

## FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW OF THE REVEREND CHARLES D. BROWER. PART 2

Interviewed by Emily Rosenthal 6/23/23 in Fairbanks, Alaska

This is a follow-up to the 10/3/2022 interview of the Reverend Charles D. Brower by Emily Rosenthal.

I initially asked to interview Pastor Charles Brower because I was researching his aunt, Sadie Brower Neakok, a sister of Charles's father David Brower. In the course of talking about Sadie, I learned that Charles's young and adult life story, a generation later, is important in its own right. There are parallels - schooling away from home and careers influenced by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), but with notable differences. Coming from large interrelated families in a city of a few thousand people, Sadie's siblings and their children also appear in Charles's stories. EJR

00;00;00;00 - 00;00;41;01

Emily (E): Now we're recording. We're at the house of Charles and Janet Brower, and it's June 23rd, Friday, 2023. And I'm Emily Rosenthal, and I'm interviewing Charles Brower.

E: I'm going to do this chronologically, going back over what we did before. There are a few things that I realized I wanted to talk to you more about.

00;00;41;03 - 00;01;21;29

E: You were talking about the bicycles there. You told us they had one bicycle –

C: That was at Wrangell - Yeah, there were two bicycles for the whole the whole school, one for the boys and one for the girls. The layout of the campus was the school building was in the middle. the girls' dormitory on one side, the boys' dormitory on the other. And there was a road behind us. The road led from the from the back of the boys' dormitory up, up the hill kind of side slope to where the clinic was. And on the other side of the road, where was the mess hall or where ate all our meals.

00;01;42;27 - 00;02;07;13

E: And had you ridden a bike before? did you ever have -

C: No. I had never seen a bicycle before. But we always had, Saturday mornings there was always a long line for kids that wanted to ride those bikes.

E: And after that, after learning how to ride, did you ever ride one again?

C: Yes. Yes. In Fairbanks. My sister, my sister lives here. I spent one summer in Fairbanks with my sister Mable [sometimes spelled Mabel]. But before, after my mother passed away, I had to go to one of my sisters for the summer because I, there was really nobody at home that I could, that would take care of us. So I went with my sister Mabel the first summer and then several summers thereafter with my sister Lorena, who was at different places throughout the state of Alaska, Port **[can't hear]** one year, Bethel another year, Petersburg another year.

00;02;44;18 - 00;03;12;28

E: And let's see, also, were you active in other, in extracurricular activities? I think I saw a yearbook.

C: Yes I was very active, particularly in high school. I was at the audiovisual club. I was on the dorm council. I was on the student council. So politically, I was somewhat active.

00;03;13;00 - 00;03;42;24

E: And politically, meaning in the in the school?

C: In the dorm council and the student council. And I was on the staff for the yearbook a couple of years.

E: And were there any issues that you came up with?

C: Really no. Okay. Just making sure as many students were represented throughout somewhere and that the same students kept showing up in the pictures. We made sure as many people got pictured as we could.

<Pause to make sure recorder was working properly.>

00;03;42;27 - 00;04;02;05

00;04;02;05 - 00;04;25;11

E: I was wondering, like, if you ever had a did you ever have a bicycle out when you were out in Massachusetts or in California after -

C: We did, yeah, not, not in California - I did, when I lived in California. I used to ride my bike to college. We lived about four miles away. But I would plan my routes to when avocados were coming off the trees, so on my way home, I would pick the avocados up off the road, off the streets, on my way home.

00;04;52;21 - 00;05;48;01

E: And there was a picture of you and your father and your brother, I think graduating from Chemawa. [Chemawa Indian School]

C: Yeah, my little brother. Chemawa [correcting interviewer's pronunciation, stressing the middle syllable] right down near Salem, Oregon. That must've been, what, 1969 or 1970, 1970, probably.

E: And, and you look pretty hip. When you were we were talking about, I was asking you about Eskimo dancing and then you said that, sometimes the kids from Mt. Edgecumbe to come came back with the latest dance craze from the lower 48.

00;05;48;03 - 00;06;28;06

C: The latest dances, yeah.

E: Were you one of those?

C: Well, somewhat, yeah. There were others who were more into it than I was.

E: Okay. And you were also talking about. there was one person I wanted to know if I got the name right, there was somebody who, one of the most difficult things that you saw there was when one of one of your classmates wasn't able to speak English that well and got thrown against the wall.

00;06;28;08 - 00;06;56;13

C: That was in Wrangell, yeah. That was one of my friends from Point Lay. Allen, Allen Upicksoun was his name. And you might see references to Joe Upicksoun. That was his uncle. Joseph, Joe Upicksoun [former president of the Arctic Slope Native Association] was very instrumental in helping start the North Slope Borough and ASRC.

E: And I'm going to get to that part too, that we sort of skimmed over a little bit. I know that you're talking a lot now to people about some of the boarding schools that were worse than where you went to.

C: Yes, yeah.

00;07;30;21 - 00;07;54;08

E: Do you know what happened to Allen? Did, if he turned out fairly, fairly well?

C: He fared okay. I don't know, he's still alive, he was alive last year. We used to interact on Facebook now and again, but I haven't heard from him in a while, but he moved back and stayed in Point Lay pretty much.

