

Rudy Gray Transcript

BARBARA CELLARIUS: This is Barbara Cellarius with Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and I am here with Rudy and Jean Gray.

And it is August 15th, and we're at the Gray's home on Jack Lake. And they have signed the oral history release form.

And I mostly wanted talk to you about your life, and especially your time in Alaska. But I was wondering if we could start with when and where you were born? Talk a little bit about how you got here.

RUDY GRAY: Yes I told the stories to Jean. We were born in July 31st, 1923.

JEAN GRAY: In?

RUDY GRAY: In Winnipeg --

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh okay.

RUDY GRAY: Manitoba. Cause my grandparents had emigrated here from Eastern Europe.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Which part of Eastern Europe were they from?

RUDY GRAY: Poland.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: At the time it was probably Austria-Hungary.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: The Austria-Hungarian Empire or whatever it was.

RUDY GRAY: Part of the empire

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And is Manitoba where you grew up? Winnipeg?

RUDY GRAY: No, my father had been working in Winnipeg, he was a mason. And jobs were scarce, but he had a friend in Chicago who wrote to him and said "come down to Chicago, there's a lot of building going on."

At that time the Tribune Tower was being built, so my father left the family in Winnipeg and went.

I had an older brother, there were two of us. He went down, probably in August or September that same year, got a job, and he sent for my mother and the two children. She was 18 years old, two children.

Of course all the possessions consisted of blankets -- for the kids, and what else can you pack on the train? Of course, I'm sure the porters felt sorry for this little kid, this little girl, cute little girl-
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BARBARA CELLARIUS: Uh huh, with the two little kids!

RUDY GRAY: The two little kids, yeah. And helped her, you know? Hardly speaking English also.

Well my father had found a -- they used to call them flats, not apartments, in the twenties. On the south side of Chicago. No indoor toilet, they used a chamber pot -- they called it, which they emptied into a drain under the boardwalk, which was the sidewalk on this particular part of Chicago.

Every morning I remember my mother carrying the chamber pot out, and emptying it, but they did have water, yeah. Well we stayed there -- oh I was only two months old at the time.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh okay well you were really little.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah--

BARBARA CELLARIUS: When you moved to Chicago?

RUDY GRAY: When we moved to Chicago, with my older brother, see. My father found another better place to live, in the north side of Chicago, and that's where I grew up.

And then 1929 came. What little money my father had in the bank, I think he had a little, cause he came from a peasant class, they didn't know about banking, they didn't know. It was hardly any money to save, what he made had to be spent on family expenses. But whatever he had was wiped out.

So he struggled. Oh by that time there were three of us, next year there were four of us, next year there were five of us, next year there were six of us, next year there were seven of us --

JEAN GRAY: All boys.

RUDY GRAY: I look back now and say "My poor mother." Cooking for all those kids, dressing them, bathing them --

JEAN GRAY: Washing the clothes

RUDY GRAY: Washing clothes, because --

JEAN GRAY: Ironing.

RUDY GRAY: My father was not part of the --

BARBARA CELLARIUS: He was probably working?

RUDY GRAY: Working or looking for work.

23 years old, 24 year old mother, seven kids! Remarkable. I don't get it -- I don't know, when I hear stories from modern mothers, you know --

JEAN GRAY: So stop complaining!

RUDY GRAY: Well, seven kids, my father off looking for work, my mother busy with all the siblings -- no time for any individual. No attention. Except for the-- always three youngest or something. 'Cause they had to have constant attention.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: They needed more.

RUDY GRAY: So that caused me to become self-dependent -- independent. To structure my life -- for me to structure my life.

JEAN GRAY: Leave it all up to you to find adventure and --

RUDY GRAY: Up to me to find -- to walk the streets and --

JEAN GRAY: Look at the world.

RUDY GRAY: Well, actually barrel dive, during the depression, behind the vegetable market.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh like dumpster diving?

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: That's because we had to raise rabbits for food, and I also would trim off anything good—

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Sure

RUDY GRAY: -- for the family, see.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: But then take the vegetable scraps for the rabbits.

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, for the rabbits, right. But as, as kids you didn't know. You didn't know that you were in hard times.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That was just your life.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, everybody was living like that. C'mon what's different?

My father was having a real tough time. And then the government started the relief program, but my father was too proud to ask for help. But finally, after 1934-35, there was no way but to ask for relief, they called it.

Because it was embarrassing to go on relief.

JEAN GRAY: Or he felt it was. That he couldn't provide, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, because other people were on relief, of course. It was –

JEAN GRAY: It was tough.

RUDY GRAY: --It was tough, right. But we didn't know it was tough. If he couldn't pay the rent -- I remember one place was \$19 a month, and we couldn't pay it. And the landlord evicted us. He and somebody carried all of the furniture out on the street – on the sidewalk.

My father, in a panic, went around, 'cause he never bought a machine or a car – I didn't know why he never taught himself to drive – so he had to walk, walk, walk to find an empty flat and talk the landlord into having us move in.

That happened twice. We had to – were evicted.

Two blocks away from any of the places where we lived was a large park. That was my escape.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: The bushes, the trees, the fields. To a little kid, these were enormous. The little pond to me was a big lake, you know? Little hook, catching the blue gills and -- but you were not allowed.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh you weren't supposed to fish there?

RUDY GRAY: No, 'cause there was a big cop on a motorcycle, cruising – you know we always listened for the motorcycle. When we heard a motorcycle we'd dash, and we'd run into the bushes and hide, and he'd go putt-putt-putting by. Then we'd come out.

And we usually fished for food. But there are also carp in the pond, you were not supposed to fish of course. But my father would go out, early in the morning, or he'd go out late at – late at night and throw in a line, and then early in the morning he'd go and check the line.

JEAN GRAY: Wow.

RUDY GRAY: And we'd get up in the morning and go to the bathroom, look in the bathtub, and there'd be a big carp --

JEAN GRAY: My mom has the same story. She grew up about that time. Different part of Chicago.

RUDY GRAY: -- Swimming, swimming in the bathtub. Cause it was only short distance from the pond --

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right. Two blocks.

JEAN GRAY: And they can live without air for a long time, those carp.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh really?

JEAN GRAY: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: And he caught some big ones, you know?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you didn't have to take a bath, 'cause there was a carp in the bathtub!

RUDY GRAY: We took a bath only once a week, anyway.

JEAN GRAY: Have to get the hot water.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. We oldest were the first in the water, of course. And by time the fourth one, it got kind of gray, and --

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right.

RUDY GRAY: Pretty soon, by that time the 20-gallon hot water tank, gas heated, was heated again for a change --

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay, so you could change the water out?

JEAN GRAY: So the adults could bathe now.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah for the other three, you know.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So what brought you to Alaska? When did you come to Alaska, and why?

RUDY GRAY: Well also, I was a great reader, and there was a city library in the neighborhood, and I frequented it, and the librarian got to know me. You know, 'cause every third day I was in there and coming out with a bunch of books.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: How old were you?

RUDY GRAY: Huh?

JEAN GRAY: How old were you?

RUDY GRAY: Oh – ten, eleven. Jack’s age, you know. One of the books that was most interesting was Jack London. *Call of the Wild*. Wow. *Call of the Wild*, what a title. Well to me, Humboldt Park was call of the wild, you know. ‘Cause no other kids took advantage of the park like I did. Except after school, several would come and fish in the pond.

So that was my dream. The wild, the wilderness, Alaska. Wow. Alaska, somewhere out there in the universe. That’s unknown. And since I was a loner, I was not frightened of the vastness of anything. To me the park was vast. And I became at home in it, see?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: So that was my plan. Someday go to Alaska. Well by 14, my uncle in Canada sent down some money – bus money – Greyhound bus to go to his farm. And I loved it. The next summer I went back.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you went to the farm for the summer?

RUDY GRAY: Yes, while in high school. Third summer I went back -- I didn’t want to go back home. I was going to be a farmer.

JEAN GRAY: At sixteen or something.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. I was going to be a farmer, my mother implored me to come -- she even came up there and cried “Come back”. No, I’m going to be a farmer. Then winter came.

JEAN GRAY: Winter in Manitoba –

RUDY GRAY: Oh – it got cold.

JEAN GRAY: And dark. And windy.

RUDY GRAY: I think I’ll go home.

JEAN GRAY: And try to get back in school.

RUDY GRAY: Well I had to summer school to catch up. I finished in summer school, graduated from summer school.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: And started junior college. Of course by that time I had to register for the draft. But I had overstayed my –

JEAN GRAY: Tourist visa.

RUDY GRAY: Tourist visa or something in Canada – I was a Canadian. My father never --

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh they never changed – never applied for citizenship.

RUDY GRAY: Never changed, yeah. So I was Canadian. So they wouldn't let me cross the border. I had to cross the border as a student. On a student visa. Of course, they registered me there for the draft.

JEAN GRAY: Ah, and you were how old? Eighteen? Seventeen?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, seventeen.

JEAN GRAY: For the Canadian draft or the American draft?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, Canadian.

JEAN GRAY: Oh Canadian draft.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, I was registered in both countries. Well, Canada called me. I was eighteen going on nineteen. And the Americans sent me a notice to report. And I had a choice.

JEAN GRAY: You had a choice--

RUDY GRAY: I had a choice.

JEAN GRAY: --or they gave you a choice?

RUDY GRAY: No, no I had a choice.

JEAN GRAY: To be?

RUDY GRAY: There was a time period where you had to report. So I reported to the American side, ignored the Canadian side, or sent them a notice. And there it was. I made the choice because, well, America was powerful, it was a rich country.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, and that saying I guess at the time, would that the American prisoners would be treated better, and since he had a choice –

RUDY GRAY: Well, to me, all I knew about Canada was that it was a small country, few people –

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, you didn't know.

RUDY GRAY: --and it was far away from Chicago.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: At least I was in America.

JEAN GRAY: You were a little more familiar.

RUDY GRAY: Right. Well --

JEAN GRAY: He wasn't a citizen though.

