

Ben & Bea Lingle
NPS Skagway Oral History Project
Skagway, Alaska
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Interviewed by Stacey Carkhuff:

Stacey Carkhuff: This is Stacey Carkhuff interviewing Ben & Bea Lingle. This is December 9th, 2009 in Skagway, Alaska for the Skagway Oral History Project and their son Mike O'Daniel is sitting in on the interview. So first I'll start where you're from Ben and why your family decided to move to Skagway.

Ben Lingle: Well that's kind of a long one, my Dad first off was, was up here. And he was working up here and then he when that job terminated up in

Bea Lingle: Kodiak?

Ben Lingle: (shook head no) in ah, somewhere up here and then he moved to Skagway and that's how we started. And then I came up later on and I came up in

Bea Lingle: When you were seventeen.

Ben Lingle: In '44 and that's about it.

Stacey Carkhuff: Okay and you say you were born in North Carolina?

Ben Lingle: In North Carolina and I moved to ah, Elmounty, California

Stacey Carkhuff: And then you moved to Skagway.

Ben Lingle: Then Skagway

Stacey Carkhuff: And if I could ask you what you did when you got to Skagway?

Ben Lingle: I went to work for the railroad.

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh, okay. And this was right after World War II so it would have been busy.

Ben Lingle: Yeah, it was, busy.

Stacey Carkhuff: Okay, And Bea what about you?

Bea Lingle: I was born here.

Stacey Carkhuff: So were your parents born here?

Bea Lingle: No my Grandfather came up right at the beginning of the gold rush. He was a gambler and he got a job in one of the gambling saloon here in town as a ferrow dealer. And they're paid a salary because it is quite an intricate game apparently. And then when he got enough money together he sent

for his wife and their little daughter. He had a house built for them. And they came up and lived here until Mother needed more schooling. She went, started school here. And then she, they sent her back to back east to a girls' school. And then when she got out of there she came up and met my Dad and they got married and then they had four girls.

Stacey Carkhuff: And you're one of them.

Bea Lingle: I'm the youngest. The others are gone now.

Stacey Carkhuff: Un-huh, so did your Grandpa ever tell you any stories of what it was like here?

Bea Lingle: I never met him, I never met him.

Stacey Carkhuff: Did he pass any stories down?

Bea Lingle: No, I think when he met my Grandmother she lived on um, had lived on a plantation down in Charleston, the Waring Plantation. And he was a river boat gambler I think.

Stacey Carkhuff: Interesting career choice...

Bea Lingle: She had one little girl, they had one little girl, which was my mother. And Grandma never even nursed her. A nigger Nanny nursed her. Can I say that?

Stacey Carkhuff: Yeah.

Bea Lingle: But um, that's how the family got started and then. And then I think my Dad's mother came over from Ireland. I have their pictures all up there on the wall.

Stacey Carkhuff: You have a lot of very nice historical photos.

Bea Lingle: [] family just gave me some and I said I can't have any more because they're almost down to the baseboard. But, and I was here and even though I went to school in Seattle this was always home. So I felt like I was raised here but I wasn't really.

Stacey Carkhuff: Okay, Ben if you wanted [] starting your two businesses in Skagway, the hardware store and Skagway Air.

Ben Lingle: Well I don't know what to say. The hardware store why ah, was previously owned by some other people. Their names were [] and ah, they bought it hmm... somewhere around 1946 I think. And then ah, one day I was in there talking to Bill and he knew I was looking for a business to buy [] and he was trying to get out of it too. So I bought from him. Since then we put in another store next door and ah, Mike has done that. And then we started a lumber yard. [] both of them are doing well. And then in the Air Service well I don't know when we started it.

Bea Lingle: I think we'd had the hardware store about ten years do you remember Mike? Three? Two?

Stacey Carkhuff: So you had it for about two years and then you started the Air.

Bea Lingle: I guess so

Stacey Carkhuff: Okay, [] in the mid-forties some time.

Ben Lingle: Yeah

Stacey Carkhuff: I know it is hard to remember things that were that long ago. And you don't write it down. You're doing it. That's understandable.

Mike O'Daniel: If I could say something

Stacey Carkhuff: Mike you wanted to say something?

Mike They started, they bought the hardware company in 1962 and the Air Service in 1964.

Stacey Carkhuff: Okay, [] so we have the accurate dates.

Mike O'Daniel: And also at that time he was also the Lead Mechanic for White Pass. So he was doing elite mechanic work and then coming down and working the store, and then flying in the Air Service. So he was working three jobs when he first started it out. So now for a good many years cause you worked at White Pass for three or four more years []

Ben Lingle: I don't even know when I did that, when I quit them but I did work twenty years.

Stacey Carkhuff: Okay []

Bea Lingle: Five children all together. Mike's the oldest.

Stacey Carkhuff: Okay now we have added Mike to the picture so if we could just keep talking about []. Ben when you came here and you started your businesses, um, what it was like to start the hardware company if you remember?

Ben Lingle: You should have come about five years sooner than this because I'm not a very good talker now.

Stacey Carkhuff: [] Bea?

