

Stacey Carkhuff and Polly Hyslop interviewing Julius Sam
Northway, Alaska, October 10, 2008
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POLLY HYSLOP: When the highway was being built, you were living across the river?

JULIUS SAM: Yeah.

POLLY HYSLOP: Could you tell us a little bit about what it was like across the river?

JULIUS SAM: Like what?

POLLY HYSLOP: Like how many people lived there?

JULIUS SAM: Well, Joe Dimet's family, my family. I don't know. You know Bessie Sam?

POLLY HYSLOP: Yeah.

JULIUS SAM: They was family.

POLLY HYSLOP: OK.

JULIUS SAM: Like Helen and Mary and all those people.

POLLY HYSLOP: Yeah.

JULIUS SAM: In winter time them old moved back. Like Walter Northway, Bill Northway, and Steven Northway [?] Used to be year round over there, sometimes they'd move to Tetlin.

POLLY HYSLOP: Oh, OK.

JULIUS SAM: In the summer time my mom cut fish and smoke it, down at the [Last] Tetlin, they call it you know, all the way up there. We'd stay at Tetlin and go to school. In the old time, the last time we come from there we moved across the country, about October 20 someplace, we'd move back closer.

POLLY HYSLOP: How did you move with your family before road?

JULIUS SAM: Pack.

POLLY HYSLOP: On your back?

JULIUS SAM: Yeah.

POLLY HYSLOP: Trail?

JULIUS SAM: When I was a baby my mom had to pack, yeah. Easy to us, I don't know.

POLLY HYSLOP: My grandmother, she lived over there too, with her husband?

JULIUS SAM: Well, they lived up there at Scottie Creek sometime, and 10 Mile, and Scottie Creek, you know the way they could get fish and stuff. Most of it was something to eat, people want, you know. If you don't do that, you don't get fish, or moose meat or something you gonna starve, you know. We on the move all the time, gotta move like if I run out of meat and my dad know we're running short on stuff, you know, he tell us, [?] hunt, if you kill moose you come back, pick up your family and move over to it. You know know, we smoke moose meat. My mom know how to cut it you know. Tan the moose hide, and all this stuff. You guys are lucky- you run into a guy who know how to talk and...Like Oscar Jimmy, he don't understand how to...He didn't go to school there, you know.

POLLY HYSLOP: Nowadays you wish that, your highway, the highway, you want it to be here?

JULIUS SAM: Yeah.

POLLY HYSLOP: [De' Ha].

JULIUS SAM: Well I don't know. This, gotta have a car nowadays to get around you gotta, you gotta live like white people. You try to live like Indian, they warn you, they pick you up and put you in jail. You know, you kill a moose out of season, or kill, say we need food, no season open, you know. We get treated like white people Nowadays. We gotta live like white people because of the Fish and Wildlife, and all those people, you know. If we don't, we don't want to go to jail, you know.

STACEY CARKHUFF: So you think that, along with a lot of the youth not having traditional knowledge has been affected by the highway?

JULIUS SAM: I don't know. I don't think it...Those young people. A lot of people like it because you go to Fairbanks, and everywhere with cars and stuff, but it's pretty good to happen to. I don't know really. We can't live like back in the old days. Indian life you know, because of law and stuff that they put up on us. If you know what I mean. They lock you up in jail if you kill a moose out of season or stuff like that, you know. Those days of moose, they affected our moose meat, you know and they get cow moose, any kind of thing, anything as soon as you can eat it, you know.

STACEY CARKHUFF: So, was there anything else that you wanted to say, or that you remember that you want other people to know about the highway in Northway?

JULIUS SAM: Well, as far as I know, is the young people nowadays, you can't do...I don't know what to do with them, really. Somehow, some time come around want to know about this and that, you know, and I tell them. But I don't think there's anybody in Northway Village that old time way, the way that I grew up, you know. They get four wheelers, snow machines, anything like that, they just buzz around all day on the lake, across the lakes and back, that's all. I don't know, they're all spoiled I guess, I don't know.

STACEY CARKHUFF: OK.

JULIUS SAM: I like the way they build this highway. It's close to our village and we can get anything we want, you know.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Yeah, it's very helpful.

JULIUS SAM: Easy.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Like medicine and everything.

JULIUS SAM: Yeah. Everything almost. I talk about it to people, and they me they like it too, just the way it is. You know, like Oscar Jimmy and all those people they're from Nabesna, Copper River people. They move up here and back in 1940's someplace across the village through that village. So I guess that's about all I can tell you.