

Stacey Carkhuff interviewing Cherie Marunde
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STACEY CARKHUFF: So, Cherie, I just wanted to ask you a little bit about the history of your family here, like what clan you belong to and a little bit about just your personal history.

CHERIE MARUNDE: Well, I was born and raised here in Northway my mom is from here, my dad is from Virginia, so, across the country. My mom's parents are also from here, one, her mom is from Tetlin, my grandma is from Tetlin and my grandpa's side of the family is from the Copper Center River area. Ok, my mom was Mary Jane Fix, my grandma, her mom and dad are Mary Albert and Oscar Albert. And so Mary Albert is from, Mary Luke Albert is her maiden name, is from Tetlin. And Oscar of course, my grandpa, his mom is Elsie, and that's Walter Northway's sister-they're brother and sister. So that's that side of the family that's always been here in Northway. Oh, um, the clan. We're [Chi Chel You] in the [Chi Chel You] clan.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Ok, so um, obviously you weren't here when the highway was built, but I wanted to ask you, just to get the perspective of a younger person if you have any recollection of elders, or your parents, or anyone talking about it and what they experienced when it was being built in 1942.

CHERIE MARUNDE: Ok, one was my mom and her brother, Mary, my mother Mary and her brother Stuart, they're both deceased now. I remember they were saying they were out playing in the flat and one of the trucks came through and it scared them to death. I remember them saying that, that it really scared them and they never- they could hear it coming and they had never seen one before, so that really scared them. And the other one, kind of the story before the road, is that my grandpa was always telling stories, and this one is by Beaver Creek by the tower there. He said he got a moose and got it, and cut it up and all that and brought it back with dog team, and he said there was no roads then. So that was kind of hard for me to visualize when he was telling me that story, because it was just like, oh. And how there's a big old road through it, and I remember him laughing when he said that. So now we could have just driven right up to it now. And it was kind of a hard, hardship for them kinda to get it back, because you would have to walk, you know.

STACEY CARKHUFF: So do you think they appreciated the fact that there was a road?

CHERIE MARUNDE: I think they did. You know to me, that's what...of course my grandpa loves cars, and loves to drive and loves to ride, so. I think he definitely appreciated the road.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Do you think he thought it helped Northway more connected to other communities, or...just by being able to drive from here to there?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Yes, because see, he helped to build the bridges, you know the bridges that you drive over. I think some of them are still up, that he built. Um, and so he was able to, learned to drive, and was able to drive to Fairbanks, even told me stories about being in Fairbanks, and it isn't not even nothing like it is now. He was able to...he said it was real easy so I think for him it was easy. He felt more connected, because he was able to get to Fairbanks. Before that I think they had to take steam boats, or they had to use boats to get to the hospital in Nenana or whatever.

STACEY CARKHUFF: So did he work for the US Army or did he just work for a company?

CHERIE MARUNDE: You know, he gave me the name at one time, but I don't think it was the US Army, there was an actual name but I can't remember it.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Do you think any important hunting places, since you've been born and you've been able to do traditional hunting and gathering that they have changed? Since even you know, the 60's to now, do you think they've changed?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Yes, I think it has, because when...just like, I was four, so like in the early 70's hardly anyone had a vehicle. And they weren't so reliable, so people didn't travel very far. And back then, I remember going even up the Taylor Highway, you didn't see a car. You didn't see a single car, even in the summertime. And we were able to pick berries there, and dig roots where ever. But now, anywhere you go, its just over run by people and cars. Everybody is everywhere and people that don't normally hunt this area drive down to hunt in this area. Um, when they had the caribou hunts here, they, the military, they opened it to the military. And it was just overrun, and the locals were too scared to even hunt. And you know this is even 10 years ago it was crazy. Even that, with the road system is over run by hunters and berry pickers.

STACEY CARKHUFF: And most of these people; are they out of town, or out of state?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Well, I think they're just out of town.

STACEY CARKHUFF: So do you think that there's been any sort of backlash or defense by people who are traditional gatherers and hunters toward these people who are coming in, or is it just kind of a sense of helplessness?

CHERIE MARUNDE: I think it's more yea, the helplessness more so. The only defense I think I see people taking or is trying to take is having the Corporation Land cut off from anyone using it, or pay a fee to use the land.