Bea Lingle: I'm mighty proud of my husband when he went to work on the railroad up here he was only seventeen. And he wasn't a big husky guy. He's always been slight built. And he went to work firing one of the train engines and they were coal fired and I mean that was hard, heavy work!

Stacey Carkhuff: Wow I bet!

Bea Lingle: It's still [] oil diesel fire I guess number 73 and you'll see pictures of that engine. It's pretty famous. And Mike worked for the railroad until it shut down. It was, it kept the town going. Tourism does now but um, [] I don't know how much further into the history of the family you want to go but we had of I think five generations here now, we just took another four generation picture thanksgiving. But we've had five or six generations, five that I can think of, in town you know.

Stacey Carkhuff: That's impressive.

Bea Lingle: It keeps going.

Stacey Carkhuff: There's not very many people that can say that they have five or more generations living in the same town, especially in Alaska.

Bea Lingle: A little town like this too you know. All the years we raised the children there was about six hundred people here. Now there's about eight hundred and fifty they say. But I think that's counting dogs, cats and chickens because they're sure gone in the wintertime and then in the summer our population almost triples, because we have all the young folks that come into work.

Stacey Carkhuff: Right Okay [].

Bea Lingle: And Mike worked for the railroad in two or three different capacities.

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah I started when I was in high school working on the section and then up to Baggage man and then to Brakeman and then to Conductor. When I got promoted up to Conductor when I was still in the Service because my time was going and I was overseas. So when I came back from overseas I was actually a promoted conductor. [] I did that a while and then went [] they asked me if I would take a job down there as a wharf agent well actually the assistant wharf agent but then right after I got down there they had a big move or they expanded into the wharf terminal and they took the wharf agent, that was there, Smokey Napp, at the time and moved him over to the work terminal and then I just got. And I think they realized what they had done to themselves so they fixed a few things. So I ended up being the wharf agent down there for quite a few years. And then I went back into the train service. And then when the railroad closed down I had been helping at the store and with the air service and I went out and finished up my pilots' license and I came back to kind of help out. And it just kind of took more and more time and so I went into that business, helped with that business. And by that time the business both businesses had built up and it was taking a lot of work so. It took everything that everybody had just to keep things going. Which was fun, it was a family business and it was growing in you know things were changing. And you know there were some lean times after the railroad closed down and it got kind of scary because all of a sudden your year round economy was gone and we were back depending on what had been our second economy which was comfortable which was tourism and then right in the middle of that the tourism decided to take off. The ships got bigger and more ships coming in. And that meant that the Air Service got bigger and the business going to the hardware store and more hotels coming into town and stuff like that it was just it kept us real busy. And we just kind of grew with it. That part is being, the Air Service part of it and of course the hardware store you were twenty-four-seven if somebody's furnace went down at two in the morning and it was cold outside I'd, you know they'd call the house and you went to the store. (All nodding in agreement.) And if somebody got sick at two in the morning they'd called you and you flew out of here and ah, you know you were just on call all the time. So one of us, one of us was usually available at all times to be able to deal with whatever emergency came up, whatever side it was.

Stacey Carkhuff: It must have been exhausting work.

Ben Lingle: nodded

Mike O'Daniel: You know, I don't know that you look at it as exhausting. It's just steady and you make sure it's covered. You know when you grow up or when you've built from nothing I mean I, I thought [] in the later years and I was busy and doing things but I couldn't imagine when he started and I can remember being around here and he was the lead mechanic for the gasman camp. He was in charge of all, all their gasoline engines, all the power plants up and down the railroad, all the casings and the motor cars, ah their ford spot body engine.

Bea Lingle: Sexton houses, light ***

Mike O'Daniel: Everything that the smaller engine, but the diesel mechanics did, he was responsible for plus when he'd get off and he'd come down to the store which Mom was running all during the day and then he'd thread pipe and cut glass and make quarters, and ah,

Bea Lingle: Work late at night

Mike O'Daniel: Work late at night and then in the middle of that and two years later he starts the Air Service with a couple of partners that and but it still meant that the phone would ring in the middle of the night [] and you just got up and went because at that time and up until a few years ago we did probably about 98% of the medevac out of here.

Bea Lingle: We were the ambulance to the hospital

Mike O'Daniel: So you were the school bus, the mailman, the ambulance, the whatever it took, you know. If you could get it in an airplane we were hauling dynamite when they were building the road and jet fuel for the helicopters. If you could get it in an airplane we were hauling it.

Bea Lingle: Mastodon tusks

Mike O'Daniel: (ha) Yeah

Bea Lingle: From up north and then he came home this one time with this big tusk coming over his shoulder.

Stacey Carkhuff: Where did you find the mastodon tusk?

Ben Lingle: Oh ...

Bea Lingle: Dennis Corington

Ben Lingle: Yeah

Mike O'Daniel: Up around Chicken

Ben Lingle: Chicken up in there somewhere.

Bea Lingle: Have you been there?