RUDY GRAY: No, no I wasn't a citizen. Because when we were slated to go overseas, I could refuse to go, because I wasn't a citizen. But they said if you refuse to go, go back to Canada. You have to be a citizen. Oh okay, I'll be a citizen. Okay gave me a jeep and a driver and officer, we drove to LA, got in front of the judge, and in a half-hour I was a citizen.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That was quick.

RUDY GRAY: Just like that. That's how I became a citizen. Meanwhile, my mother had been studying because she wanted to be a citizen. She always was studying, always reading. I'd come home from school and she's say "What's this word?" She's have a list of words, you know.

My father never became a citizen, maybe toward the end? So he had to register as an alien and report every year or something.

JEAN GRAY: So he ended up in the service --

RUDY GRAY: I ended up in the service and because of the interview I had with the inducting officer, I listed my background -- college -- just that word, college, set me above.

JEAN GRAY: And you'd only had a year.

RUDY GRAY: Not even a year.

JEAN GRAY: But you got in and tried.

RUDY GRAY: But the fact that it took me out of college meant that I was able to learn --

JEAN GRAY: To them, anyhow.

RUDY GRAY: To them. So in basic training, they needed somebody to send to radio school. College. Rudy Gray --

JEAN GRAY: Well you were Grzebieniak at the time.

RUDY GRAY: Well I was Adolph.

JEAN GRAY: Adolph Grzebieniak

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: Yes.

RUDY GRAY: And they enrolled me in radio school. During basic training – I got the basic training. The bayonet, the rifle range –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And all the other stuff, you know. But mostly I was always dressed in khakis, while all the other guys were dressed in dungarees, the gray –

JEAN GRAY: Digging holes and painting pots.

RUDY GRAY: And cleaning up the area, and I'd be strolling with my books, going to school. But that set me up for –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So were you in the army?

RUDY GRAY: Yes, it was the artillery. So I was assigned to the radio section and learned Morse code, and radio maintenance. I finished radio school, well – they were concerned about chemical warfare. They needed somebody to send to chemical warfare school. Rudy Gray.

JEAN GRAY: Did you put your hand up and they said “Hey this guy will do it”?

RUDY GRAY: And I went to chemical warfare school. And was designated the battalion chemical warfare noncommissioned officer. Which allowed me a jeep and a driver to go to all the gun emplacements and instruct them in decontamination procedures.

I didn't know I was teaching. All I knew was that it got me out of KP [Kitchen Patrol]. Right?

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, exactly. This is a pretty good stint for being a private.

RUDY GRAY: I was a PFC [Private First Class] by that time.

JEAN GRAY: Oh heaven forbid – excuse me. I don't even know what that means.

BARBARA CELLARIUS and RUDY GRAY: Private First Class.

JEAN GRAY: Oh first class! Oh heavens, yes, I get it now.

RUDY GRAY: Well that set you above –

JEAN GRAY: The rest of them.

RUDY GRAY: The private, you know. Then we went to desert training, the Mohave. And thought – we were red army and the blue army was Patton and his bunch, and we thought we were going to go to South Africa – I mean North Africa, desert training.

Ended up in Hawaii. Jungle training.

JEAN GRAY: And 1943 this is?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, '43. Jungle training. Crawling through the –

JEAN GRAY: The jungles of Hawaii.

RUDY GRAY: Oh, terrible. Crawling through stuff like that, you know. But we set up the radio, and our battalion was designated to set up their guns along the windward side of Alaska –

JEAN GRAY: Hawaii – Oahu.

RUDY GRAY: Oahu. To defend Hawaii, you know. Ack-Ack, anti-aircraft. And we set up the radio. We were net control. All the batteries had radios, and we were control. We were net control, they reported to us.

When we received a report from group that bogeys were in the area, or Japanese zeros, they come to us, and we would warn all the guns to get ready. It was a procedure. You just didn't sit around and then fire when you wanted to. You had to get instructions, from the major, to the captain, to the lieutenant, to the sergeant –

JEAN GRAY: And sitting on Oahu, this was still practice.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: This was after Pearl Harbor, of course.

RUDY GRAY: And one time, they said get out to the road, you know. And who came by in a limousine? Macarthur, FDR, and the generals drove by. We didn't see them of course, but the cars –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You saw the cars?

RUDY GRAY: All the big cars went by.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: So you ended up going to where?

RUDY GRAY: Well, you're always waiting. In the army, you're always waiting. You never know, nobody told you anything, you know, "Oh we're going to go here in two weeks." You never knew, never knew.

Suddenly, pack up, you know. We're going the – going to load up to transport. Where are we going? I don't know. Nobody knows.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Just get packed.

RUDY GRAY: Get packed, you know. Get on the transport, get to your bunk. Where are we going? We don't know, you know. The ship starts heading out, you don't know. And you look around and there's a few ships on the horizon, but you don't know that there are a hundred other ships all around you. And nobody knows anything.

Maybe the officers didn't even know. Rumors. We're going to Yap. Oh boy, we're going to Yap.

Historically, of course, by that time Macarthur was already determined to return to the Philippines. Idle return. It happened at that time that he was ready. So, we were attached to the 96th Division, and they were the invading division for Yap. They were now attached to Macarthur, instead of Nimitz in the north, they took 96th Division, and placed it under Macarthur's command you know, and we headed for Guam.

And at Guam, wow, a thousand ships. I mean, there was – it was enormous, awe inspiring – all kinds of transport, destroyers, battleships. We're going to Leyte, Philippines. That was October 20th, yeah. Headed for Leyte, the invasion of Leyte.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Was this '44?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, October 20th was the invasion date. I was treating this like a vacation. They told you nothing.

JEAN GRAY: And these kids didn't know how horrible this was all going to be.

RUDY GRAY: No, you never knew.

JEAN GRAY: And they're 18 and 20 year olds.

RUDY GRAY: Shoot, you know, we get into the bay, you know, there's so much noise. All the metal ships, all the sounds overlap each other, so what you get is a *woo*, instead of a boom, boom, boom. But you could see the 16 inch shells red hot, going over, you know.

JEAN GRAY: So you were on the water when there was an invasion?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah –

JEAN GRAY: You hadn't landed yet?

RUDY GRAY: No, no, we getting ready to –

JEAN GRAY: So you needed to bombard the island or something?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, the first wave was going to go in, so you had to clear the shore.

JEAN GRAY: That's right, so you could get in.

RUDY GRAY: So four or five hours later, they had thousands of others to go in in first. They're not going to send in –

JEAN GRAY: The radio guy, to be mutilated. You know, you don't want him, boom.

RUDY GRAY: But went in about the fourth wave, Ack-Ack our guns, because the Japanese were facing these shores, you know. So we had to set up the guns to defend the shores.

JEAN GRAY: And some of this he would never have known, at the time. But he's been reading World War II history, now that some of that stuff is declassified –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh okay, so now he understands –

RUDY GRAY: Well that's how I knew what was going on after.

JEAN GRAY: And can get into the specific of the waves of who went in, and when –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right, right –

RUDY GRAY: All you know is you're on this ship –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You're just there –

JEAN GRAY: You're waiting for someone to tell you what to do.

RUDY GRAY: Okay you have a number you're designated. You line up, I've got my 240 radio on my back, you line up. Okay, load up, you get over the rail and you go down –

JEAN GRAY: That rope –

RUDY GRAY: The rope –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh like a ladder, a ladder, yeah that net.

JEAN GRAY: The ladder thing, like you see in the movies.

RUDY GRAY: Into the LCVP's [Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel] and vroom. Meanwhile, you're down below, things are happening. You don't go above until you're ready to, you know. So you didn't know what's going on, you know.

Hundreds of LCVP's are bringing the infantry in, you know. They're like bugs on the water, *bzzz* they'd come back and load up again. It's a – hey, it's like a movie.

JEAN GRAY: It's like Saving Private Ryan –

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah, it's like a movie.

JEAN GRAY: Coordinated chaos.

RUDY GRAY: I looked and said this is like a big screen movie. Honestly, because nothing's happening to you.

JEAN GRAY: You're not terrified yet.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It's happening around you.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, yeah. You haven't been shot at.

RUDY GRAY: You don't know what's going on – all you know is you're going to go down the rope, get in the LCVP, you're gonna land, you set up your radio – that's your job.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You're just following what you're supposed to be doing.

RUDY GRAY: You set up your radio and get in contact with all the other radios.

JEAN GRAY: And everything's going to work, just like practice.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah that's all the job you have. Fortunately of course, you know, the infantry went in first and cleared the area, see. But that's the way I felt. I was not frightened or anything, 'cause I had only this job on my mind.

JEAN GRAY: That's all you knew to do.

RUDY GRAY: All I needed to do. There's no time to think "what if, what if, what if?" you know.

You could hear the shooting going on, but –

JEAN GRAY: Well it didn't affect you – they weren't shooting at you?

RUDY GRAY: Well you don't know, you don't know.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: And that's how the infantry guy feels. He doesn't know what's happening out there, hundreds of others are getting shot at, blown up, killed. All he knows is, he's got to go in this little place and hide, and anybody moving, he's got to shoot. That's all he knows. There's no big picture –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Uh huh. Just focused on where you are, right then.

JEAN GRAY: Keep them from being too terrified, I think

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, focus on this. And that's what my job was. Focus. Get on the radio, everybody report in, you know. Keep a log. And the lieutenant is standing there, giving orders.

Well, of course, day after day the ammunition dump blows up down there, *woo*, and then all the little things start, the nitty-gritty. The supply sergeant has to go get supplies, so he talked the other guy into giving him a couple crates of oranges, and all the little things.

JEAN GRAY: Sorta like MASH.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, he managed to get three cases of frozen turkeys. Wow, you know.

JEAN GRAY: When you hear that stuff, yeah –

RUDY GRAY: All that nitty-gritty stuff.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right.

JEAN GRAY: Something else to talk about besides your job.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So how long were you in the army?