00;07;54;19 - 00;08;22;04

E: Yeah, it seems that's true of a lot of, I mean you know in other places in the United States, when kids want to move away. But I remember, whether it was you or Sadie said that almost all of your kids are around here and not moving away.

00;08;22;08 - 00;08;52;23

C: You know, I have two sons who live here in Fairbanks. One son is just north of Wasilla, that's down by Anchorage. And one son lives up in Barrow. So.

E: And when you're talking about that, I'm going to skip over to the question I have about your sons, because you were talking about when you were going to school at Northrop -

C: Northrop Institute of Technology

E: Right. And you skipped one of the quarters because you were having a son and you said that was that was very meaningful to you. And I wondered if you could tell me a little bit about that or if you wanted to or not.

C: It was a time I, my plan was to finish college in three years and we were in a quarter system, and I could do it in three years. But then towards, in my junior year, when our son was coming along, our first, eldest son Yves, was coming and it seemed worthwhile to take time off to be there with Jan and the baby, and be there while, if Jan went to work. Because she was working for the County of Los Angeles as a public health nurse then so.

00;09;44;14 - 00;10;06;04

E: okay. So you were taking over for a part of the time for what she was doing.

C: Yeah, but she had some maternity leave off too. So we were both there. We lived in a small house in Hawthorne, California. Well, it's just south of where the college was. Just south of Inglewood, southern part of Los Angeles, kind of still, not quite central Los Angeles, but a little bit south. South Los Angeles International Airport area. In fact three of our sons were born in California.

E: You said two of your sons were born in the hospital and two at home.

00;10;35;06 - 00;11;01;23

C: Yes.

E: And I'm sort of curious about that, about why those decisions were made. And what, if there was a lot to those decisions-

C: Yeah, being a public health nurse, I can remember her comment about having birth at home, was that hospitals are for sick people and birthing is not a sick experience.

E: Got it. And so, so were the first two in the hospital?

00;11;01;23 - 00;11;28;18

C: Yes. One was born in Torrance. One was born in Northridge.

E: And by then she felt she had enough experience that she could give birth at home.

C: Yeah, and the third one was born at our house in Newhall. And I was working away, and I was what they called job-shopping back then, working in Saint Louis, Missouri for McDonnell Douglas. And when it came time, I flew home. I made it in time for his birth. And Jan's mom was there.

E: And what year would that be?

C: Must be 19, 1970s.

E: So all that consulting that you were doing and running, jumping around was after the Navy.

00;12;34;21 - 00;12;55;18

C: Yes. I started my work after college at Lockheed California Company. And then to Rockwell International. Then when the B-1 [bomber] was stopped by President Carter, I went job-shopping with one of the companies I knew. I worked up in Sunnyvale. I worked up in Seattle for Boeing. I worked in St Louis for McDonnell Douglas. And then from there I went to work for Raytheon just outside of Boston, Lexington.

E: I know there was a place that one of the labs that you said in Lexington, the name I didn't get like

C: Hanscom Air Force Base was the name of the place where I worked.

E: But there was like a C,S,D something or -

C: CSDL Charles Stark Draper Laboratories. So Charles Stark Draper Laboratories. Charles Stark Draper Laboratories. But they were a systems engineering company for many of the big projects for the Air Force. But they had us as a second set of eyes to look and make sure that what they were buying, what they were specifying was what the military needed, how it fit.

00;13;23;02 - 00;13;58;05

E: And so would you say that most of that work well, maybe it changed over time. Were you on the hands on working part of it -

C: Yes

E: or were you on the design part of it?

C: No, more on the review of what was specified. And my job really was to look for testability, how things were testable so that we did not have to replace a whole unit. We replace just a small part; to make sure all the test points were appropriately located. And those kinds of things, trying to make the process of repairing things much simpler than.... Okay, so they could make the repairs on the field rather than having to send the unit back to depot or someplace.

E: And then later on, when you were working at, through ACRS and you were doing more management?

00;14;29;00 - 00;15;06;03

C: Yes. But after a while there when we lived in Boston, I was a contracts manager for the company I worked for.

E: Okay. Now going back from that, when you first got out of high school, you were picked, selected to start working to get training in electronics and that kind of thing. And the people that you went with, I think it was California right away, at the beginning -

00;15;06;08 - 00;15;31;18

C: Los Angeles, yes.

E: Were those people you knew? Were those people that came out of the same kind of school?

C: Some of them I knew, but there were there were a couple of brothers from Fort Yukon I never knew before because they were not from there. And the school system that I was at in Mt. Edgecumbe, Oliver Leavitt from Barrow was there with me and Al Adams from Kotzebue was there, Morris Thompson from here, in Tanana [the Tanana Valley surrounds Fairbanks] was there. Sam Kito, those folks were going through the same schooling system and technical school run by RCA.

E: But all of those people were coming from indigenous areas.

C: Yes.

E: And doing this work. Were you working with other people that weren't?

C: Most of us were. We lived in several different boarding houses scattered around Los Angeles, but we all met. The school was on Sixth and Main, upstairs from the Continental Trailways Building in Los Angeles. But then RCA decided to close the school, and moved it to New York, so I left a little after that happened. I moved with the school first, then ...

E: And when you moved, did the other people move also with you?

C: Almost everybody did, yeah.

00;16;33;18 - 00;17;23;11

E: That was in the early sixties, right?

C: 1964, the fall of 1964.