Stacey Carkhuff: I haven't been there. But I can, I can imagine finding a mastodon tusk would be

Ben Lingle: ***

Mike O'Daniel: Goldminers they're always [] they were finding a lot of stuff. They were finding a lot of stuff up around Dawson and stuff too like that one there. When they were moving a lot of ground

Stacey Carkhuff: So was the hardware store the first hardware store in town?

Ben Lingle: No Bill and Dorothy Duke had one there before us and then when they sold out I purchased it from them.

Stacey Carkhuff: Was it the only one?

Ben Lingle: Yeah

Mike O'Daniel: Well but Carter

Ben Lingle: Well no

Bea Lingle: Carter didn't really have

Ben Lingle: Carter kind of had one

Mike O'Daniel: Carter just kind of had stuff and some nuts and bolts

Bea Lingle: Nobody called it a hardware store it was just a Becarter's

Mike O'Daniel: But then you also had Harry Ask that had a bunch of stuff upstairs that boots and things. And you had the commissary which was a grocery store

Bea Lingle: For the railroad

Mike O'Daniel: For the railroad and you had ReeRee's which had the new kids' tennis shoes coming out in it every year. So you know everybody kind of handled [] everything but everybody kind of sent everybody to, they knew what everybody else had. Well if they didn't have it they just sent you next door and they'd say no, no, so and so carries that and

Bea Lingle: Sears and Roebuck did a big job too and Montgomery Ward

Stacey Carkhuff: Un-huh

Bea Lingle: You know we didn't have a road out

Stacey Carkhuff: So you had to order through the catalogs?

Bea Lingle: Yeah

Stacey Carkhuff: So

Bea Lingle: Mike

Stacey Carkhuff: Go ahead

Bea Lingle: My, I was just going to say Mike's seen a lot of changes. And of course he has his children, his three children are here and then he has his grandchildren here. So it's going on and on and on.

Stacey Carkhuff: It's good

Bea Lingle: It is! I love it!

Stacey Carkhuff: It's good that they're still in Skagway.

Bea Lingle: Yeah, they

Mike O'Daniel: They've all gone out and gone to school. And we've told them if they're, to come back and they want to come back just to bring something to the table when they could [] and so far we've been pretty, pretty lucky with that. My youngest son, is actually running the store for Benny now so

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh Okay.

Bea Lingle: And his Mom and Dad (motioning with her head towards Mike) are working for him.

Mike O'Daniel: Yep, yep (ha)

Bea Lingle: (ha)

Stacey Carkhuff: Is that your son John?

Mike O'Daniel: Yes

Stacey Carkhuff: So what [] Service was that the first Air Service to come to Skagway?

Ben Lingle: nods

Mike O'Daniel: They had some on and off in the early years and White Pass had, had a flying Service. And you know probably in the early the twenties and the thirties. And there had been some starts but never, nothing had ever lasted very long. And ah, he started in '64 and we closed it down in what was [] it was two years ago right, 2007.

Bea Lingle: Yeah and Mike's youngest son went out and got a degree in business management. And he met a girl out there getting the same kind of degree and she's now our City Treasurer, Cindy.

Stacey Carkhuff: Un-huh

Mike O'Daniel: And she came up and worked in the summers in the hotels, the Westmark.

Bea Lingle: Yeah and she was willing to come back here when they graduated from college, which we were lucky, you know that.

Stacey Carkhuff: Yeah

Mike O'Daniel: Probably the hardest thing right now is for young people to put roots down and to stay here. It's getting tougher and tougher.

Bea Lingle: It always has been. Yeah but they could go to work for the railroad.

Stacey Carkhuff: Why do think that it's getting tougher?

Mike O'Daniel: It just isn't any to try to get a year round job or to try and get a job that you can go out and get a loan to buy a house or buy property and build a house, and it's just everything is mainly seasonal and it's just hard for them to get loans and stuff. It is hard to believe that the economy the way it is and how we got here [] for young people to try to get.

Bea Lingle: and railroad isn't year round anymore and tourist industry certainly isn't. And that what's, is our, our two biggest ...

Stacey Carkhuff: But when it's on in the summer that's all on.

Bea Lingle: It's on!

Mike O'Daniel: It's on, I mean there's some people that are making probably a good yearly income out of the few months that they have to work in the summer, [] and the White Pass is innovative to do things with health care so most of their employees can keep it year round and stuff. So I mean they've done they've had to figure the system out and make it work. But it's just hard for, you know young people to get on and get into it. Right now it's people who have been there a lot of years and they're just trying to hang onto them so.

Bea Lingle: And it used to be that the railroad had their own doctor [] serviced the whole town. He delivered me. He delivered my first two children.

Stacey Carkhuff: And then where did you go to deliver your children?

Bea Lingle: Well

Mike O'Daniel: They did it; they did it mostly here in Skagway up until John was the first child born in the what's the Dahl Clinic which is the one that they're getting ready to move out of now. And they used it [] times and insurance and stuff like that they just don't do it anymore.

Bea Lingle: Well a lot of the children were born in Canada. They'd go up there. And a lot of them have been born in Juneau.

Stacey Carkhuff: Un-huh

Bea Lingle: And a lot of the children that were born in Canada they have a choice, they have dual citizenship.

Stacey Carkhuff: And were they born in Whitehorse?