RUDY GRAY: Three years.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Three years.

RUDY GRAY: And then we went to Okinawa. That was another show.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So was that – so during that three years, after you were in the Philippines, you went to Okinawa?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Yeah after Leyte was taken, we started to stage for Okinawa.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: That video that Joe has on his site –

JEAN GRAY: Oh that he had, yeah, site's gone, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: We were sitting, waiting for – to load up for Okinawa. And the same procedure, the troop ship, get in the bay –

JEAN GRAY: How far away are those places?

RUDY GRAY: Oh, but this was time it was different. The kamikazes –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh, uh huh.

RUDY GRAY: Started there, in Okinawa. And you'd look around and boom, that ship gets hit over there –

JEAN GRAY: And things are starting to sink in, huh?

RUDY GRAY: And you're hoping you're not – you know, let's get off the ship, let's get off of here, you know. You don't know –

JEAN GRAY: You're a sitting duck.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah you're a sitting duck, right. But by that time, the Japanese had decided not to defend the shore.

JEAN GRAY: 'Cause you were there after the major invasion that some of the stories are written about, the really bloody thing? You were there after that right?

RUDY GRAY: No, no, first day.

JEAN GRAY: Really?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, the first day. The Japanese had set up their defensive lines miles in –

JEAN GRAY: Way inside the island? Okay, okay.

RUDY GRAY: They were not going to fight on the shore.

JEAN GRAY: They had learned.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It didn't turn out –

RUDY GRAY: The bombing and our planes tracing, you know.

JEAN GRAY: So they were in those tunnels that we hear about? Holes in the mountain.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, we'll wait for them to come to us. You know, which was a better strategy, actually. And it worked, you know, but it was fortunate for us too.

JEAN GRAY: You knew where they were.

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, right. Yeah that was April 1st. April fool's day, '44.

JEAN GRAY: So how long did you stay in Okinawa?

RUDY GRAY: Well, of course, until it was secured, and then in June, and then we wanted to go home. Yeah, about 100,000 of us wanted to go home too.

JEAN GRAY: Oh because your time is up? You've been in for two years?

RUDY GRAY: Oh no, no, your time isn't up. You're in for the duration.

JEAN GRAY: Oh until the end of the war?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: Oh so it's not like a two year thing.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, the war happened to end, and we were there. You know, now, get home. They only have so many ships. So they created a system, how long you've been in, the action that were involved in – they gave you points for that, and gave you points for that, and points for that.

And we were 61-pointers. You know, but others had 100 points. They went on the cruise ship home, until they came down to us, and that wasn't until December! From June till December, we had to wait for a ship.

JEAN GRAY: And you were sitting at Okinawa waiting for a ship.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, what to do. You know, the officers they – so they formed a college.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh okay.

RUDY GRAY: Tracer College.

JEAN GRAY: Tracer College?

RUDY GRAY: Tracer College.

JEAN GRAY: Just a word, but tracer meaning the bullets and all that stuff.

RUDY GRAY: Okay, okay, anybody know how to teach anything, you know? Well I want to keep busy, yeah, yeah I'll teach typing. Because at the time, I was teaching myself typing –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: For the army books. Well I'll teach them typing, you know. I kept a chapter ahead. Once they learned the keyboard, you know, it was just a matter of practice, practice, practice. Also, I was teaching myself short hand. I'll teach shorthand too, you know.

It was fun. And they thought it was fun. It was something to do. You couldn't play volleyball all day.

JEAN GRAY: It was hot, it's a tropical island.

RUDY GRAY: And it was in a tent, it was shady and cool. I didn't know I was teaching.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: But you were.

RUDY GRAY: I didn't know I was a teacher. I didn't – all I knew was that it kept me out of drudgery. And it did, you know, even aboard the troop ship, to keep busy, I was ordered to lecture on decontamination and gas mask procedure on the fantail. "Everybody report to the fantail for a lesson in decontamination." And I was up there standing, and everybody was –

JEAN GRAY: Still a private first class?

RUDY GRAY: No, I was a T-5 by then. Technician, 5th grade, and I didn't know I was teaching. All I knew was that it kept me out of the KP.

JEAN GRAY: Still, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: You know that's the way you –

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, well you're looking for an easy way to be in the army.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You were how old at this point? Like 22?

RUDY GRAY: Uh, 19, 20, 21 and a half.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, right. Just a kid. I looked young for my age, I looked 15. You know, all the guys kidded me, and I had these glasses and they called me professor.

I couldn't swear like they could –

JEAN GRAY: Still can't.

RUDY GRAY: I'd try, but they'd laugh at me. It was a foreign language to me, to swear, you know. Finally, we loaded up the troop ship. Now what to do? You know, it's a three week trip.

We started a newspaper. Tracer. Called it Tracer. I have copies of it. Matt Vogel was the editor, and I was the reporter, Flettery was –

JEAN GRAY: And you're on the boat?

RUDY GRAY: And we were on the boat. Mimeograph.

JEAN GRAY: And what's there to report about?

RUDY GRAY: Oh there will be bingo tonight and –

JEAN GRAY: And Joe cut his finger and—

RUDY GRAY: Oh no they got AP reports.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay, so you got news reports.

RUDY GRAY: We got news reports and printed them up. And then the mileage, how many miles to go.

JEAN GRAY: Everyday? Every week?

RUDY GRAY: Everyday, yeah. How many miles to go, they were very interested in that. Finally, there's the Golden Gate. Oh boy. Underneath the Golden Gate. And the boat was out there with a band to greet us.

JEAN GRAY: How many people on the boat – ship? Sorry.

RUDY GRAY: Ours?

JEAN GRAY: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Oh about 8-900. They were all victory ships.

JEAN GRAY: What does that mean?

RUDY GRAY: They were constructed by Kaiser very fast.

JEAN GRAY: To get you guys home –

RUDY GRAY: During the war, to get troops over there, and then –

JEAN GRAY: Use them – okay.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: And what year is this now? '44? '45? Early '45.

RUDY GRAY: No, late '45.

JEAN GRAY: Late '45?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: But you were until December –

RUDY GRAY: December '45.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: December '44 – was it December '44 that were – you left?

RUDY GRAY: Yes, yeah –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So this must be have been early –

RUDY GRAY: No, December '45.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: December '45, okay.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Because by January '46 we were in California.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay, so January '46 you get to California.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. April 1st, '45 was when we invaded Okinawa.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay, I had the year wrong.

RUDY GRAY: And then in June –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yep.

RUDY GRAY: A-bomb. 'Cause we were already preparing to invade Japan. I thought it would be nice to visit Japan.

JEAN GRAY: Not like that. It would've been a slaughter in 1945.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, well Okinawa was a slaughter, but we didn't know. I'd see the replacements come in off the ship, new fatigues. Young kids, you know. Hey, hi, hi, hi! Heading

for the – and then here come the trucks with feet sticking out, the bodies, up in the tents, where they –

That would be terrible detail. They'd have to search the pockets and take off their watches, everything –

JEAN GRAY: Their dog tags.

RUDY GRAY: Dog tags. I wrote a poem about being in one of those –

JEAN GRAY: You were never in one, though.

RUDY GRAY: Well I wrote a poem about somebody laying there, looking like me. Clean, you know. Just like sleeping.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So how did you get from California to Alaska?

RUDY GRAY: Well, of course, I wanted college education. College – that was the key to success. You had to have a college education in those years. So I'm going to go to college first, see –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: Get my degree. Make money. How to make money? Business. Okay I'm going to get a business degree.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Where did you go to college?

RUDY GRAY: Pardon?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Where did you go to college?

RUDY GRAY: Bradley University.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And where's that?

RUDY GRAY: Peoria. I wanted to be close to home so I could go home every weekend. Your first year in college you want to go – you haven't made any bonds yet so you want to go home every weekend. And then every second weekend, and –

JEAN GRAY: And it's like home? Where's that?

RUDY GRAY: And by then, maybe once a month you'd go home. By that time, you'd broken the bond with home.

Well, so I'm going to get a business degree.

Well I changed, I was going to go into journalism, I was going to be a writer. 'Cause in high school, the English teacher encouraged me to write, you know. That's why I started my poetry. Which also, army years I wrote. Poems.

Well I wanted to get out of college soon as possible, so I went to summer school for three summers.

I'm going to Alaska. No money, little bit of money, but there was a company that paid you to deliver a car if you drove it to the west coast, for \$50. They paid for the gas. So I got a car to deliver to Seattle.

JEAN GRAY: What year was this?

RUDY GRAY: '49. '50. That '49-'50. Never made a plan, how am I going to get to Alaska from Seattle?

JEAN GRAY: Details, details.

RUDY GRAY: Never know how much it was going to cost, never checked into the costs. I don't know how.

In Peoria, I roomed in a private home and got to be friends with the land lady, we always had great talks, you know. And told her I was going to Alaska, Seattle, she said "Well I have friends in Seattle. Here's a letter, a letter to them, a letter of introduction."

So before I turned in the car, I went to their home and I gave the woman the letter and she read it, "Oh come back in the evening, my husband will be home and we'll visit."

So I came back in the evening and we had dinner. The son-in-law and daughter and family were there, we were talking, talking. The son-in-law says, "Do you know how to paint? I can't hire anybody to paint my house."

"Oh I know how to paint, yeah."

Oh okay, for two weeks I painted. They room and boarded me for two weeks.

JEAN GRAY: And you made?

RUDY GRAY: They were Mayflower people.

JEAN GRAY: And you made how much money? That was the point, right? To give you a job so you could make some money.

RUDY GRAY: I don't recall. But one day, a letter, registered letter came for me. Who knew I was there? In the letter was a ticket, air ticket to Ketchikan. And a notice for an interview with Pan America.

My land lady had a daughter marry a guy who worked for Pan Am in Ketchikan, and she wrote to her daughter that I was in Seattle, looking – going to Alaska looking for a job. They had an opening, got the Ketchikan ticket, and a job.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So what were you doing for Pan Am?