E: Were you aware of what was going on in the country with the Vietnam War at that point and everything?

C: I kind of heard about it, but nothing that impacted me until, until later on, yeah.

E: So that was sort of one of the things I was wondering about was... When you were drafted, I know you wanted to go to college and then you decided you would join the Navy?

00;17;23;13 - 00;17;51;20

C: Yes.

E: When you, if, as I remember, you couldn't - there wasn't any room for you in the Indian college where you knew people. So you said that's what you would do."

C: Yeah,

E: Did you think about anything else when you were drafted, like any other alternatives to that? And why the Navy?

C: The Navy offered me - Well, first of all, right, if I'd have been drafted and gone in the Army, I would've just been a foot soldier. But my work I really enjoyed was electronics. When I went down to the recruiters, the Navy said, "Oh yeah, we would put you in technician school, and you can go repair electronics."

E: So when you go to the recruiters, are you going to, did you go to a Navy recruiter or was it just everything?

00;18;11;28 - 00;18;38;26

C: There was a recruiting office for the Marine Corps, the Navy, and the Army, all the Air Force, all in one recruiting office.

E: And did you ever have any ... Because if you had gone to college, you could have gotten like a draft deferment or something.

C: Yeah.

E: Did you consider that?

C: No. I thought maybe might have thought maybe at the time that it was just more paperwork I'd have to fill out there.

E: But you knew enough to know that you didn't want to be a foot soldier?

C: Right, right.

E: Because of the risk or because -

C: I didn't even think of that. It was more the being able to work on electronics.

00;19;01;14 - 00;19;37;14

E: Okay. I guess a lot of the business that you were in, but a lot of the business the country was in at that time was military business.

C: And it still is today, over half of our budget every year.

E: Right. And so that was really the places that were easy for you, especially because with your experience, to find work.

C: Yeah.

00;19;37;16 - 00;20;01;13

E: Yeah. I know that we had talked about earlier, I'd asked you when you were in high school, did you ever think about what you would do for a career? And you said, "No".

C: No, no. I figured something would come through. But no big plans, no big dreams.

00;20;01;13 - 00;20;35;26

E: I guess to me it seems like, a lot of this came through the BIA, but it was very helpful in putting you through the training that you could do and to get jobs.

C: The electronics training, yes, right.

E: You left there because of the violence mostly in New Jersey, I guess it was where you were living.

00;20;35;27 - 00;20;59;25

C: In a tenement building, yeah.

E: And did the other people that you were with feel the same way?

C: Some of them did and some of them went looking for apartments rather than living in the tenement building that was given to us by the BIA. Others went looking. But I wasn't really there long enough to see how everybody else fared and what they did afterwards. I think that's probably true for most, I don't know of anyone else who went through training, that training when they moved it to New York. I don't know of anybody else who went there, or anybody who moved, or finished that school. I think most everybody left after a short time. A short time to a much later time before the whole school finished. Nobody that I know that went there has ever finished there.

00;21;49;18 - 00;22;36;11

E: And why do you think that was?

C: Probably the atmosphere we were living in, and the location where it was, all the way on the other side of the continent, from us.

E: And most, most of the people were from this side of the continent?

C: Yes, most of them were from just Alaska.

E: So when you went into the Navy, obviously at the beginning you were in, was it Michigan?

C: Milwaukee or just south of there to Milwaukee and Great Lakes, Illinois where the boot camp was.

00;22;36;17 - 00;23;09;29

E: Did you have a sense of where you were going to be placed and what if you were going overseas or not?

C: No, but I knew I was going to be going to more electronic training. That was what I was interested in. And the recruiter, I could remember, the chief who was there said, you can make your choice after you go through boot camp and go through the electronic training. Then you can make your choice of where you want to go. So that's what I was doing, I told them I liked airplanes, so I wanted to go to a patrol squadron 'cause there's a chance of getting on there.

E: And did you learn to fly too?

C: No. Well -

E: You liked working on them?

00;23;27;14 - 00;23;46;09

E: Yeah, working on them. Being around them, yeah. But growing up, my brother in law had a flying service, I used to work for him. I probably mentioned it, but the last flight of the day was to go from Barrow up to Kotzebue, load up the plane full of gas for the next day's operation and fly it back so. And my brother, my brother in law would take a snooze on the plane and tell me what to do.

E: That's really cool.

C: Yeah.

E: So you sort of did learn some.

C: Yeah. The basics of it.

E: But you've never flown a plane.

C: No. Not on my own.

E: Which brother in law was that?

C: Joseph Felder was his name. He was from down around Nome. He's buried in Nome cemetery in Nome.

00;24;06;10 - 00;24;37;24

E: And he was married to one of your sisters?

C: My sister Jenny, Yes.

00;24;37;26 - 00;25;11;16

E: I'm trying to figure out how to ask you questions. Because I've learned this from the back to the front instead of the front to the back. And one of the first things I learned about the Inupiat was that, because we had taken a Tundra Tours [24 hours in Utqiagvik] in 2016 and that was my first knowledge that the Inupiat existed. I was completely ignorant of that. And I admired the [list of Inupiat] values, and I liked, one of them being "avoidance of conflict". And so when I hear about you being in the military industrial complex and being in the war and everything, I was just wondering if there was any conflict in your mind about it.

00;25;54;07 - 00;26;18;05

C: No, no. I just had a job that had to be done.