Bea Lingle & Mike O'Daniel: Yes

Stacey Carkhuff: Because that would be a lot closer than Juneau ...

Bea Lingle: The same distance

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh right there was no road until the '79 so you had to make up your mind.

Bea Lingle: Yeah until '79

Mike O'Daniel: But everyone worked for the railroad so they got free passes on the railroad

Bea Lingle: Yeah they'd get on the train because it ran year round. It was interesting living though. Because the men that worked on the train they were gone two days and a night, [] they had to overnight. And the women were left to raise the children, take care of anything that was freezing and all that in the wintertime for two days and a night they were in sole charge down here. And their husbands would be back for one night and then take off again.

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh

Bea Lingle: You know go back north. So my Dad and one of the other train men [] the other fellow was on a different train crew so they were, when one wasn't there the other one was. But the train had a, the White Pass had a, what they call a bunk house where the guys could bunk in and stay in that.

Stacey Carkhuff: Did they ever get stuck up there in storms?

Bea Lingle: Oh yeah! My Dad was stuck for two [] White Pass summit.

Stacey Carkhuff: Was that, that big storm in '62?

Bea Lingle: oh no I don't think it was in,

Mike O'Daniel: The one that she is talking about is the one with Larry Sullivan and all those guys were

Stacey Carkhuff: I just read, I just read the ...

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah that was Larry and J.D. and all those guys but her Dad was probably the generation before those guys and that was before there were CATS they did it all with the rotary then, so. That one that J.D. the one that you read on was the one that had rotaries and CATS trying to get the train unstuck and things ...

Bea Lingle: Tough living

Stacey Carkhuff: Yes but good living

Mike O'Daniel: The impossible just took an extra day to get it done with things so

Stacey Carkhuff: They worked hard []

Mike O'Daniel: They had a lot of ingenuity, I mean they built everything here for the railroad or for the engines very little, I mean, and they did order things in but a lot things they made here for their equipment and stuff cause they just didn't have the luxury to order out and wait for it to get here. So everybody that you know I know a lot of the things that he built [] they just looked at it and machined it or made it or took it over to the machine shop and had ... showed what they needed and that was ah, it was amazing what they came up with. They were a lot self-sufficient, a lot more self-sufficient than it is now. I think just because the internet is so easy to get on or dink around on and

Stacey Carkhuff: Order your part

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah, order your part and ah, you know transportation is a whole lot more reliable and we have [] coming in here. So the dynamics of things has changed a lot.

Bea Lingle: And we get our freighter in those days once a month, it brought our groceries in, so fresh stuff wasn't very handy

Stacey Carkhuff: Right

Bea Lingle: And after the war why we had powdered milk or canned milk. In fact our kids were raised on [] milk. We didn't know it was the best kind.

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah we tasted fresh milk and we thought something was wrong with it.

Bea Lingle: (ha) Yeah

Mike O'Daniel: We didn't want to drink that stuff. Give me good ole' canned milk and water.

Bea Lingle: Yeah (ha ha)

Stacey Carkhuff: Yeah it holds a lot better. You don't have to worry about it going bad.

Bea Lingle: & Mike O No (ha)

Stacey Carkhuff: Well why don't we move on to your ah, work as an Artist and what got you started on that [] as an artist?

Bea Lingle: Well it started, I always liked drawing and paint and stuff like that. I had never had any lessons except I had majored in art in high school. And I had a couple of art teachers there. But when I got up here and started raising a family we didn't have a lot of money to go around. And I wanted to go out and have coffee [] once in a while. So I began beach combing and picking up driftwood and painting little fat Eskimos on it. And it sold. And I did that right up until my youngest sister, her health was failing and I was getting old enough to get my social security check. So that's why I quit cause I had made money then [] but that's why I was doing it. And I did that that was with acrylics. But I started out, when I first got out of high school and came back up here, I painted stationery and painted the envelopes and the letter paper and I sold like a box of twelve and people, you know for note paper and stuff but I

couldn't have lived on it. [] hotel rooms and cleaned houses and things like that for people that did work but ...

Stacey Carkhuff: What gave you the idea to paint Eskimos on driftwood?

Bea Lingle: I didn't have enough money to set myself up with paint and supplies. That was free and cheap. So I got four colors of paint because I did know how to mix different colors blue and red and yellow and blue and I can't even think of it now ... and I mixed my own greens and browns, oh and black and white. You only need five tubes of paint to really get by.

Stacey Carkhuff: Right

Bea Lingle: And then when I got enough ahead I got more paint and then I got brave and set all [] and I didn't even know how to do it. But I told the main thing was just having enough nerve to start out. And I tried to work out something. And I had some pretty good sized classes. And the school called me in and I taught during a certain period during a school year and I did some classes there. And I'd have a show at the bank. And then people could go in and see what the children had done. And they were great! They were just great!

Stacey Carkhuff: So do the tourist enjoy your painting or do they buy it?

Bea Lingle: Well they bought them. That's all I cared about.

Stacey Carkhuff: How did you go about selling them?