RUDY GRAY: Dressed in black suit, white shirt, black tie, writing out tickets. To me, that was not Alaska. Gone. When I had my – excuse me.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Let's see if I can pause this. I'm not sure, I'm just going to let it run because it seems to be running. I can't see the screen.

JEAN GRAY: You're right in this light you can't see it at all.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It's the light, I can't see the screen so I can't make sure it's on, so I'm just going to let it continue because –

JEAN GRAY: So those birds that were fighting, there are three of them, right? Came back and forth, eating the oatmeal we didn't eat. One of them was a baby, and that was the one making the noise. Now he still – if you know what to look for, right, know what to look for – 'cause when the baby jays are born they're like all black. And the parents are still the gray with whatever –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And they change colors.

JEAN GRAY: And there was a little more black on this guy if you knew where to look, you know. But he was doing this thing, you know the fluttering thing? And squawking at them, 'cause they still want mom to feed 'em. Even though he's perfectly capable and he's been here alone, eating. You know, and mom and dad are nowhere to be found. Or taking food away, whatever they do. So that's what the noise was. It's gone so the dust up is gone. And they're not going to eat that anyhow, dates, so, I was going to say – they're just not into fruit. Unless it's like, covered in beef broth or something. And then you can fool them.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Something to make it interesting.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah. The oatmeal is not surprising actually, it's solid, doesn't smell like much, and it doesn't taste like fruit, I think. I don't know if it's the sharp taste, or whatever it is they don't like.

Oh here's the cake–

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Thank you. Actually, what if I do – okay we're going again.

RUDY GRAY: Of course I went to college on the GI Bill. Which gave you just enough to get by. But the manager of the cafeteria was a woman, and she kind of liked me, so she gave me a job as a cashier.

JEAN GRAY: And now you're back at Bradley?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, at Bradley, but –

JEAN GRAY: So he's just backed up a little bit.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: But the land lady kind of took a liking to me, you know. Her husband, he worked for a company, S&H Green Stamp Company –

JEAN GRAY: Oh, yeah. My goodness.

RUDY GRAY: But he was also a photographer. 4x5 camera and he had a dark room. And he contracted with dancing studios to take pictures of the kids.

JEAN GRAY: At the dances at school?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, and I would help him. Then we'd go down to the dark room and print 4x5's, you know. So I learned a little bit about dark room work.

Anyway, that's the steps to Seattle, to Ketchikan. And there I was.

JEAN GRAY: 'Cause you'd made connections, right?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you wore a suit and tie, and –

RUDY GRAY: Terrible.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And issuing tickets –

RUDY GRAY: This was not my Alaska. You know, looking out the window at the beautiful view, when I'm here writing out tickets, longing.

Well an opening opened up at a Pan Am station on an island where the airfield was. That's where the big planes landed. And then the amphibian planes picked up the passengers and flied them to Ketchikan, and land on the water.

Well that station there, the manager there left, and I got the job. Well that was better than the city, anyway. However, while I was in Ketchikan, at lunch time, there was a little restaurant, called Hamburger Heaven.

JEAN GRAY: In those days?

RUDY GRAY: And all the business people would go there to – for lunch. Downtown. And I would go there. One day I was there, at a table, busy, waiting for my hamburger, facing the door, and three women came through the door. One woman looked around, and I looked around and saw how crowded it was, and she started to back up, and I stood up to her and I went like this – and the three women came in and sat down.

I didn't know at the time that one of the women was a pioneer. Oaksmith. Just a wonderful woman. She had a dress shop in Ketchikan. She was one of the old families of Ketchikan. They come in later in the story, my second year in Ketchikan. They – we were talking away, talking away, and "Where are you staying?"

"Oh I'm staying at the hotel." Oh and then Maurine says, the older lady, "I have a house that needs painting and there's a room" –

JEAN GRAY: You're a house painter?

RUDY GRAY: Honest. "You can have the room." Just from that gesture that –

JEAN GRAY: Did these two people – the house that you painted before, did these people know each other? Or was house painting just off the top of her head? Was there a connection there?

RUDY GRAY: No –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It was just – just happenstance.

JEAN GRAY: Another house needs to be painted, here's a guy!

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah – it did need, it did need – it was really rundown.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, and just like, here's a guy, he must paint houses!

RUDY GRAY: Ketchikan is very damp.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yes.

RUDY GRAY: And there I was, you know, after work – until I went to Annette Island, you know, so I stayed there for several months.

Got to Annette, and the plane came from Seattle, landed. Refueled, took off, and went to Fairbanks. Refueled, loaded passengers, came back, landed at Annette, refueled, went to Seattle. And that was it.

Now, what to do between Annette and Fairbanks, right?

JEAN GRAY: All the time, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Rough. What to do with that time.

JEAN GRAY: You got hours.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Sit there in the black suit, but – Well somebody told me about a stream across the bay where the salmon were running. Oh boy. The plane took off, I did all the paperwork, had to loan a boat, motored across the bay, went to the stream, wow, the salmon were jumping up the falls – beautiful!

Man, you know. How to catch them? Oh here comes somebody. I ran and hid, it was a native. He came and carried a big net, you know, and he netted a few fish, put them in a sack, went into the trees, came back without the net. Left.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And you watched him, so you know that there's a net in the trees.

RUDY GRAY: Ah, I gotta find this net!

JEAN GRAY: So that's how you do it, then.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, I looked and looked and couldn't find a net. Finally, oh it was stuck in the ground, stuck up in the air, it wasn't down like this, I'm looking for a net, stuck – man I didn't know anything about – put it down, below the falls, of course all the salmon are down in the hole, getting ready to jump in the falls.

The net filled with salmon, I can't pull it up! And I'm trying to dump the salmon out, trying to get at least a few. Well, I learned how to get a few out, you know.

Oh time to get back, the plane is coming back from Fairbanks. I better get back, you know. Dress up and get the passenger list, the freight list, and the mail weight, and all the paperwork done before the plane comes.

So that went on for some time. However, what to do with the fish? You know, if I can't get rid of the fish, I can't net 'em. I'll give them to the stewardesses. They loved it.

JEAN GRAY: Would you clean them and gut them and all that?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: How would you wrap them? Newspaper or something?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah –

JEAN GRAY: Were they kings?

RUDY GRAY: No, sockeye. Because they had a cook at the restaurant there, and bunks for any planes that got stuck there by weather.

JEAN GRAY: Oh, so they had housing?

RUDY GRAY: Oh they had housing, yeah. So I kept them in the cooler till they came, see. Fresh sockeye right out of Seattle –

JEAN GRAY: Right from the stream, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: But I never knew about the tide.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: You know where I'm going. I never knew about tides. So there I am, I motor across, get the net, get some fish, come back to the boat, and it's high and dry on the rocks. The tide went out.

I'm struggling. I get drift wood and put it under the boat, and roll it and roll it, and finally I got it to water. And I'm tooling across the bay to get back to shore, and here comes the plane from Seattle.

JEAN GRAY: Uh oh.

RUDY GRAY: Uh oh. Of course they panicked in Ketchikan, sent somebody over. I got fired. But I didn't care. I knew I was ready.

JEAN GRAY: That wasn't going to be your life.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, I called it quits, you know. I didn't know at the time that I could transfer anywhere in the Pan America world. But I didn't want, that was –

JEAN GRAY: To push papers all the time, and work 12 months out of the year, that's no fun.

RUDY GRAY: Circumstances, things – yeah. Things worked out.

While I was in Seattle –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Before you went to Ketchikan?

RUDY GRAY: Before I went to Ketchikan. They had a visitor. A tall, attractive blonde woman, friend of the family, came to visit. And –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: This was the family that you had been introduced to?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah, that I was room and boarding with, before I would go painting. I was sitting at breakfast, and, I don't know if you should put this part in the story, but we're talking over breakfast. And she reaches over and holds my hand and says "It feels like we've met somewhere before." I'm a naive kid, you know, what do I know?

"Here's my number, if you ever come through Los Angeles, call me up." Okay now, I get fired, I'm going home, and I'm going through Los Angeles.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: You have a phone number of a good-looking blonde.

RUDY GRAY: How 'bout that.

JEAN GRAY: Why wouldn't he?

RUDY GRAY: I figured, hey, this is like a movie – I'll play the part. I'll see how you play the part.

JEAN GRAY: And how old are you at this point, maybe 23-4, something like that?

RUDY GRAY: Ah, no, 27 or so.

JEAN GRAY: Oh that's right, college, okay.

RUDY GRAY: So I got to LA, I call her up, "I'll go to this corner of this building, and I'll be there to pick you up." Okay I'm waiting over there, *beep, beep*, I look, and there's a white convertible Cadillac.

JEAN GRAY: That does sound like a movie, huh?

RUDY GRAY: I'm a kid, you know!

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: But I'm acting the part.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It's LA.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: It was then, too!

RUDY GRAY: Okay, I get in the car, and “Oh I’m so glad to see you.” She grabs my hand, you know. We go, where’s their home? Brentwood. That’s where OJ Simpson lived.

JEAN GRAY: Ah, pretty fancy, huh?

RUDY GRAY: Oh, fancy, Brentwood. Above LA. So that evening I meet a gentleman in the house, his son was an almond farmer. And days went on, and they offered me a job in the warehouse – they were Mayflower people. Seattle people were Mayflower people.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And Mayflower Moving Company –

RUDY GRAY: Pardon?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: The – the moving company?

RUDY GRAY: The moving company, yeah.

BD: Yep.

RUDY GRAY: The big moving company, Mayflower people, I call them. No, I’m going home, you know. So after a week, you know – they had a maid, chauffeur, and a gardener, the whole bit, these people.

JEAN GRAY: Of course, in a house like that.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, it was Spanish style, beautiful. I’m going home, I’m always going home for Christmas. It’s December. I go home, spend January, February there. I’m waiting for spring, I’m going back to Alaska.