E: So you went in at 64 and came out in 68, right?

C: Yes.

E: And is that, is that what you signed up for, four years?

C: Well, after I was there for a while, I thought I was going to stay for longer, but the one incident of the car coming by splashing me with water and me ending up in the brig for overnight, so that was the end of that. If somebody can, can - and he was a lieutenant commander, unmarried, he was a bachelor.

E: Tell me this again, because if you told me this before, I don't really remember.

C: I was stationed at Lemoore Naval Air Station after Vietnam got hot and heavy, having got moved from patrol squadron training outfit to what we call a Tailhook outfit. And so I was stationed at Lemoore Naval Air Station just south of Fresno [, California] and the little town of Lemoore had a theater there. And I went to see a movie one Saturday afternoon. And maybe about 6:00 is when the movie got out, I went out and a car come around the corner and there was a puddle there and it splashed me. So I hollered at him. Next thing I know, there are MPs [military police] in a van came and picked me up. And he had complained that I was disrespecting to him as an officer. I was not in uniform. He was not in uniform. And I, he was in the car, and I don't know what he heard or what, but he, he pressed charges against me.

00;27;29;21 - 00;27;57;25

E: What rank was he?

C: I think he was lieutenant commander, a young lieutenant commander. But I'm not sure what, it could have been a lieutenant.

E: What rank were you?

C: I was third class, petty officer third class. But I can remember spending the night in the brig. And the next day I got out, went back to my unit, and I went through a court martial, a summary court martial for the executive officer, the second in command of our unit. And he said, "I know who, I know who put you in, and I know you probably didn't have any say as to what happened, but it's been known he's done that before." Now, he's saying he's a.... Nothing happened to him. And I don't think anything ever did. But, but I spent the night in the brig, and I have it on my record. So I said, if this is the way it's going to be in the military, I don't want any part of it. So I was not going to make a career of it. Otherwise I would have.

E: Was that before you were overseas?

C:Between. Yeah, between, between the first and the second cruise, yes.

00;28;47;15 - 00;29;11;07

E: So did you, did you sign up for two years or -

C: Four years. It was a sign up back then, it was enlistment for four years. To join the Navy back then it was a minimum of four years. And I made rank fairly quickly.

00;29;11;07 - 00;29;55;26

E: When you were overseas and, mostly in the South China Sea?

C: Yes.

E: And I did ask you if you ever went into the countries and you said yes. So tell me a little bit more about that.

C: It was just a short time, but whenever, since I had top secret clearance, and my job included fixing those things that were very sensitive materials, whenever one of our planes got shot up and they had to land on the ground in country, my job was to go and take the sensitive parts out of the aircraft, bring it back to the ship.

C: It was Da Nang, normally where the planes landed, and that's where I would go and take the parts out and bring them back to the back to the ship.

E: Did you see combat there?

C: No, but I, but I heard gunfire, and I heard bombs going off. But it was always, you know, I wouldn't say stressful, but it was a different experience. But I grew up around guns and I knew what they could do. But no, I never really thought about it there but, the ship would only send one person. And that was me because I knew what, I worked on the airplanes and I know how to put them in and take them out and if anybody need, help, the Marines were there. I would just say, "Come," and they would come and help me.

E: But your growing up with guns were using guns to get food?

C: Yeah, yes.

E: Did you hunt also?

C: I used to spend the summers, like, ever since I can remember going out with some of my uncles and cousins going out on our, my dad's boat and going up and down, up and down the rivers.

00;31;14;10 - 00;31;34;01

C: It was one of those boats there you see them, kind of on the beach, there are three or four, or two or three boats under there with kind of cabins on them. My father had one of those kinds of boats. So we lived in that kind of a motor boat. Motor boat, with inboard.

E: And what were you hunting then or fishing?

00;31;34;01 - 00;31;56;12

C: Mostly caribou.

E: Caribou from the boat?

C: Yeah. Just up along the river.

E: So not in the ocean.

C: No, no, no. But they also took it out in the ocean. But there was more for walrus.

E: Seals?

C: Yeah, well, seals were hunted from a smaller boat, more along the ice.

00;31;56;14 - 00;32;32;18

C: But those boats were mostly for the bigger animals, like the walrus was primarily what they were after.

E: Again, this is also asking you questions because of my background, but did you grow up seeing cowboys and Indians and -

00;32;32;20 - 00;32;59;10

C: Oh yes. yeah. We played cowboys and Indians. I can remember having a pair of cowboy boots and cowboy hat.

E: And did you ever think about the fact that the Indians were the indigenous people?

C: Not really, no. In fact, one of my friends whose a son of a missionary, I think one of the elders in town named him **itqillq**\_\_\_\_\_? which in our language means little Indian because he liked to play the Indian part when playing cowboys and Indians. .

E: So some people like to play the Indian part and some people -

C: Oh yes, we watched those Saturday afternoon matinees with the serials of the Lone Ranger, Tonto -

E: Do you have cap guns?

C: Oh yeah, yeah, we had cap guns.

E: You had real ones.

C: I had a bb gun in there one time.

00;33;20;28 - 00;33;47;28

E: And what about bows and arrows?

C: We had. We made those sometimes out of Baleen. They weren't very strong, though -

E: But more authentic than ours were.