STACEY CARKHUFF: You're talking about Corporation Lands cut off or make them pay a fee, do you think thats deterred people, or do they just pay the fee and go?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Um, well they're just setting that up now. And I think that it'll work both ways. I think the people that's been here forever, they'll just pay the fee and keep doing what they're going to do, keep using the land for hunting or whatever. I think some of the local people want to make it high enough so it would deter people from using the land. I think if it was up to some of the people, they would rather not see anyone on the land.

POLLY HYSLOP: Especially air boats. That's not land, but nobody has the right...to tell who can go on the water ways right?

CHERIE MARUNDE: No, and that's, thats another thing. They're using the water ways, because of the highway now we're getting a lot more people with boats. And so it has definitely picked up with the traveling of the water ways. You know, there's more duck hunters, more moose hunters, and then some people, I don't know where they're from. They come down every year and go up the Nabesna River-park here and go up the Nabesna River to go sheep hunting. So, it's definitely a lot more people here from the road. And it definitely impacted all the hunting.

STACEY CARKHUFF: So, well if you could, just tell me a little bit about your personal use, and what you do for hunting and trapping and just the traditional lifestyle that still exists among the younger

generation, like your generation. If you could just talk a little bit about that, and what you've learned from, actually been born into.

CHERIE MARUNDE: Raised, yea. When I was a bit younger, I'll just do, go ahead and start with mom, and more or less what she taught us. We kind of lived in seasons. The summer months we'd be gathering berries, fish. She did a lot of baskets, so we'd need a lot of birch and roots to make her birch bark baskets. Sometimes we'd, a lot of the summers we'd stay up in our cabin, and do the fishing and stuff there, then you would go to the fall time and you'd pick and gather the roots that we eat, and you did the moose hunting. Um, hope I'm not forgetting anything. And we still fished, later in the season too, you know late summer and fall. In the winter time it was mostly trapping, most of the winter, and of course we went to school and so. And then, the spring time would always be duck hunting, gathering roots again, mostly I went...So I mean, we'd always. And then in the summer, sorry I forgot, in the summer we also did gardening, that was always a big thing for us. And now, it's almost the same now for me. I mean, we do fishing, we dry our fish, we have two ways of cutting it. We use the human, the round, I don't have any fish to show you, but we dry it. So there's dog food fish and the human fish. So I mean we did it two different ways. And then, I also dry moose meat if you've seen the rack, Glen laughs at it because it keeps getting set up more. I have moose meat drying right up in the stairwell right now, but um, because its too cold outside. I mean, its just that we do that, dry the moose meat and hunt for moose and caribou. We trap, the trapping we start in October and go till March, like early March, and then all through March and part of April we do beaver trapping and muskrat trapping and that's all done on the lakes. Last thing, we have a dog team, so as soon as it freezes and gets enough snow we run the dogs just to keep them in shape and then we trap beavers and muskrats with them and sometimes around the line up by the border we have a trap line at the border. We use them there, because there's not much snow and the dog team works well, and it doesn't use any gas.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Yes, that's true. How many dogs do you have?

CHERIE MARUNDE: We have eight that we run, and the barking one over there.

STACEY CARKHUFF: So you said your trapline is on the border?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Well, we have one there, we have a 50 some mile one outback here that my family has used for, I believe we can count it back to over 200 years ago. So it went from, I'm doing it now, my mother did it for about 30 years, my mom Mary, my grandpa Oscar did it before that, and his dad Peter.

STACEY CARKHUFF: That is a long running trapline. So, what kind of animals do you catch on this trapline?

CHERIE MARUNDE: OK, we catch wolves, wolverine, lynx, fox, marten, mink, beaver and muskrats.

STACEY CARKHUFF: That's quite an assortment of animals. So once you have them all, then you skin them do all that, do you save the fur, or do you sell it?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Well, I use some, and then some of it we do sell. Just to pay for gas, and whatever else. When I was younger, I didn't use hardly any of it because we needed the money. So now, of course I'm working now, so I like to use it for sewing, some of it.

STACEY CARKHUFF: That's interesting. So with the border trapline, do you have any recollection of

having issues with the border? You mean the border of Canada?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Yes, Um, no it's on the American side, I always just say border because it's close, but we actually get to the border slash but we never go into Canada, no they've never said anything even through we're running on the slash.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Because I've heard of a lot of people having major issues trying to get back and forth just because of the passport regulations and...

CHERIE MARUNDE: There isn't...we're way out there. Nobody, there's no one even out there. So its...