Meanwhile, my father had become a little successful in his masonry business. And my brothers were working with him. But one brother working with him had been drafted, went to Korea. Oh boy, I better help my pa. Pa’s place, I better learn the construction business, you know.

When I go back to Alaska, I’m going to work for a construction company, and their needs. Not the nitty-gritty, you know, how to run the company. Get to Seattle, hop on the plane, stopover in Ketchikan, I want to say hello to my friends.

I’m walking down the street in Ketchikan, “Hey Rudy!”

“Oh, hi Sig.” Swedish fellow, or Norwegian, whatever. Friend of mine from the year before.

“Hey, where ya been?”

“Oh, Chicago.”

“Where are you going?”

“Going to Anchorage.”

“What are you going to Anchorage for?”

“Oh, I’m going to get a job with a construction company, learn the business.”

“Oh, come with me.” He takes me up to a construction office, I got a job. Never got to Anchorage. Yeah, I learned all the hiring, firing, taxes, insurance, the whole bit. How to run an office.

JEAN GRAY: How long did you work at that place?

RUDY GRAY: Oh, couple of months.

JEAN GRAY: And you learned all that?

RUDY GRAY: About two, three months. Meanwhile, with this company, subcontracted the tunnel digging portion of the job, to a Canadian company. I met the Canadian superintendent and told him I was Canadian also. Oh we’re buddy-buddy, you know.

There would come a time when the superintendent of the North Land Construction out of Vancouver, the superintendent said “Hey, sorry, but we’ve got to let you go. My grandson is coming up and we’ve got to give him a job.”

JEAN GRAY: So now you’re out of a job.

RUDY GRAY: I’m out of a job. Yeah go down the street, there’s Andy. Andy Easton, the Canadian superintendent. “Hi, Rudy, how you doing?”

“Oh, okay. I just lost my job.”

“Oh yeah? Hey I’m opening up my camp up there in Beaver Falls, I need a man to run the office.”

JEAN GRAY: Just walked into these jobs.

RUDY GRAY: How ‘bout that. I learn the whole bit, and Andy gives me a job.

JEAN GRAY: And Beaver Falls is sort of in the middle of nowhere up there?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yes, its south of the powerhouse where the electricity for Ketchikan is made. Before they put it up with Dumont.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So it was part of the power generation for Ketchikan?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, the generation plant. There was a home there and a family living there. It was built on the hillside, the camp. On stilts, you know. About 60 men and a tunnel was being dug up here.

JEAN GRAY: And the tunnel would be for what, water?

RUDY GRAY: Water, yeah. Come from the lake. To run the –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: The generator, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: -- Generators. They were expanding the –

JEAN GRAY: They knew the cruise ships were coming.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, well. One day, a woman, the wife of the powerhouse operator, comes up and asks me to come to dinner. Wow, something to do. Okay, I went down that evening for dinner, and introduced me to their daughter. Their 15 year old daughter who had a neck brace on. She got injured and couldn't go to school, they were homeschooling her. But they didn't know how to homeschool, apparently, or were not interested in it, you know, but they had to keep up. The law says you have to provide schooling.

So they asked me to help them homeschool the girl.

JEAN GRAY: And why did they ask you?

RUDY GRAY: 'Cause I was the only –

JEAN GRAY: Did they know that you had any of the teaching stuff that you had just talked about in the army?

RUDY GRAY: Well they assumed since I was running –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You were kind of the manager.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah that you must be somewhat educated in some way, okay.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah. Right, they weren't going to ask just anybody.

JEAN GRAY: So you weren't just anybody to them.

RUDY GRAY: No, no –

JEAN GRAY: Oh okay.

RUDY GRAY: I was dressed differently, and –

JEAN GRAY: And you weren't out carousing.

RUDY GRAY: Well there's no place to carouse.

JEAN GRAY: He's not a carouser, so –

RUDY GRAY: We had a bunk house for the men, they were catered by this national company that made the food.

Anyway, instinctively I could sense this girl was very sickly looking. Depressed, yeah I'm sure. I look back now and say this girl was suffering from depression. Well she's alone, right.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, no contact. How old? Fifteen?

RUDY GRAY: Fifteen, yeah. Okay I'll come down. I went down the next day and they had a record player. LP – LP records. And I had some LP's, I don't know how, or whatever. So I thought, I have to get this girl's morale up, you know. Can't teach –

She didn't think I was teaching, you know.

JEAN GRAY: You spotted a problem.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah, I was going to uplift this girl. But I have to get her physically active, too. Well how are you going to get a 15 year old girl physically active? She's depressed, well. She asked if she was doing something, contributing.

Well, I gave her my camera and I told her, "every morning you go up the hill, to the tunnel, and take pictures of them working there." And I would send the pictures to Vancouver. Not B.C., yeah B.C. To show them progress that the tunnel –

JEAN GRAY: Oh okay so you were doing it. Yeah, there you go.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, we were doing it. Boy, oh boy. It was like a job.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah right, yeah. And it was useful.

RUDY GRAY: And she looked forward to it. I didn't know I was teaching.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, got her out of the house, got her fresh air.

RUDY GRAY: Got her out of the house. And she was doing something for me, who she was becoming infatuated with.

JEAN GRAY: Of course.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You were how old?

JEAN GRAY: Not even 30.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. But I didn't know that. I didn't know that, I just thought we were getting along. So, December came, and they had to close down the job because of the weather. So I went back to – I went back home.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: To Illinois? To Chicago?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, Chicago. Yeah, all the time my mother was alive I always went back home. And I'm dreaming of going back to Alaska, you know. Part of the adventure is – that was the second year, third year? Ah, it didn't matter.

Anyways, my brother was drafted, I had to take his place and work with my father. So I just stayed and worked for him for three years, until my brother got out of the service.

The highest paid laborer in Chicago, with a degree. Mixing cement, carrying bricks –

JEAN GRAY: But you had to do it 'cause it was for your dad, who needed help, so you –

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, right, yeah. For my mother. By that time, all the boys were grown and she was in her prime, you know. But I wanted to get out of this.

I'm always reading, old newspapers I find on the job, 'cause you know, I haul the materials up to pop, and I have to wait until he calls for more materials. And I'm reading, there's an article in the paper about National College of Education is offering a one year program, a master's degree in education program. Oh, whoa, wow. I can get a teaching certificate in one year, with a master's.

How to break the news to my father, to the family? They didn't like it, no. They did not like it. That's when they all kind of –

JEAN GRAY: Thought you were turning – turning your back.

RUDY GRAY: Traitor, I was a traitor.

JEAN GRAY: Not going into the business.

RUDY GRAY: But my mother had gotten sick by then, breast cancer. And the year she passed away, that's when I decided I'm going to school. Took a year.

A bitter year. That's when Ed wanted – Edmond wanted the business. Competed with my father. Threatened Wally. He was mean.

JEAN GRAY: So you get your degree?

RUDY GRAY: Well, graduation time comes, and my supervising teacher knew I was going to go to Alaska, you know. He said “Before you go, I want you to talk to Dr. Marlon.” The superintendent of Winnetka schools, you know.

“Well, yeah I’m not interested.” I said.

“Oh just talk to him,” you know. Winnetka, they don’t hire beginning teachers.

JEAN GRAY: No. That’s a pretty fancy-shmancy suburb of Chicago.

RUDY GRAY: So I sit down with Dr. Marlon, who coincidentally became the first Secretary of Education under JFK after that. I didn’t learn that till later. “Tell me about yourself.” Oh, so I gave him a rundown. Just like I’m doing here now.

And he liked it. And he kind of knew what these kids needed, you know. An experienced person.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, a more mature person whose been around a little bit.

RUDY GRAY: Who had done things, you know. And then he looks at me, and he says, “I hear you’re a born teacher.” My supervising teacher told him, this is the impression he got, you know. And I didn’t know this till later, of course. I learned this from parents in the –

Part of my graduate courses, one of them was the Winnetka plan. A form of progressive teaching. I thought, if I had Winnetka on my resume, I can get a job any place. ‘Cause all master’s programs study the Winnetka plan throughout the country.

JEAN GRAY: And now you’re going to be in Winnetka.

RUDY GRAY: And here I am, a chance to, hmm, okay. I’ll try it once. Get it on my resume. I didn’t do anything differently than I had done with the girl. And didn’t do anything different – didn’t know I was a born teacher, actually.

Okay. I get the first year and it’s a very progressive school system. They had a traveling psychologist and a traveling nurse’s aide, and all – the whole bit to take care of these kids, they’re very pampered kids.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: What – like what year was this? Roughly?

RUDY GRAY: ’47.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: No, ’57.

RUDY GRAY: '57.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: No, no, no, no, no.

JEAN GRAY: It was earlier than that – it was right around then.

RUDY GRAY: Oh '50, I graduated in '50. It was '57, right, right, right.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: My mother passed away in '56. Yeah, '57. '57, right.

I had gone to school with a young lady that had graduated with me. However, she graduated summa cum laude. And she got a job – they hired her because of course –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, she had good grades.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, summa cum laude. One day she came to me, and she said, in tears “I don’t know what to do, the kids won’t listen to me.”

I said, “Well, what’s wrong?”

She said “Well, I have this one boy, he was rolling his pencil down his desk, and I told him to stop, or I’ll send him out in the hall. Everybody started rolling their pencils down the desk.”

Summa cum laude.

JEAN GRAY: Sounds like mutiny.

RUDY GRAY: I didn’t know at that time, that there was sixth grade – six classes of each grade in this school. And each year, they split the class up into thirds, so that they all would –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Move them around.

RUDY GRAY: Move around, you know. The following year, I decided to stay. I had such a great year, I decided to stay a second year. I looked, I got that entire class. I learned this later, that the school psychologist had recommended to the principal that this class that the teacher had ruined, be sent to Mr. Gray.

Yeah, well she quit teaching.

JEAN GRAY: Oh gosh, after all that effort.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, she had to quit teaching and get married. And then I took the class to her wedding reception. After that, you know.

