We got in the car and drove down town.

My babysitter, Reka, I was real close with. I spent the night with her a lot. Her Chihuahua had puppies and I had been promised I could spend the night with her that night because I hadn't been able to see them. The night before my mom said, "You can see them anytime don't worry about it." (I never told you this story last time). So I was going to go down town and spend the night with her. We were driving down to check to see how the puppies were cause her house was down town. We drove down Rezanoff and we got to the bottom and they had it barricaded. They told

us we couldn't go through. The streets were all wet . We thought that they were scared of fires from the oil and stuff. Maybe oil got leaked out of the barrels. They were spraying down in case of a fire. We didn't know that there were tidal waves coming in all ready and wetting down the streets so we turned around and went back home. I never did get to see the Chihuahua's puppies because they all died in the tidal wave. What happened to them was strange because the house was still there and you could see the water line where the water went up to a foot below the ceiling. It was around where Mac's Sporting Goods store is right now. There were a lot of houses back behind the front road there. The big dogs, there were two adult dogs, that were alive and they had spent the night on the mattress that was floating a foot below the ceiling. The puppies all died, but you could see where the mother had tried to pull them all on top of the mattress and keep them up there, but they all died so I never got to see the baby puppies. I never got to see the baby puppies. That was traumatic for me when I was eleven years old.

But anyhow so then we went back home and we figured we'd go up and stay on higher ground at a friends of our's house the Christoffersons. They lived about five or six houses towards going out of town from the Jr. High. We could see the ocean from there and it was high enough that we felt safe. I don't know why we were up there except that it was high and it was safe. He played the piano and my dad played the saxophone. We

went up there and there were a bunch of kids up there that all knew each other. One of the parents went down to find their dog and came back with a case of whiskey they had found. It was from one of the stores I guess. There were tidal waves coming and going all night long. People would go out and look for stuff even though there were tidal waves coming and going. I remember my mom talking on the phone right before we went up there to a friend in Oregon. She was constantly saying here's another one, here comes another one. There were after shocks so every time we'd have another jolt it was like being on a boat. It moved all night long, the island moved. We had a lot of after shocks. It was never still. We had them for months later. So we went up to their house, they played, and danced, and drank whiskey. All the chandeliers they had in those days that were over the dining room tables. We had one, and people that stayed with had one. They moved all night long. We could here the roar of the waves and we could peek our heads out side and look down towards town . You could hear the roar. All of the town was being demolished. It was like this loud roar happening like a big storm. About midnight we decided that it was over so we went home. We got home and we ran down to the ocean shore which was the channel across from Woody Island and the water was running parallel to the shore rather than a tide runs in and out. It was black with oil. We looked at it and ran back up the hill. My mom and dad had realized that out in the lake you could see

silhouettes. The old Beachcombers, a log cabin, and all of the small planes airport down on Mission beach was in the lake and the trailer park and about 50 or 60 cars in the lake. The ice was pushed around the shore. It wasn't in the lake. We all went to bed and about one o'clock in the morning about an hour after we got there my mom heard this huge roar. I was asleep. All the houses and trailers, everything that was in the lake moved all the way down to one side and all the way back to the other side and brought to the middle and dropped down from the water that came into the lake from Mission beach.

Did anyone die in there?

No, nobody died in the lake, but I do know one family that lived down in that house had to run across the ice that was cracked in their stocking feet. The Legrues: Janet, Antoinette and Raymond Legrue, to get away from the tidal wave they had to run across the ice. That sounded scary to me. The next day there were no telephones, no electricity, and no running water. My dad put the coffee pot on the burn barrel outside our house. Nobody worked, nobody was allowed down town. There was no way to get anywhere because you couldn't go through town. And most the places were destroyed or disaster areas. So everybody wandered around and looked at all the damage. Oh this was on a Saturday. I wandered down to where the old Beachcombers was, where the Salvation Army is now. I was with my new dog who was eight months old at the time and I got down to

the very bottom of the hill about a quarter away from our house someone came running up from the beach screaming "Everybody run a 90 foot tidal wave is coming." And due to the fact that the one the night before was 15 feet everybody ran, stampeded to their cars and took off. I was running hysterically home. Everybody drove right past me until somebody stopped and picked me up right before my house and dropped me off. I ran in and told my mom and dad. We listened on the radio. We didn't hear anything. Finally we realized it was just a rumor. It wasn't true, nothing happened, nothing came. There was no running water and no heat or anything at our house so we went to a house; the Chandley's house, one of the older houses facing Baronoff park. They had a fire place in a big house so five of us families went and stayed there for the night. We put on plays for the parents all night. What we didn't know was that one of the men there had T.B. and all of us children were exposed to it. I didn't know that till the next year when my brother and I got tine tested and were positive. All the rest of my friends had been on the pills cause they had found out. During a disaster a lot of the time they miss people. We were two people that were missed, but had already cured ourselves so it was okay we never had to take the pills. We had to have X rays from then on.