Bea Lingle: I put them in the one of our local restaurants; they let me hang them on the wall. And then I'd go in [] they'd write down what they sold and put the money in an envelope. And then I'd give them a percentage.

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh that works

Bea Lingle: It wasn't much it was only thirty percent they got. But they were happy. And I spent the paint got, spent the money for the paint and got a little picture hanging wire and then I stapled [] the backs of the driftwood for hanging. As low a price as I could set it up it. But it was fun, it was fun. Mike's youngest sister, the baby of the family's got quite a bit of talent. She just sold one of her originals to our museum.

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh so your museum here in Skagway?

Bea Lingle: Un-huh

Stacey Carkhuff: So your daughter has taken up where you've left off kind of?

Bea Lingle: Yes but she's, she's ... she does watercolors and she does a good job.

Stacey Carkhuff: And what's her name?

Bea Lingle: Dorothy Brady

Stacey Carkhuff: I'll have to go over to the museum and check it out.

Bea Lingle: Well they just, there's a story about a ship that went down

Ben Lingle: (to Bea) You've got that picture is up there on the wall.

Bea Lingle: (to Ben) Yes I'll show it to her.

Bea Lingle: In Lake Labarge and they just found it, they just found it. And she had been interested in that story and found an old picture of it and painted it in watercolor. The picture was black and white but she did a good job. And then she made prints of it and was selling the prints. And then when they found this ship and it hit the newspapers in [] and showed pictures on the internet we gathered around my other son-in-law's laptop and saw pictures of it. And Mike's been down the river quite a few times with the family goes every year, a bunch of them, four to five canoes full. And they've been right over the top of that thing, you know [] the museum knew that Dorothy had the original of this ship when it was working. And they asked her if they could have it and put it, and buy it and put it in the museum. So we were real thrilled for her.

Stacey Carkhuff: That was kind of coincidental that she painted it and then shortly after it was

Bea Lingle: It's found! I don't know they say that weren't going to raise it but I think somebody will some day.

Stacey Carkhuff: I think they will

Bea Lingle: But they found the [] boiler was still in the boiler. One of the crew kicked off his boots and his jacket and they were still lying on the deck.

Stacey Carkhuff: It's wonderful how it's all preserved down there.

Bea Lingle: Yeah. Up in the Yukon it's so cold you know. Things don't rot like they do down here. Mike's been working on an old log cabin [] mink ranch there's four hundred and eighty-feet on Nar's Lake. And our nephew had a chance to get a cabin if he'd move it, free. So he moved it down on the property. Mike's been working like I don't know what on that and really made it cozy.

Stacey Carkhuff: So is this property []?

Bea Lingle: [] on the Yukon

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh so it's in the Yukon

Bea Lingle: nods

Mike O'Daniel: It's right on Nar's Lake which is the upper which comes out of Bennett and comes out at Nar's near the summit, the head waters of the Yukon River. And that was all where that ship that she

painted, The Gotter, had started out working out of Bennett and the upper Yukon and then they transported it down past the rapids. I'm not quite sure when they did that. And then it operated on the lower Yukon down to Dawson and [] and they had to bring it across the rapids probably when it was in the winter time, slide it across and get it down to the next part of the river where they could use it.

Stacey Carkhuff: Hmm

Mike O'Daniel: But it was packed over the pass I think and they'd built it up in Lake Bennett then used it on there for a while, quite a while, while they were building the railroad because the railroad was built from Skagway to Bennett and from Carcross to Whitehorse [] right around Bennett Lake it took them a year or so to do that so they had steamboats working Lake Bennett then so. It was one of the first ones that was on the upper lakes to work.

Stacey Carkhuff: Alright. So we talked about tourism earlier but Bea I wanted to ask you about your personal experiences with the Days of '98 show.

Bea Lingle: Well that [] and ah, they finally got to where the four or five gals that were in the cancan the most years we were having our children at that time too. I think one time they said out of four gals that were dancing one night they counted sixteen children (ha).

Stacey Carkhuff: *** (ha ha)

Bea Lingle: Yeah but if we had four ships a week that was little, about 200 people, if we had four a week, we thought we had a big week. Now we have nine a day!

Stacey Carkhuff: They're a lot bigger ships.

Bea Lingle: They're a floating city! You know they've got restaurants, plural, dance halls and casinos and shopping malls. And Ben, Mike and Benny with the Air Service they had a contract that Benny had signed with Holland America because they didn't use to come in here. And ah, he'd have to fly sometimes a hundred and forty people back. They'd come up on what they'd call a day boat from Juneau and that they'd have to fly them back to Juneau that evening to get them back on board their ship. And ah, Benny had to go out and get scrounge every little air taxi business in southeastern Alaska to come in here and do that. Because some of those planes only held four people most of them six or so. And you know he had to get them all back. Boy, that was busy. Those were good years for the Air Service.

Stacey Carkhuff: Right so do you have around what year it was when you started doing the cancan dance?

Bea Lingle: Ah, It was right after um, the war had ended.