But I didn't learn this until – this from the parents until later on. That the school psychologist had recommended that that entire class be sent to me. And I didn't know I had ADH –

JEAN GRAY: ADHD.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh.

RUDY GRAY: Students in there, one kid was on pills, citoles, every Friday he'd go to Northwestern University to be tested for something or other. He was in my class. It was Mike Black. A big kid who drooled, you know, and stumbled.

You know, no problem. I won't go into detail about how I run my classroom, but every kid in that school wanted to be in Mr. Gray's class. And all the teachers called and referred to me as that crazy Mr. Gray. But I would take kids to the park for lunch, on Saturday's I would take them to Riverview, was that before your time?

JEAN GRAY: Oh, yeah. Well, no it wasn't. I was alive in 1957, no doubt about that.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, Riverview. It was a ride park.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah like an amusement park.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh, like an amusement park, okay.

RUDY GRAY: An amusement park, yeah. One teacher had a farm, and I would take groups to the farm. And cut willow sticks and let them –

JEAN GRAY: Let them go fishing the hard way.

RUDY GRAY: Fish in the pond, yeah. I gave them all of these experiences, and they would of course talk about it to other kids, and the other kids would be so –

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, how come we don't get to do that?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah "I want to be in Mr. Gray's class next year, mommy." And the teachers, they would talk to the principal, call the principal up, "You put my girl or my boy in Mr. Gray's class!" I didn't know this, you know. The school ran behind my back.

JEAN GRAY: Of course, they weren't going to let you – so the second year went pretty well, and there's Alaska waiting for you, but –

RUDY GRAY: The P.E. teacher says "Hey Rudy, this next class coming up, they're terrific." I had two terrific years already, I mean gratification –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right.

RUDY GRAY: Oh man. You know, all my life, I never had that. Coming from a big family, I never had that notice or attention, and here I was –

JEAN GRAY: The success.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, I mean cars would go by, *vroom vroom*, “Oh there’s Mr. Gray!” I’d go to the store, “Oh there’s Mr. Gray!” Can you imagine?

JEAN GRAY: I can’t imagine that. And this is ’58, ’59 at this point?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, right. The second year –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So how many years did you teach there?

RUDY GRAY: Three, three.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: The second or third year, I don’t know which, but there was this one girl sitting there, fifth grader, oh I – she’s sharp. She’s a real sharp one, very mature. This is 1949 – ’59. She’s ten years old. She writes to me till this day. She’s a judge in Seattle.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Wow.

RUDY GRAY: She’s been here three times. And I spotted her that first day, Holly. You know, beautiful. I mean serious looking girl, very attractive, you know. All business, mature. And she’s that way still.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you did three years at the school, how did you then come to Alaska?

JEAN GRAY: How did you finally get away?

RUDY GRAY: Oh, I said finally, I’ve got it. I wrote to Juneau –

JEAN GRAY: You cut the cord.

RUDY GRAY: Superintendent of schools, and said I want to, you know, place a job in Alaska, you know.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you wrote to Juneau as the state capital?

RUDY GRAY: State’s capital.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: They sent me to Fort Yukon.

JEAN GRAY: With Don Young.

RUDY GRAY: From Winnetka to Fort Yukon.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That could be the title of your book.

JEAN GRAY: They sent me to Fort Yukon! Woo!

RUDY GRAY: Oh man, I looked – I looked, oh, oh, oh, oh get back on the plane! Oh the plane took off! I was stuck, Jesus! Oh man, talk about adapting, whew.

JEAN GRAY: And you'd never been to the mainland of Alaska, you'd been on the southeast.

RUDY GRAY: No, no, Ketchikan, yeah. Oh man, this was it, this was the bottom.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And what time – did you get there in the fall?

RUDY GRAY: Yes.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: I've been there once.

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: I've been to Fort Yukon. Or maybe twice.

RUDY GRAY: Well back in the '60's –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It was probably different.

RUDY GRAY: Oh, oh –

JEAN GRAY: It was 1960?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So just after statehood.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, just after statehood.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So how long were you in Fort Yukon?

RUDY GRAY: Three years. Don and I did not get along with that superintendent. Boy, and the higher-ups in Juneau got in touch with Don and – ‘cause they lost the representative and wanted to know what happened. It was ‘cause the superintendent in Fort Yukon used the state car to go pick up people to vote.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh, uh huh.

RUDY GRAY: You know, and they – that’s how Don got involved with the higher-ups from the party. You know, and he kind of liked it. And that’s how he started in politics. That little action, you know, got him going.

JEAN GRAY: Got him high up enough to say “Hey.”

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So was Don Young superintendent of schools then?

RUDY GRAY: No, he was the fourth grade teacher.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: He was the fourth grade teacher, okay.

RUDY GRAY: It was the superintendent that was –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Who was using the car.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, the superintendent learned about Don getting in touch with the Juneau higher-ups –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And tried to reprimand Don, you know. And he was going like this to Don, you know. And Don grabbed his finger and said “Don’t point your finger at me!”

JEAN GRAY: You saw this?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah. I was there. He grabs his finger, “Don’t you point your finger at me!”

JEAN GRAY: And nothing’s changed!

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, that was Don.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So after Fort Yukon where did you go?

RUDY GRAY: After Fort Yukon, I went to Mentasta.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay. And how –

JEAN GRAY: For how long?

RUDY GRAY: Two years, I think. Two – two years. Yeah, after Mentasta I went to Healy.

JEAN GRAY: All one-teacher schools at this point, right?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, oh yeah. My supervising teacher – I made certain that I got a one room school. I just don't get along with superintendents.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It works better if you don't have a superintendent.

RUDY GRAY: They don't like my – no, they can't tell me how to teach.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And how long were you in Healy?

RUDY GRAY: One year.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: The year JFK was shot. And the earthquake.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay so that was – uh huh.

JEAN GRAY: '64, yeah? And Healy didn't have a road yet, right?

RUDY GRAY: No, the Parks Highway was just being built.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: It just reached – was reaching Healy, I could hear the machinery working, you know. No, I had to take the railroad to go to Fairbanks. But you rode it for nothing. You knew the railroad workers, they'd water up in Healy, and you'd just hop in the caboose.

JEAN GRAY: And they were going to Fairbanks –

RUDY GRAY: They were going to Fairbanks.

JEAN GRAY: Get off and go shopping and come back a similar way, sometime later.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah. No problem, no problem. The engineer would even stop for you, yeah. Yeah it was – and once, I wanted to get some moose meat to a friend in Fairbanks, and the railroad tracks go right across college –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Uh huh, right across the street.

RUDY GRAY: And she had a house right there by the – off the tracks. So I told the engineer to slow down when he was crossing College Avenue –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And just throw the meat.

RUDY GRAY: I kicked the quarters off, you know –

JEAN GRAY: Are you kidding? Oh my gosh!

RUDY GRAY: I kicked the quarters off, and she and her small sons would gather the meat.

JEAN GRAY: Oh gosh.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So can we back up to Mentasta for a minute –

RUDY GRAY: Yes.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Did you know Wilson Justin in Mentasta?

RUDY GRAY: Wilson Justin was my fourth grader –

JEAN GRAY: Still do.

RUDY GRAY: He was sharp –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: In Mentasta?

RUDY GRAY: Oh I spotted him right off. I liked him. Well I raised dogs at the time, so I gave him a puppy, you know. Well, several months later the puppy grew up, and Wilson was ratting – ratting for muskrats –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Ratting for muskrats.

RUDY GRAY: Over at the lakes and there's still ice on the crick and it all was frozen, and Wilson fell through the ice, waist high, he couldn't get out. He called the dog over, grabbed the dog, and the dog panics and pulls back and pulls him out.

Of course, they tell the story differently, that the dog saved Wilson.

JEAN GRAY: Like a Lassie show.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right.

RUDY GRAY: And Laura, his mother, just adored me after that. I gave him the dog, they loved that dog, oh.

JEAN GRAY: The dog saved Wilson –

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, yeah Wilson's lives right here –

JEAN GRAY: Wilson raised the dog –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah right up the road.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah. Oh yeah, Wilson's a great friend of mine.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: I think, I think when I met you before we were at the campground with Wilson, so that's how I remember that story.

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So, okay – after Healy where did you go?

RUDY GRAY: Chitina.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Chitina, okay. So that would've been in like '65, '66?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And how long were you in Chitina?

RUDY GRAY: One year.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: That's where I met Mudhole Smith. Out of Cordova.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So I heard that you – you'd been gone up to Kennecott, is that – was it when you were working in Chitina that you went to Kennecott?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, a group of people in Seattle bought the rights to the tailings, and they were going to – well, get what gold they could from the tailings. During the height of the Kennecott Mine, they didn't care about the little bit of gold –

JEAN GRAY: Copper or gold?

RUDY GRAY: Gold, the little bit of gold –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: There was probably a really small percentage.

RUDY GRAY: Too much trouble for that little bit of gold.

JEAN GRAY: Right, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: So they would just throw it in the tailings, so they would run and get the gold out of the tailings. And their system didn't work, so they went bankrupt.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: And meanwhile, I was helping them with my airplane, I'd fly in their mail and their –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you had an airplane at this point?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Well I had an airplane all along.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So when did you learn to fly?

RUDY GRAY: 1952.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay. So you were – when you were in Chicago?

RUDY GRAY: No, when I was in Ketchikan.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh when you were in Ketchikan, okay.

RUDY GRAY: No I learned from –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: We didn't talk about learning to fly.

JEAN GRAY: Skipped the flying part, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Oh boy, the only way to get around this country is –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Well this is true.

RUDY GRAY: To be a bird, to fly. So when I went back home, I started taking flying lessons.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Yeah, I forgot about the flying part.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay. So you started taking flying lessons in 1952, when did you buy your own airplane? Or did you borrow somebody's –

RUDY GRAY: 1953.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: I didn't want to pay for a rental.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Cost me \$1500.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: I was working for my dad, you know –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: In '54 and '55. Living at home so I could afford –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And I wasn't a social bug, I didn't –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You didn't have other things to spend your money on.