STACEY CARKHUFF: So have you um, are your kids interested in the culture?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Yes, I grew them up just the way I was, since they were little. I have pictures of my oldest daughter at 6 months in my trapping sled in a car seat, with a blanket over her. So I mean, she, that's how they were raised, all three of them. So they all know how to trap, and fish and hunt; they do it all. And now, we're getting them educated in college, so.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Do you think that they'll return to the community?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Well, my oldest one definitely wants to come back, my son is working for [IRA] in Fairbanks and I don't know what he's planning on doing there, and my youngest daughter is going to, is training to be a hygienist, so, there's no work here for that, so I doubt she'll come back even though she may want to.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Right, yeah. Are other people your age with kids teaching their kids as well, or.

CHERIE MARUNDE: Not to the extent I believe I am, because a lot of them don't know how to trap or fish. And there were a few that taught their kids how to hunt.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Do you think that may have to do with the fact that they weren't taught as a result of cultural changes, or?

CHERIE MARUNDE: It could be. I'm sure it is, because they weren't taught how to trap, so then how would they teach their children? You know, we grew up and my mom and dad both trapped, and partners more or less, and so you know when Glen and I got together I was the only one that stayed in Northway, and there was eight of us and I'm the only one that lives here. So then of course the trapline just went to me. And so we've been trapping it since I was 18.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Wow. So I know you and Polly are both interested in your Native language and you have been taking classes and you're very interested in preserving it. Do you want to talk about that for a little bit?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Sure. It's...to me the last speaker is, I believe is, if he's speaking Frank, and no one under that is speaking it. I don't know it fluently, and I don't think anybody knows how to read or write it. And we're learning. So I think it'll definitely be gone in the next 30 years if someone doesn't preserve it. Which is sad to me, because it's part of our culture. And you know, when I started school, I

didn't know a lot of the English names for things, and I remember being embarrassed because I'd say the name, like a rabbit is ga'. And you know, he'd say "Whats this" and I'd say, and it wasn't even in the same language which is what the other kids were talking, you know. So it was a little bit embarrassing when I was little. Now I wish I would have tried to remember more. Because...and it wasn't just me, there was other kids that knew only, you know all the birds, and you know ah, the animals, they just knew the Indian names for them, the didn't know English names for a lot of the stuff.

STACEY CARKHUFF: So both your parents spoke?

CHERIE MARUNDE: No, just my mom.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Oh, OK.

CHERIE MARUNDE: Yea, my dad's from Virginia.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Did your mom speak English as well? Did your siblings? Did you say you have siblings?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Yes, there's eight of us.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Did any of them pick up on it?

CHERIE MARUNDE: No.

STACEY CARKHUFF: So what kind of school was it? A BIA school or was it a...

CHERIE MARUNDE: No, it was a, when I went it was a State of Alaska School, it was a state school.

POLLY HYSLOP: It wasn't the two story- room school- was it the Walter Northway School then?

CHERIE MARUNDE: No, we went to the Northway...it was just Northway School then, it was down by the FAA building. And it was, it was trailers.

POLLY HYSLOP: Oh, well then that's different.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Did you have any Native teachers?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Yes. We actually had a Native language class when we were...and a Spanish one too. I mean there was different languages.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Well, that's valuable in Northway.

CHERIE MARUNDE: So there, there was I remember I think Eddie was there for a while, Marilyn, and Della I believe were the people that were...and we just played games, like bingo but it would all be in Native language, and the written. Maybe that's why I was so interested, in you know, when the classes were started, that I really wanted to you know remember how to write and learn how to read.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Well that's cool. Its good that you had a teachers that were able to provide

some of that culture and background for you.

CHERIE MARUNDE: And the other thing I forgot to say, is during the winter months also, my mom did a lot of beadwork or sewing of mukluks and hats and mittens. So she did that, I forgot to put that on there. I said that's one of the things she did. And I also still sew, and that's just throughout the year though. But its not, you know. A lot of times a lot of people just did it in the winter when its cold...

STACEY CARKHUFF: Oh, so you do it all year?

CHERIE MARUNDE: All year, yea.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Is it just because you like doing that?

CHERIE MARUNDE: Um, just because I do it when I can. Since I do work full time its hard to, you know you can't live in seasons like you normally do.

STACEY CARKHUFF: Yea.

CHERIE MARUNDE: I just think that the, for the road part, it definitely played a part in losing the culture, because people are more interested, especially the younger generation, my kids are included you know, they want to go watch a movie, and you know, they want to go to McDonald's and so I think you know, having the easy access to bigger communities definitely has had an impact on this one. You know people go to grocery shop, you know. So definitely.