Stacey Carkhuff: So you were

Bea Lingle: So that would be '45, it was after that right after that. And the Chamber Started getting active and they knew the ships were going to be bringing tourist in again. When I came back up out of

high school all the windows were painted. You could not see out of your porthole in your room cause during the war they couldn't let any light you know out they had to be dark.

Stacey Carkhuff: So you were in Seattle during the war.

Bea Lingle: Yeah by the four years of the war I was in high school.

Stacey Carkhuff: So you kind of missed the mayhem in Skagway

Bea Lingle: Yeah but when I came back up in '45 there were barracks buildings and Quonset huts all over town. In fact our garage is one of the old barracks buildings.

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh really?

Bea Lingle: Un-huh

Stacey Carkhuff: Do you know what it was used for?

Mike O'Daniel: Legion Hall

Bea Lingle: Yeah it was the Legion Hall for a while.

Ben Lingle: I don't know what it was used for

Bea Lingle: Probably housing

Stacey Carkhuff: That's interesting that you have it now.

Bea Lingle: Well there are houses, the house right on the corner of this block []

Stacey Carkhuff: I heard that they were taken apart because they were given to the city to build houses.

Ben Lingle: nods

Bea Lingle: They were in sections, they were built that way, they came into Skagway that way in sections and then they bolted them together

Mike O'Daniel: They were just panels and they just set the panels together and bolted them together and panels, floor panels they just bolted them, and wall panel and trusses for the roofs, I mean they were like a modular things [] whatever things as long as they were on a four-foot center they did it. But a lot of houses were started here out of a boxcar or out of a, you know, a lot of them were out of barracks building or stuff. I mean you get a whim over the weekend owned a piece of property and they could scavenge up enough panels and they could start building a house the way that it, you know. It's a lot different now you've got to get an environmental [] everything so it's not quite as easy as it used to be.

Stacey Carkhuff: Right but without lumber yards and *** difficult to buy

Bea Lingle: Nobody threw away anything. We still have people like that, our youngest son.

Mike O'Daniel: (ha ha)

Stacey Carkhuff: Do you think that's changed?

Bea Lingle: Well it wasn't as bad as it was. One time Benny and I almost got a divorce. I cleaned out fourteen [] in our garage. They had broken down and people couldn't fix them and they'd order a new one through the hardware and Benny would thought I'm not throwing it away we might need a part. You know.

Mike O'Daniel: But I think that is encouraged of all Alaska. You know what I mean? I think people just, they'll use it if there is a possibility of making something else out of it, they will. They'll hang onto it. I mean they know [] stuff here and you just a lot of times you can't round up things and I think that was pretty common in Alaska. People were pretty imaginative and had a lot of ingenuity but they just didn't throw a whole lot of stuff away. They created the art of recycling better than most people did so

Bea Lingle: Well Mike's even started at the lumber yard. A lot of things arrive here in crates and he takes them apart and he uses some up if he can use them [] puts them in a bin and it says free wood on it and by golly this summer it was, people found it that were camping you know and living in tents and

Stacey Carkhuff: Firewood?

Bea Lingle: And they took that firewood yep!

Stacey Carkhuff: That's good.

Bea Lingle: And many people bring him, or order new refrigerator and need it hauled it down and if it still worked [] he'd put free on it and it wasn't there very long.

Mike O'Daniel: No and they went through a lot of them as long as it was working. Well it used to be in the old days and you took something to the dump and it was still pretty good then you wouldn't throw it away, you'd set it off to the side. And you'd write works or something like that on it but now they don't have that much room so when things go up there they get thrown in the pile or they...

Bea Lingle: Burned, we don't have a dump. We don't have a garbage dump like most towns.

Stacey Carkhuff: What do you do with your garbage?

Bea Lingle: We have an incinerator.

Stacey Carkhuff: Okay

Mike O'Daniel: They've got metal, metal in the metal pile and they bring the barge in every couple of years and haul the scrap metal out and stuff anything that's burnable they burn.

Stacey Carkhuff: What do they do, say back in the day, when you were growing up what did you do with your garbage?

Ben Lingle: They had garbage []

Bea Lingle: They would

Mike O'Daniel: They had landfills

Bea Lingle: Yeah, it was at the end of the river for years and ah, like Mike says people set things out to the sides and people go down there and shop (ha).

Stacey Carkhuff: So it's like transfer stations almost now

Bea Lingle: Yeah and then they had to make a law against that sort of thing going into the river, into the water system.

Stacey Carkhuff: Right

Bea Lingle: So we had a dump couple of dumps []

Stacey Carkhuff: Didn't one of them turn into a rifle range?

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah, it when they were burning the dumps they lasted quite a while because it kept burning the stuff down in them. And then they outlawed the burning at the dumps and then it really , I mean it made liners and everything else for them, well and it doesn't take long to fill something like that up so

Bea Lingle: Yeah now they've got a rifle range up at

Mike Yeah the rifle range [] from down there but it wasn't dumped for very long because they filled it up and it was too much in the trees and they didn't burn that one as much as the one up above

Bea Lingle: Yeah up where the fire department's got their stuff

Mike O'Daniel: Got their stuff now. That one burned for a long time and they told them that they had to stop that one and they were taking a lot of stuff off of the cruise ships. And they found some cockroaches in it one year and it mysteriously caught on fire. And it never did go back out again. It was our 365 day-a-year wind sock. (ha) We could always tell which way the wind was blowing coming off the dump, thing so.