Did you know any of the people that were out at Chiniak camping that weekend?

Oh yeah there were people in Chiniak out camping. We knew all the people because we went out camping with them a lot. All of us lived out on the base when civilians lived on the base. They would take any of the kids that wanted to go out so I got to camping with who ever went out there. There were quantzahuts out at Chiniak point. They're all gone now, but they were past the tunnels where the salmon run. After the earthquake it took about a half an hour for the first tidal wave to come. All the people in Chiniak that were camping out decided to send several people in. There were several families there and each family sent several people in to check and see what was going on in town. The rest of them stayed out there. All the people that left got to Kalson Bay Inn just in time for the first big wave. Most of them were killed. There was a guy I knew who was two years older than me, Ricky Vosgien, they found him hanging in a tree. He was caught in a tree. My band director Mr. Sholtz, him and his family died. I think their whole car was taken. There was this poor man in a Volkswagen. He made it to higher ground. His car went with his wife and new baby in it, but he made it. He lived. There were several of them that died. The rest of the people were on high ground. They were kind of caught because Kalson Bay is such a wide and low bay and that's how the tidal wave builds on a flat lower place.

None of the people died that were at Chiniak Point?

No. You had to be on ocean level or five to ten feet up. Like this house is

100 feet up. There's no way unless it was a huge tidal wave that we've never had before. The tidal wave we had was fifteen feet. A tidal wave builds on natural ocean shores. That's why it destroyed the town because it was natural shores down there and the wave just went up the natural incline.

Which destroyed Kodiak more the tidal wave or the earthquake?

The earthquake didn't do anything. Kodiak is solid rock so we didn't have fissures and cracks in the ground like Anchorage and other places that have fill and not solid rock. We had a few cracks in the runway in the base. Few people lost a few things that fell off shelves. We didn't have any cracks in the ground. Kodiak is the perfect place to be because it's solid rock. The tidal wave that we didn't know anything about destroyed everything including the brand new parking meters the city had just put in that we haven't had since.

Did you like it better before or after the tidal wave?

I liked it a lot better before Urban Renewal came in and destroyed a lot of buildings that didn't need to be destroyed. It was more cost efficient to just bulldoze and burn the whole town down and start over again. I had one friend who was older. I just found out recently that he had a metal shop down town was trying to revive it. There was nothing wrong with it. It was perfectly fine. He was told he had two hours to get out of there because they were going to bulldoze down the building and so he lost his

business. Urban Renewal bulldozed him down. For a long time we had a lot of ticky tacky shacks. Krafts was like a plywood building and these plywood walkways. Everything was plywood everywhere. It was real crummy. Before that we had unique quaint little towns with wooden walkways and false fronts. Neat old stores that were individually built one at a time throughout all the years. There were a a lot of personality in them. Wadlinger Drug store was one of those kind of stores that you would walk in and the floor planks would creek and there was a little bell on it and there were panes in the display windows. The old dry goods store was on a dock and you'd walk in downstairs and there'd be hardware and you'd walk up these old stairs in the back and it was just like and old fashioned store with spools of material and all this stuff it was right on the shore there. The old Kodiak Hotel had that bear down on the harbor. It was back further where the Holmes Johnson clinic is. There was the old Noughtons bakery that had the best baked goods ever. The house that's on Rezanoff that everyone calls the haunted house was down town. Right when you came in from the base and turned a corner and came down by where Jack Mann's is, right about in there, it had a store behind it that was a shoe store. Across the street was the Knewtzons just another old, old store that had these creepy cranky old wood floors. They had wood stoves in the back of them. Knewtzons had lots of Jenny dolls. We'd go down there and pick up Jenny doll's....(More Interview on tape).

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