RUDY GRAY: I didn't spend my money, no.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay, so now you were working for – helping this group of folks who were trying up at Kennecott, who were trying to get the gold.

RUDY GRAY: Okay. They were going broke. The one family, living in a trailer, didn't have any money to pay their oil heating bill. So I helped them.

Howard Knutson and his wife ran the post office, and he had invested some money in this group, and he lost all that money. And he became very angry at them for losing his money. And his brother had invested money in this group, and they all lost their money. Very angry. They were very, very angry at me for being friendly with these people, and helping them.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So what happened?

RUDY GRAY: Well, the brother –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Howard's brother?

RUDY GRAY: Howard's brother, got very physical. He grabbed me, "How can you be friendly with these people?" And I loaned my truck to this guy –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: To the brother or to somebody else?

RUDY GRAY: The family, to get out of town, you know. And I said “Be careful.” The brother threatened to shoot him, you know. At one point there, I couldn’t start my truck, and a friend of mine checked it out and found out all the wires had been switched. They were really after me and these people, the Knutson bunch. You know, they were volatile people.

Meanwhile, meanwhile, well I won’t go into that detail of how we had a school in Chitina. Howard Knutson had two kids.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And he didn’t want to send them anywhere, so he wanted a school there, but we needed nine kids. So he room and boarded a bunch of kids from Mentasta.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: And that’s how we managed to have a school there, and I got the job.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: And the school there consisted of a log cabin owned by Mudhole Smith. And two of the kids were children of Howard Knudson’s brother, and his two kids – that was four, and then there was five kids from Mentasta.

Which dropped down to seven, but opened up with nine, legally.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah that’s what you needed.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah we didn’t say anything about the dropoff.

JEAN GRAY: Losing the two. So how long you taught there, only a year then, huh?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, oh I had to get out.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It wasn’t a –

RUDY GRAY: No.

JEAN GRAY: Wasn’t a pleasant situation.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah if you weren’t getting along with the family that had the kids in town.

RUDY GRAY: Oh no, they, they – after that I went to Dot Lake.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Uh huh. Was the children's home then?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah I went to Dot Lake.

JEAN GRAY: And that's when Anne Purdy was there?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Do you know Anne Purdy?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: I don't.

JEAN GRAY: *Tisha* – the woman who wrote *Tisha*.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh, okay. I've, I've – yeah. But that was when they had the boarding school or the children's home?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Not just the local kids?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, yes. The only local kids were from the home. Ruth Charles' kids.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: All the rest came from the juvenile detention out of Fairbanks. Nice kids, like I told you. I asked one of the nice boys from Barrow, "How did you get in trouble?"

"Oh I broke into a building, government building."

"Why?"

"Something to do."

And till this day, same problem. Something to do.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Something to do. And how long were you in Dot Lake?

RUDY GRAY: Oh, those first – two years. By that time I thought I'd lost my touch, I'd lost my touch. I can't teach anymore. I'll go to conventional school. So I went to Elmendorf, and taught for two years. I had the touch, it was still there. Oh man, it was great. Those kids, they're all sons and daughters of officers –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: At that particular school. There at Elmendorf. Delightful. At that time, Begich was teaching at the other school.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: The father?

RUDY GRAY: The father, yeah. Yeah I'd take the kids out to restaurants so they'd learn how to act in a restaurant. Or – I did that in Winnetka too, by the way. The mothers and fathers were so grateful, that I would take the time.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: But I was in an ideal position, you know. I was single, I was experienced, I liked the kids, I was set up –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: For that, for them. And it would never happen again. Maybe it would, I don't know. It could never happen again. I stayed there two years. I had the touch.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So – but then you decided to move on?

RUDY GRAY: I went back to – I went back to Dot Lake.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay. And how long were you there this time?

RUDY GRAY: Three years. Then things got strange there with Charles. His wife was my cook, for the lunch program. And Chief Isaac's daughter returned with a Mexican husband, and she wanted the cook's job. And I wouldn't do it. So they made it pretty rough on me.

Wrote to the superintendent in Juneau, the governor, to get rid of me. And all that garbage. And my supervisor and the superintendent from Tok were good friends of mine and, you know, were not concerned. They called a meeting in Dot Lake. "What don't you like about Mr. Gray? Oh, I see a case of beer under his table." That's all they could think of.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: I'd get groceries in town, and put it in a case.

JEAN GRAY: Use the box. Not beer though, you're not a drinker period.

RUDY GRAY: If we could return to Mentasta, I'll tell you another story.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Sure, yep, yep.

RUDY GRAY: Okay, as with all villages in those years, when fall time came, all the young men would return from their summer jobs, and parasite off the parents. They'd spend all their money, you know, they didn't know how to save. All they knew is how to get enough money to buy a case of beer. And in Mentasta there was about a half dozen of them.

Jake Butler was one of them. Kenny John's daughter, was married to an Osage Indian who was a taxi driver in Anchorage. She broke away from the village and went to work as a house maid or something in Anchorage, and she would take a taxi to work. And he was the driver, and they got together and he got her pregnant. Well she says he got her pregnant.

But he had left the wife and children in Oklahoma. And there was some oil property in Oklahoma that his ex-wife had. He came here, legally or not, married Ruth. Well the child was born, and it was blonde.

JEAN GRAY: Scandal.

RUDY GRAY: But the Indian didn't care, 'cause by that time his ex-wife had died, and the two children were sent up here, and he got the property in Oklahoma. But he had to provide a home for them. And that's why he married Ruth, you see.

But he was a mean one. He got involved with a native girl in Beaver Creek, and Ruth found out about it. Kicked him out, kicked him out of the house and she came to live in the village in Mentasta, she was living seven miles outside.

But anyway, these guys would come back to Mentasta in the fall and drink, get drunk, and fight. And the kids would go and hide in the outhouses, you know. To keep away from them.

I was at Ruth's house one evening, and there was a drunken melee going on. And a knock on the door, and the door opened up, and Dewitt – Dewitt's brother was there. I said, "What do you want?" I had a shotgun, you know.

"Oh, oh. Oh, nothing, nothing."

And I put a shell in the chamber and said, "Get out of here!" He turned around and went. Anyway, that's another story. He eventually went to prison for killing somebody in Glennallen or some place. But that's another story.

At any rate, Katie – Katie John came to me one time and asked how she could stop the drinking in the village. I said, "Well, you have to organize. You have to have a group, and you have to vote on it."

"Well, how do you do that?"

I said, "Well you call a meeting, you know. And then elect a chief or a president, whatever you want to call them, and then you write down the rules. Just three steps."

"Oh, okay."

They call a meeting, people show up, guys show up, they vote for a chief – president or whatever, and they elect the Osage Indian. Ruth's husband. They elect him chief. Okay, they

propose the first rule, no drinking in the village. They vote, of course, all the women vote no, and all the guys say “Oh, what – what’s going on? You know, we don’t have to do that.”

“Yes you do,” Katie John says. ‘Cause she had asked me, you know, “What if they don’t follow the rule?” You call up the trooper. And the trooper’s a friend of mine. That’s how it works.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: It’s just the – wow. She liked that.

JEAN GRAY: I always say, and I don’t know enough about this, but with that information that Rudy gave Katie John, it sent her on those steps. She understood the little bit of power that you had could really make a difference. It’s sort of amazing when you think about it.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, she – she was smart. Ruth John, her daughter was smart too, but she got in trouble.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: I’ve never met Ruth.

RUDY GRAY: No, she passed away as a young lady. Of course, Fred John accused me of getting involved with Ruth, ‘cause I would bring her – after she got rid of the Osage, I would bring her wood and moose meat. And I gave her a teacher’s aide job. It just consisted of sitting there and reading to the kids, first graders. But she got money for that.

JEAN GRAY: So they always assumed Rudy was romancing somebody or other.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Oh, all the time. It’s not possible for a guy like that not to get, be –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right. Have a girlfriend

JEAN GRAY: There has to be one thing – it’s just one thing. That’s all it is.

RUDY GRAY: ‘Cause everybody else does it.

JEAN GRAY: That’s right. So this guy’s gotta be doing it or else there’s something wrong with him.

So are you going to tell them about the other story in Mentasta? ‘Cause that’s a doozy.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. What was that?

JEAN GRAY: The one with the hostile guy.

RUDY GRAY: Oh. I didn't understand the culture. Paul Simeon and his family lived in Mentasta, but he had a cabin here on the Nabesna Road, right across from Calvin. And –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: His mom's place. Or his –

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Actually it's not, it's – Paul must have been Ruby's husband?

RUDY GRAY: Whose?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Was Paul Ruby Simeon's husband?

RUDY GRAY: Yes, yes.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: Ruby was nice, she's a nice lady. One day I'd been hunting on the Nabesna Road and I was coming back, it was in the fall time. An overflow had occurred and I crashed through the ice ledge and got stuck. So I went over to Simeon's cabin, unwired the door, and slept there. And in the morning I hiked over to the lodge.

JEAN GRAY: Over to Sportsman's.

RUDY GRAY: To Sportsman's Paradise.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: To Sportsman's? Okay.

RUDY GRAY: To pull me out. I got back to Mentasta, and told Paul, "Hey I stayed in your cabin last night. I got stuck at Lost Creek."

"Oh no problem, no problem."

Sometime later, that fall, it was cold. That was in '62. My truck was new. I had what's his name from Montana drive it up. My new truck. The only one in the village. Knock on the door, and there's Paul, "I want to use your truck." I didn't know about this culture thing, you know. I do something for you –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: You do something for me. I don't want to let him use my new truck, "What do you want?"

"I want to go get some firewood." It's a long winter. And you want to get firewood now? That means you going to use my truck all winter to get firewood? 'Cause they always stock firewood.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: They get what they need for a few days, and go out again, and you know. “I’ll tell you what Paul, after school, you come and we’ll go and we’ll get your wood.”