Ben & Bea Lingle: nodded

Stacey Carkhuff: I imagine the EPA would not appreciate that now.

Mike O'Daniel: No there's a lot of things they...

Stacey Carkhuff: Well this is a question for Bea and Ben [] in Skagway since you came here and since you were born here?

Ben Lingle: Oh, Gee

Stacey Carkhuff: It's a big question

Bea Lingle: I think seeing the houses being built over here. I love looking up there and seeing the lights.

Ben Lingle: You could see them all the way going to Dyea.

Bea Lingle: [] for years. Our youngest daughter just sawed it up (ha ha). They bought the lot that the house was on. And the house, it was bad and she sawed it up. But she's got her horse up there and everything. But now you can even see Christmas lights if you look up there. If you look out the window.

Stacey Carkhuff: I've seen them, there's even a cross a big white cross up there.

Bea Lingle: Yes I think that's on, is that Hanson's?

Mike O'Daniel: Well, she's talking about that one over here.

Bea Lingle: Oh, that's on [] that's forest nobody lives up there.

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh okay

Bea Lingle: But that's the power company. There's a story for the cross. A guy that owned the power company and started it for years here, and I guess they still do but they've branched out so big, his wife got very ill one winter and ah, he put that cross up there and he said if she pulls through I'll light [] that and she did pull through.

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh wow

Bea Lingle: I think they're both gone now, but (turning to Mike) Is that the story that you remember Mike?

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah Arthur Garrett

Bea Lingle: Yeah so we have the cross and we all love it. And we just had a fellow come to town that used to live here and he was a logger and they hired him to go up and brush out because the trees were growing over so that you couldn't really any see the cross [] in town.

Stacey Carkhuff: Do they light it up all year around?

Bea Lingle & Mike O'Daniel: Un-huh

Bea Lingle: Yeah in the summer you can't see it.

Stacey Carkhuff: Yeah I was going to say you probably can't see it very well in the summer.

Bea Lingle: Yeah

Ben Lingle: nodding

Bea Lingle: And ah, one time quite a few years ago Benny and I drove on the road after they got the road going over to Dyea and we counted thirty houses that day up there and []

Stacey Carkhuff: In Dyea?

Bea Lingle: No on the hill over here.

Stacey Carkhuff: Oh

Bea Lingle: We tell people that our town is four blocks wide and one mile long but it's branching out now. It's growing.

Stacey Carkhuff: Do you think that it is difficult for people now to build houses on the hill?

Bea Lingle: It doesn't slow 'em down any, if they want it bad enough.

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah I mean it's hard but the fact that you have to set up your own septic [] stuff you know and that's all expensive stuff to drill a well and you know set that up which you don't have that cost in town. You just tie into the, you know the sewer system or the water system in town which is the advantage but it's just not a lot of available empty lots in town for sale. There's more homes now probably than have probably every been that are [] to be in south end of town or an empty lot, a clean slate to do your own, own thing with it. There's not a lot of that available.

Stacey Carkhuff: Un-huh so any other changes like tourism or that type of thing?

Bea Lingle: Like the ships, how huge the ships are that are coming in now. And Benny and I got, we were able to [] available take a trip on Holland America and I think that we took advantage of it, during the twenty years he had the contract with them, four times, went through the Panama Canal and just wonderful trips. But the ships! They had elevators! They were eleven stories high! You know from ... it was just fascinating. But that's like all [] our waterfront every year they do something down there. We don't have any beach anymore, so to speak. And ah, that's been interesting watching that. Now they're building a breakwater so you don't get so much wind in the boat harbor. And they're building a breakwater to keep that breakwater from [] ferry dock and we didn't have a ferry for so many years. And I remember the first night, the first time a ferry came in here. It was in the evening and the train went down and tooted it in. And ah, we had a congressman or some politician that got on it because nobody could get off of it hmm ... what is that law? [] You couldn't get off, you couldn't go from one American port to another American Port?

Mike O'Daniel: On a foreign built vessel

Bea Lingle: On a foreign built vessel

Stacey Carkhuff: It was a Canadian vessel?

Bea Lingle: Well, well one of the ships that we had in here was built in, where was the Wickersham built?

Mike O'Daniel: It was over in Scandinavia or something.

Bea Lingle: Yeah []

Mike O'Daniel: they thought that they were going to change the law and it never happened so they could only use it between Prince Rupert and you know it just you could only get off at Prince Rupert if you got on at Skagway and stuff. And so they finally sold it out and most of the ones

Bea Lingle: Funny!

Mike O'Daniel: Most of the ones were all American built. And they didn't start until sixty winter of '63 [] and TV

Bea Lingle: Yeah TV

Mike O'Daniel: And ferry's in the same winter and stuff like that they were pretty close to the same time.

Stacey Carkhuff: Did that make a huge difference when the TVs came?

Bea Lingle: Yep! No more movie theatres in town. We had two at one time.