C: Most of our, I'd say hunting implements were slingshots, not so much bows and arrows. A bow and arrow couldn't go very far with the bows we made, the arrow didn't go very far.

00;33;48;00 - 00;34;25;18

E: How did how does somebody learn to throw a harpoon?

C: Well, in whaling it depends on the crew. Uncle Harry [Sadie's youngest brother], the first Kupaag, his crew, he had a, I wouldn't say a requirement, but he expected people who were in his crew, and people who were going to be obviously the harpooners and the shooters, that they would spend time practicing. They have kind of an outline of a whale and Uncle Harry would place you wherever he thought the approach was to the whale from the boat. And if you're in this situation, where are you going to throw the harpoon and have questions, but he would tell you where the most vulnerable parts of the whale were, and depending on which way the whale was coming, coming from behind or from the side or from the front, where are you going to throw the harpoon and where are you going to shoot? And he would tell you, after he got the whale, and we help butcher the whale, where the bony parts were, those were supposed to be not hit. And where the vital organs were and how the best way to do it, almost [miss then kill?]. So some crews had that kind of a training session and -

E: It sounds like you had some of that.

C: I heard some of it. I was never a harpooner so, but I watched them. I can remember some of Harry's comments, and his son's comments afterwards, that practice kind of went away.

E: His son Eugene?

C: Yeah, Eugene and now Frederick. But that practice had kind of gone away. They don't train so much, they kind of depend on the guys who know the anatomy of the whale, really, to do the harpooning, so you know where to throw him.

E: And you said you were on a whaling crew when you came back. What crew was that?

C: Well I started out with my Uncle Tom's [Sadie's oldest brother.] crew. And then with my dad's [David Brower, Sadie's 2nd oldest brother] crew for a little while. Then with Kupaak crew, which is Uncle Harry's which came out to be the Aalak crew. So I stayed with that crew for quite a while. And my son, my oldest son was part of that group. Been there since he moved there.

00;36;33;17 - 00;37;15;27

E: A couple of times when we were first talking, you were talking about Billy and Stanley, your cousins?.

C: My Cousins? Billy Brower and Stanley Brower. Billy was Uncle Robert's son. [Robert was Sadie's 3<sup>rd</sup> older brother.] And Stanley was Uncle Tom's son. And they were both a year or two older than I was, but we were the three that hung out together.

00;37;16;00 - 00;38;13;15

E: And you also said that you knew Billy Neakok [Sadie's eldest son.]

C: Yeah, And Charlie. [Charlie Neakok ,Sadie's 3<sup>rd</sup> child, born 1945, the year Sadie's father Charles D. Brower died, so also named Charles after him.]

E: How do you pronounce that?

C: Neakok. I'll tell you a story. I was preaching at a church, an Indian church, Chippewa United Methodist Church near Oscoda, Wisconsin, last week. Michigan, excuse me. I was telling the story of some of the early Wrangell days and how my number was number 74 instead of my name, because some people found our names hard to pronounce that I could remember the first day of school teacher and several of us kids from Barrow were there. Ronald Tuckle, his name is spelled T-U-K-L-E. And Ronald is about my age, he's gone now. But I can remember the teacher standing front of the class saying Ronald "tuckle, tuckle". And Ronald didn't want to say anything. He sat there. He wasn't going to answer until he got the name right. Finally, one of the other guys stood up and said, It's Tuckle [ph. Tooglee] He tried that teacher, "tuckle."

E: There was a family that still had a sod house when you were growing up.

C: Tagarooks were the ones that lived there, that was on the west side of town, Ira and his sister. I think there might be one other sibling. But Ira was about my age and his sister, I think was Susie. And they had one other sibling, but they lived in this sod house, kind of on the western west end of town over there where the last road is, going out past the airport, their house was in that area. It's not there anymore. But outside of that that was the last, the only, sod house I ever saw anybody living in.

E: You talked about, when you and Janet were talking about how you met and you first saw her in 1966. So that's not really meeting her when she -

C: I watched her get off the plane.

00;40;23;10 - 00;41;04;01

E: You had no idea who she was until later. And you said that she worked she worked with a nurse who was seeing a friend of yours.

C: Later on, the person who introduced us was Sharon Brower. That's Billy Brower's widow now, my cousin, Billy's widow, Sharon. She was the one that kind of put Janet into writing me a letter. I would write letters to my mom or to my dad, but never got any answers back of any of, none of my sisters never wrote either. Nobody from my home town ever wrote me.

00;41;26;25 - 00;42;04;15

E: Was that because people just weren't writing very much?

C: I don't know. They had their lives.

E: Yeah, right, but like, Sadie talks about, you know, she didn't see her mother for four years.

C: Yeah.

E: And it seems like her mother never really learned English. And I know it was, you know, other people that put together, your cousin Edna [McClean, daughter of Sadie's older sister Maria] put together the dictionary and the writing and everything. So maybe there just wasn't that much writing?

00;42;04;17 - 00;42;28;10

C: No. There wasn't, no. Most of our stories were handed down, generation to generation, storyteller to storyteller. And I can remember when we were in Wrangell and even in Mt. Edgecumbe that somebody from our town would always have a small tape recorder, Wollensak was a small one that was preferred, pretty expensive though [\$189.50 in 1957 translates to over \$1,000 today]. But the folks would gather together some evenings on tape saying hello back and forth. And so we sent tape back and forth instead of letters. That's primarily how we connected, stayed connected during the school year, was through the tape recorders. And not many of us had them. So it was always a group was how we gathered together.

00;42;53;18 - 00;43;13;04

E: The fact that you had them at all sounds so much better than some of the other places.

C: And probably contributes well, our parents, a lot of our parents probably, some of the older folks didn't go to school, and some of them might have gone to third grade, but so writing was not a big issue for them. So I don't know if that was the case for my family. My father went wrote a lot of time when he was chairman of, the equivalent of, the community response for when people write, there was no organized group in Barrow that, like the Rotary or whomever, would answer questions or, like a Chamber of Commerce or whomever. But whenever people wrote asking questions about what was there to see in Barrow, he would answer them back and say, "Here's who we are." But to me I never I never I don't remember ever getting a letter from my dad or from any of my family except maybe later.

E: I think you said, even when your mother died, somebody else came and told you.

C: Yeah. Yeah.

00;44;13;06 - 00;44;40;02

E: You were talking about the term Tailhook.

C: That's kind of a term that in the Navy that that was given to those of us who were temporarily on a ship for one cruise or whatever many cruises and it related to when the planes land, they drop or hook down and so those of us who were Tailhookers, were the organization -

E: That's how they stopped them?

C: Yes. Yeah, we were the organization that belonged to the group that took care of those airplanes who were part of the unit, so we're known as the tailhookers.

E: Is that is that on every aircraft carrier?

00;45;06;00 - 00;45;29;16

C: Like I went on two different cruises on two different aircraft carriers, but the same air group. The air group was made up of fighters, bombers, the mail airplanes and those kinds of thing. But the air group was made up of several different units. Some, like I said, were fighters, some were bombers, mail carriers. But those that made up their group, that was kind of temporarily on board an aircraft carrier. The aircraft carrier crew was really the crew that ran the ship and all the other parts within it. But those of us who were on there just for a cruise were the tail hookers.

00;45;56;11 - 00;46;24;12

E: You said a small attack outfit?

C: Yes a small attack outfit. Yes, a small aircraft, one pack, one pilot. The aircraft I serviced was A-4 was the designator for it. It had a pilot and a lot of electronics and a lot of bombs. Light attack outfit is what it's known as.

E: And your role in that? Were you one of the people that was chasing the planes coming in?

00;46;24;14 - 00;46;46;20

C: No, I was the guy that repaired some of the electronics on the plane. Communications and navigation equipment is what I was responsible for repairing. The flight line crew, the guys who served as the planes on the deck, there were two different people on the deck for different contractors. But the flight line crew were the green shirts. They were the repair people. They would open up them, you know, open up the nose, bring it up, take out the radar, take out the communications. My job was I was in the shop down below, after it came down. So that kind of led to my work afterwards of making sure aircraft parts were testable so that instead of having to pick out a big 200-pound box, you could just replace a small piece of it. And that's what my role as a consultant to the military was, to make sure that whatever was being built was easily accessible, easily fixable.

E: So when you came back from the Navy, when you left, it was 1968 and there was a ton of politics about the war.

00;48;00;23 - 00;48;27;03

C: Yes. Yes I lied very low. I lived in San Francisco for several months with a Chinese family. The guy I had lived with here, he had been part of my air crew, but he was an aircraft engine mechanic. So we both were in the same crew. So we both got out very close together. He invited me to go stay with him in San Francisco. So I stayed there with him.

E: Were you upset about the way, the different sides of the politics?

C: Not really. I figured people have their opinions. There was nothing I could do to change them, probably. So I didn't even try. In San Francisco back in the day, I would say was hotbed, but one of the places, Berkeley, primarily, was heavy on the anti-war stuff. So there were, it was best just to kind of lay low.

E: And I suppose coming back up to Alaska might have made it easier.

C: In fact, when I got back to Alaska, really there was no antiwar stuff going on here at all.

00;49;30;04 - 00;50;11;25

E: Did you lose friends? You said you saw what it did to some people.

C: I have a cousin that lives in Anchorage, that killed a brother and was a post-traumatic stress situation. He was surprised, the brother surprised him, and he reacted and killed his brother.

00;50;13;13 - 00;51;07;25

E: The Inupiat values, going back to that, was that something that you were aware of as a concept when you were a kid?

C: No, some parts of it were stressed, but most of it was just through their people's actions. They lived it more than they stressed saying it. But now, to me it was kind of a surprise how much there was in talking about it today than there is living it.

00;51;07;26 - 00;51;41;23

E: I first read about people talking about them, I mean I saw them when we were here. I read about I think it was Willie Hensley's book.

C: Yeah.

E: And then I found there was a time in 1980 when I guess when social ills were worse than and maybe now? And groups of elders were going around to the different villages and talking about them. Were you part of any of that or were you not here?

00;51;41;23 - 00;52;34;16

C: No I was Outside Then.

E: When Etok [Charles Edwardsen, Jr.] and the people that were working on the land claim settlement. Were you aware of that when that was going on?

C: I knew it was happening.

00;52;34;18 - 00;52;59;12

E: But you weren't involved?