Stacey Carkhuff: Really? What did they play there, beside movies? Was there...

Bea Lingle: Nope just movies changed them three times a week.

Stacey Carkhuff: Just movies... did you get them shipped in from...

Bea Lingle: Yeah I guess so.

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah they shipped them up or flew them, a lot of times a movie they would bring them in on the ship and they'd have enough, they'd have all the film canisters and stuff. They weren't like current releases or anything like that. But they'd get enough to last them until the next ship came in and change over and stuff.

Stacey Carkhuff: Were theaters popular?

Mike O'Daniel: Oh yeah you know

[] **Bea Lingle:** You know six hundred people that's not ... and half of those were kids you know so it just going downhill financially for anybody having something like that and

Mike O'Daniel: The more stuff that you got it would just change the demographics of the things people were more into socializing they would dances at [] particular month and they'd have a big dance if it was a New Year's or a Purple Bubble Ball or a

Bea Lingle: Or a Fireman's Ball

Mike O'Daniel: Or a Fireman's Ball or it could be the Purple Bubble Ball like I said they had the you know the different themes like a Hawaiian Luau or different themes throughout the years and stuff and they usually had one big one a month that people could dress up and go out to and the theater was part of that [] and the kids and ***

Bea Lingle: The night we got TV was we had four teenagers, four of our five kids were in their teens and it was Halloween night. And it came on at 4:00 in the afternoon and one channel, black-and-white and went off at midnight I think. And the kids all []

Stacey Carkhuff: What did you do?

Bea Lingle: They can't talk about it.

Mike O'Daniel: Well that's why we couldn't talk about what we went out and did on Halloween but we could watch things. I you know, I think that it was a novelty and I don't remember it ever being where you got glued to it or stuff. I mean you had just grown up with other things to do, going to the lake or making [] you know as a typical small town that ah

Bea Lingle: We used to go ice skating and I'd take the kids on winter picnics. And we'd hike up the river because you couldn't hike up the river any other time of the year you know. We'd hike up on the ice. We'd fix hot chocolate when we got up there or we'd fix snow cones but we didn't know about snow cones [] out of a paper cup and I'd sprinkle Kool-aid over the top and we just did things like that.

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah I just remember growing up and some weekends you'd have a party at, you know each parent, you could go to somebody's house and they'd usually have music and [] somebody's house and I think that they called it a dancing party. But you know we always had something to do. We had you didn't have a lot of kids in school. We had a lot more, I think there was about an average of about one hundred and sixty kids in school. And so we had you know we had a band and we played on the weekends one weekend at the Rec Hall and so you had live music [] like that and I think when it just seemed like people were more, they just went out and made their entertainment. I don't think that you ever thought you were at a loss for anything.

Bea Lingle: I was usually on clean-up if the grownups had a big dance at the Elks or the Legion or something. And the next day I'd take all the kids with me and we'd clean up. And if they had favors they kids would collect favors because people wouldn't take them all home so [].

Mike O'Daniel: And when the ferry came in it seemed like it started spreading out, so you didn't have all of that, that close-knit-ness. It seems like there were things going on over in Haines and people would load up in their boats and the women would put their dresses in plastic bags. And it wasn't anything to go to Haines in a sixteen foot skiff and go down to a dance that was going on down there [] then when the ferry started running people went to Juneau and they got on the Jet and went south. And you found that all these people that you'd come to know over the years in these different communities. You didn't see them as much anymore. You just seemed to bypass them

Bea Lingle: We used to have house parties a lot and played cards. And the kids and us played games too. We had certain games we liked to play []

Stacey Carkhuff: Simple but fulfilling life.

Bea Lingle: Yeah it is. But now we've got computers and cell phones and I can't even work the darn TV set (ha). Benny went in there to lay down I tried to work it. We've got two controls here. You'd think I could make it the sound go down? I finally just turned it off. [] They have, they have.

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah but I think that is more life in general, more regulations, more rules more trying to legislate common sense. And you just can't legislate common sense. (ha) You've got idiots are going to be idiots and things but and you, you, I think that it's tougher for kids. There's not as many in school. I've got two grandkids in school and they're [] sports in the school. And the school does a really, really good job at trying to keep them busy, you know giving them things to do and giving them options for such a small school. But it's

Bea Lingle: You've got three grandkids in school, Gretchen's still there.

Mike O'Daniel: Yeah three, so but ah, you know they're busy all the time, involved with their activities.

Bea Lingle: And they're on the Honor Roll, they are good []!

Mike O'Daniel: And so ...

Stacey Carkhuff: So this tape only has about two minutes left on it. And if you want to talk some more I can put another tape in.

Ben Lingle: Shaking his head no.

Bea Lingle: I think we about covered it unless you have anything else that you wanted to ask us.

Stacey Carkhuff: No I think this has been great.

Bea Lingle: Okay

Stacey Carkhuff: So I'll stop the tape, I appreciate all three of you sitting here and

Bea Lingle: Yeah I'm glad Mike came over because he has better memory on []

Notations:

[] indicates gap in replay

*** indicates the recording was garbled