C: Yeah, quite often, in my consulting job, I was working primarily for the military. I was down in Georgia. I was in Seattle. And I was in Oklahoma City. Quite often when I was in Seattle with Boeing, on my way back to Boston, I would take a Northwest Airlines flight from Seattle to Washington, D.C. and on up to Boston. And quite often there were people from the Arctic Slope on the plane, going to Washington, D.C. So I would connect with them there on the plane. So I kind of knew what was going on, but I was not really part of that. But I got my news from those folks who were kind of on the front lines of it on their way to Washington, D.C. And it didn't happen all the time, but enough times that I knew what was going on, but not to the depth that they were involved.

E: And Billy Neakok had some role in that too, didn't he?

C: Yes, some yeah. He passed away recently. This was just this last year. Debbie Dahl Edwardson did a wonderful piece on Billy after he passed away. but Deborah did a wonderful piece on some of the work that he did. Debbie wrote that book, My name isn't Easy. It's quite a long piece, but it's about Billy says a lot about what he was involved in. It also has a picture of Etok and Billy at the tail end of it. Etok was also early on in that RCA training program in Los Angeles, but I don't know how long, I don't know if he left that after the school closed in November the or was October November or December of 1964, it was after Kennedy was killed I can remember. But yeah.

00;57;35;12 - 00;58;18;09

E: So your peers in school, did they tend to move to certain kinds of careers?

C: Not really. A lot of a lot of them went back to doing what they grew up knowing. Some of the Morrisses went back to Hydaburg [on Prince of Wales Island] and that area, and became fishermen. Even some of the ones that went on to tribal college at Haskell, where I was thinking of going, ended up going back home and doing things at home. Some of them stayed like Billy Atseriak. He was from down around Bethel area somewhere. He was one of my roommates in high school. He went and stayed in the military, made a career of it, he was a major in the Army when he retired. He was from one of the communities down near Bethel. Some people I've kind of lost track of ... I can remember Rusty Mullaly was in Kotzebue. [Alvin] "Rusty" Mullaly was a year ahead of Charles at Mt. Edgecumbe, in the class of 1962] He and I were kind of on par as far as being quick in math and those kinds of things at school. He and I attended the predecessor to what is now the Rural Alaska Rawhides, the one program here in University of Alaska Fairbanks, where they came from around the state and bring them to here, encourage them about college, which you can expect in college. We spent a summer here at University of Alaska Fairbanks back in 1962, I think it was. It was the year they first started the World Eskimo and Indian Olympics. Before, it was just the World Eskimo Olympics then, early on and then some.

01;00;03;19 - 01;00;34;27

E: Do you do you know others of Sadie's children? I know you know Donna. Margaret?

C: Margaret's gone. Margaret Ferguson No, no.

E: Did you know Patsy?

C: I know who she<sup>1</sup> is, but she was younger, so I didn't quite connect with her often. Danny, some of the other brothers, brothers, sisters I really didn't know. him. Danny was probably the youngest that I knew.

01;00;34;29 - 01;01;08;08

E: Did you know Glenn?

C: Yeah, I know who he was, but I didn't know much. I can remember him as a baby. Yeah. Yeah.

E: Did you know the tragedy of Glenn and Patsy? But as far as I know, they were partying at the house and Sadie wasn't around. Sadie and Nate had gone off camping and I think Patsy accidentally shot Glenn and killed him and it sounded like there was nothing, no violent intent. No violent motivation or anything, but it was another of those things that, when of alcohol and drugs are around, can happen. Let me just ask you for my sake and also for to hear what you have to say about that, if I were doing a story about Sadie's life, would you think that I should avoid talking about that type of thing?

01;02;41;12 - 01;03;07;11

C: Well, I don't think so. I think it adds to the fabric of life and while it might have happened after or before or during when she was a court magistrate. I'm sure it had a lot of input as to what her mindset was when she made decisions on court activities. I'm sure it did.

01;03;07;14 - 01;03;39;13

E: And she talks about learning about what drinking did to people because she saw them.

C: It's a big impact. Yeah. In fact, when Jan and I were up in Barrow recently for our granddaughter's promotion from eighth grade, we're going to walk over to the hotel from my house, probably a half mile walk. And one of Billy's daughters stopped and gave us a ride to that.

E: Billy ,,,?

C: Billy Neakok, yeah. Her mother was a Navajo. My wife, Jan, had worked with her at the hospital way back when. But this young lady's working at the I think Native Village of Barrow maybe. She made it a point of stopping and had a good visit.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles likely confused the androgynous-sounding name with Sadie's daughter, Dora. [Patsy "Aqi" Neakok, Patsy Karl Neakok, Pat Aqi Neakok] was Sadie's son, Glenn's brother. All three were born while Charles was at boarding school in Wrangell.

E: Just a little bit more, [for the Sadie project] When I talked to Donna, there was a court episode in Sadie's book that I thought, if I couldn't get done this big, huge thing that I'd really love to do, I might try something smaller.. And I'm trying to get records of this very early case. Donna said something about talking to Charlotte Brower. And I know in Sadie's book, Charlotte Brower was essential to her, and they helped each other. But when I tried to talk to Charlotte Brower, she seemed willing then unwilling to talk to me. So I was just wondering if you could give me any advice on that.

C: I could talk to her.

E: Because really, what I'm trying to, and maybe you know, what I'm trying to do is find out where ... Court records are generally public. I think unless there's something reason for sealing ut. But because these are old records, I don't know where to get them.

C: I'll call her and let her know because we still, I still visit them during the regularly when I'm there.

E: If you would, I would be very grateful for that.

01;07;59;29 - 01;08;22;00

E: Did you ever get a hunting license? Did you ever need a hunting license when you were hunting around here?

C: Only when we came back in 1992, mainly to be able to go hunt and fish. But whenever I was in Barrow, I really didn't think I needed one. I don't think I need one. But I've got a lifetime hunting, fishing trapping license now that I'm over a certain age. Back then I really didn't feel I needed one, no.

E: But do you know of anybody having to get licenses now? I remember when Sadie was talking about the duck stamps coming in.

C: Yeah. I think it's primarily so many go and hunt or fish outside their region. Like many go to Kenai to go fish for salmon. Dip net for salmon. There you need a license. Where back home folks in Kaktovik, folks in some of the villages across the North Slope, they probably do not. I don't think any of them have any hunting license as a as a regular course unless they go down to Kenai for them. I think they're kind of in the minority. Because it's kind of understood they we still do things a certain way. Understood by both by the court systems and by our local people.

E: The duck-in I think was about that.

C: Yeah, some of the impact primarily comes from the wildlife people trying to protect whatever or trying to raise money and they think they know more about it than we do. So they come in and say, we want to represent you, we want your name on our brochure for this or whatever. But that's probably some of the cause of the tension between the folks in Arctic Village, Venetie on the caribou with the folks on the North Slope. Those kinds of things happen primarily because somebody from outside the region comes in and says, "We can talk better than you or we can do this better. We can raise more money because you're part of our organization type thing". And where does that money go? I don't I think it ever goes to Caribou or whatever it goes to. So we've had some

problems with people coming in trying to say we knew better, we know better than you. But that kind of puts barriers in some areas up between groups, which is unfortunate. But yeah, it happens.

E: I loved reading about the science of the whales. There was a Jeslie ...

C: Jeslie Kaleak

E: Kaleak, I mentioned this to you, the first time, but I didn't know who wrote it, but I think it was in 1993. I have it and I could send it to you if you're interested, it's stuff that you know, and I'm just reading about. What you've lived. But that was where I found the best explanation, for me, for the whole land settlement and the fight about that. Also the story about what happened with Eben Hopson and not going to school is in there too. And now I think it's a part of the curriculum, in the North Slope and that it's a really nice long piece. So I think, you know, anybody interested in what goes on around here might want to see it. Would you like me to send that to you?

C: I would like it, yeah. Be pretty fun to read it. Jeslie's widow still lives up in Barrow. Julia. She was originally from Point Hope.

01;12;10;05 - 01;12;51;19

E: And do you know [retired judge] Mike Jeffries?

C: Yes. He still lives Barrow. In fact, I go to the Presbyterian church. He's an elder at their session there. In fact he greets me fairly regularly when I'm preaching. And so. And Debbie Edwards is also there. But another person you might talk to about Billy - George Edwardson, who is Debbie Dahl Edwardson's husband. He and Billy spent a couple of years walking out in the tundra searching for some of the things the old stories, their version or their take on some of the old stories talked about looking for some pockets of this or something. But they spent a couple of summers together just walking out in the tundra. George would be looking for evidence. George would be a good guy to have conversations about. George and Billy were quite a team in that. Some people thought they were looking for gold, and I don't know what they were looking for. George would be a good resource for that.

E: What year did you move to Fairbanks?

C: Just recently? 2018, just before pandemic.

01;16;23;16 - 01;17;27;09

E: And why did you choose to move here?

C: We lived in Anchorage for a number of years, twenty something years. And every time we went through it, it just seems so big and we want to stay in Alaska. So, yeah, Fairbanks made sense for us and we had two sons who lived here.

E: But you wouldn't move back to Barrow?

C: Not really.

E: Is it easier to live here?

C: Yeah, easier for me for, like I still travel, I wouldn't say extensively, but I still travel fairly regularly. I've been, just since this spring, Chicago, Dallas, Michigan.

E: The places you're traveling, like Michigan, where you spend a lot of time there, does that just organically grow out of one thing or have you been in Michigan before?

01;18;23;17 - 01;18;48;24

C: No I hadn't. I preached in Flint, Michigan a few years ago and some of the folks that are in that same conference United Methodist. A couple of them had also been people I knew when I was going to seminary, so they asked me to come. And some of the Indian tribes there heard I was coming, so they asked me to extend my stay or come earlier so I could go visit several Indian mission churches. So that's what I did. Broke bread, gave sermons.

E: And when you were traveling a lot, you said - Let's see Janet said she didn't like traveling quite as much as you did, but that you took her to a lot of places where you had been.

C: Yeah. When I was going someplace where she had interest or had never been before, then she might come along with me. We've been to Wake Island, Midway Island, Korea.

E: So those islands, were you going for work?

C: Yes. Now, with the Methodist church we've been to London, to India. She comes if it's related to family, you know, Tennessee, New York, those kind of places and we used to go on trips to Hawaii. We spend a few weeks in Hawaii with family from Barrow or from here. The boys would get their vacation plans together and rent a house and we'd come along, tag along. Family in Tennessee, where her sister lives out of that little town called Parrish Tennessee, Henry County. Her mom and aunt stayed with her sister for a number of years. They're both gone now.

E: Well thank you.

01;20;50;17 - 01;21;17;05