“Oh what kind of friend are you?” Course he’s thinking of my using his cabin, you know –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: A friendly gesture. Now he can –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Ask – ask for your help.

RUDY GRAY: ‘Cause it’s cold. The truck is standing for over 24 hours, the oil is congealing, and I have to start it to go get firewood? No, no, because if I want to use my truck it’s for something purposeful, I have to go to Tok, I have to put an oil fire under it –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Ah, right.

RUDY GRAY: I have to heat it up, just to go get firewood you’re not going to do that.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: At that time, there was a white man from Anchorage who was a guide and outfitter, he used horses. And he had hired Laura as a cook. He liked her, and became romantic with her. Every Saturday he’d come with his – not a truck, but what are those?

JEAN GRAY: A station wagon.

RUDY GRAY: Station wagon. Filled with fresh vegetables and fruits, and share it with the village. And I’d always go over to Laura’s cabin when he was there, I don’t want to use names, and visit with him, as a gesture, you know.

I could see from the school, I could see him pull up. So I was there one evening, I look out the window, and I see Paul Simeon walking past, and there’s nothing past Laura’s cabin, except the school. And here it’s getting into nighttime. And he’s got a rifle, and he’s walking that way.

And I know it’s the women who go out hunting for rabbits, the guys don’t do it.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Well, I ignored it, conversing with a gentleman. There’s a knock on the door, and I’m by the door. Laura was over here, the other guy was over there. I open the door, and it’s Paul, and he’s waving, “Come on outside, I want to talk to you.” And he’s holding a rifle, and I’ve got a cup of coffee in my hand. A cup.

“Oh, come on in and talk.”

“Oh, what are you afraid?”

“No I’m not afraid.” And I turn my back to him, but I’m watching Laura. And the guy is not saying a word, he does not want to get involved, I can see that. Nothing happens, I turn around, “Well Paul, what do you want?”

“Oh nothing.” And he backs off. Well, this is – this is not the end, I thought, you know. If he’s going to do this now, he’s going to do it again.

So I get in the truck and go over to Mentasta Lodge, and I call up Buddy Long, the trooper. I tell him, “Hey this native came and threatened me with a rifle.”

“Oh we’ll be right over.” You know, he picks up –

JEAN GRAY: Bill Craig.

RUDY GRAY: Bill Craig, the customs man. And both of the come, and you know, it’s an hour drive.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And they come over there and say “Okay where is he? Where’s Paul?” They go down to the cabin, “Where’s Paul, where’s Paul?” Finally in one cabin they find him hiding under a bed, you know. They can’t have the story of anybody threatening a teacher in the village. You can’t do it. The word gets around.

They grab Paul, and Paul is about 5’6” and Bill Craig is about 6’4” –

JEAN GRAY: And Buddy’s like 6’2”.

RUDY GRAY: And they grab him and pull his feet up, two feet off the ground, and carry him past me, “I’ll get you later, oh I’ll get you later!” you know. He’s still half drunk, and they’re taking him to town. He talks the magistrate into letting him off so he can gather his traps. Spent the rest of the winter serving a month or so, or whatever.

But he disliked me ever since, of course. And of course, his son, first grade, wouldn’t do a thing. So I failed him. So Paul talked around that I failed his son to get even with him. Woah.

JEAN GRAY: And you were still sort of new in this state, trying to learn this –

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, this was my second year.

JEAN GRAY: This culture and whoa, what are you in?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah we went back to Mentasta. Now on my third year and fifth year separated by Elmendorf –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, I'm going to go someplace else. By that time, I had gotten rid of my plane 'cause I was on the highway and didn't need it.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: I went to Bettles Field, they called it Bettles Field at the time. It's now called just Bettles.

JEAN GRAY: What year was that?

RUDY GRAY: '70, '71.

JEAN GRAY: And how old were you?

RUDY GRAY: Oh figure it out. You know math.

JEAN GRAY: You were 49 – 48?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You'd been living this life for a while. Going to small rural schools and teaching. So how was Bettles?

RUDY GRAY: Bettles was nice, nice school. FAA people. Half native kids, half whites. Then I heard of a couple from California, were up north near the Brooks Range building a cabin – were going to build a cabin. Wow, I thought, that's –

JEAN GRAY: Who are these people?

RUDY GRAY: Steve.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah Steve and – what's her name?

RUDY GRAY: Kathy.

JEAN GRAY: Kathy.

RUDY GRAY: That's –

JEAN GRAY: What's the story there?

RUDY GRAY: What's the story, yeah, what's their purpose, you know? So Steve comes into town for supplies, hikes in –

JEAN GRAY: Oh jeez, oh my god.

RUDY GRAY: And then charts out with somebody.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So when you say he hiked into town, he hiked into Bettles from the cabin site?

RUDY GRAY: He did, yeah from –

JEAN GRAY: And how far would that be?

RUDY GRAY: Oh, 35 miles.

JEAN GRAY: Oh gosh. Hiked that – if you call that a hike.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Is this Steve Ulvi?

RUDY GRAY: Pardon?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Steve Ulvi?

JEAN GRAY: Steve Alleman was his name.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Alleman?

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, A-l-l-e-m-a-n.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: We sort of lost touch with them, we saw them for a few years and then we lost touch.

RUDY GRAY: I liked Steve, yeah. And they got a little baby, oh my god!

JEAN GRAY: They're trying to live out there, sort of squat.

RUDY GRAY: They were living in a tent.

JEAN GRAY: Oh my gosh. What an adventure.

RUDY GRAY: I got to help these people. The only way I can help them is to get them an airplane. So I went to Chicago and bought an airplane. Now I had a purpose.

It was a Citabria. I hadn't flown for four or five years. Got an instructor, a half hour, dual instruction, I took off for Alaska. Using a road map –

JEAN GRAY: And a compass, and no radio, right?

RUDY GRAY: No I had a radio.

JEAN GRAY: Oh, okay.

RUDY GRAY: The one in the 40's didn't have a radio. Yeah, oh yeah. It was equipped very well, but I didn't need it, 'cause –

JEAN GRAY: You were going to follow the road.

RUDY GRAY: I wasn't used to it.

JEAN GRAY: And you weren't IFR.

RUDY GRAY: Oh no I never flew without blue sky, you know, there was no reason to. I wasn't a hotshot pilot. Didn't need that.

Well, I would buy supplies, put them in sacks, and in the airplane – I had a young fellow there, living there, about 18 years old, Andy Greenblack. He was my bombardier. I took the door off on the right side, and I'd maneuver as close to the cabin as I could. If you got too low, of course you couldn't see the cabin until you past it.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And you couldn't get too high because –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You had to be just right.

RUDY GRAY: You had to be just right, you know.

JEAN GRAY: You don't want to turn everything into mush.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, and you had to watch your speed, 'cause you couldn't stall, you know –

JEAN GRAY: You don't want to kill yourself.

RUDY GRAY: Couldn't hold that nose up too much, you had to keep RPM's going, you couldn't go too fast – you had to be just there, you know. Okay! And he would drop the sack, course he would drop it here and it would go like this, right?

JEAN GRAY: Go forward.

RUDY GRAY: It would maintain momentum, you know?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh right.

RUDY GRAY: And of course the fresh fruit would turn to –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Applesauce.

RUDY GRAY: Fruit cocktail.

JEAN GRAY: If it was that big.

RUDY GRAY: But I got eggs down to them.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, you were pretty successful from the stories I've heard.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: By the time you'd figured out how to pack it all.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Steve can tell the stories better from the ground.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, what he ended up with. He might have been trying to nice, to protect your effort.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: And it lands and you go, "Oh my god what am I going to do with this stuff? But boy, we're glad to have it."

RUDY GRAY: In the winter I put skis on and he'd snowshoe a field for me.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh right.

RUDY GRAY: Well I kept him going for two or three years. He appreciated it.

JEAN GRAY: How'd you communicate to say you were going to be there? Or did he just hear you? And know it had to be you flying over. Not like anybody had a phone.

RUDY GRAY: No.

JEAN GRAY: Or radio.

RUDY GRAY: He had a dog team.

JEAN GRAY: He had to feed them too.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: I don't know about that story.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you did that for two to three years? So you were in Bettles for two or three years?

RUDY GRAY: Five years.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: Now that fifth year Barb, some people got to dislike me. It happens, when you're living so close in a village, you know. Pretty soon you step on somebody's toes, and their friend says "How can you be friends?" And you know how it works.

One day, I had a favorite boy, he was great, good kid. All the kids looked up to him. There was a single mother, and the powerhouse brothers operated the powerhouse, lived close by them on the edge of town. And they got to know each other, and I think one of them started to romance her. And I'd always stop by whenever I'd come by on my snow machine, checking my trap line. And I became pretty good friends with her.

Again, you know, I'm trying to romance her or something.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah of course, that's the immediate assumption, yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, that's what these guys thought.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: One day the boy comes to the classroom and he's got his hat on, and I said – I forget his name. Anyway, you're not supposed to wear your hat in the school. So I asked him to "Take your hat off." You know. He didn't move. I said, "Take your hat off." I never had to talk to him that way, he was always disciplined, you know, nice kid.

JEAN GRAY: This was an alarm bell, sort of.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah. Well because I knew his personality and nature, I knew his defiance had something to do –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: There's something going on.

RUDY GRAY: Something was going on. And he's got the rest of his life to live from an incident that occurs here, you know.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, let's not push this.

RUDY GRAY: And I have to weigh what the other kids are going to think –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: If I let one student defy me. My ego doesn't get affected, you know. What's important to me is why this kid is defying me at this particular time. 'Cause I know he's not a showoff. He's a favorite already, he doesn't have to prove anything.

JEAN GRAY: Something serious going on here.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. I forget it.

JEAN GRAY: Let him get away with it, huh?

RUDY GRAY: Let him get away with it. Well later that day, that evening, I dropped by the house. And I tell the mother about how her son wouldn't take his hat off in school.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: She said, "Oh, I gave him a haircut and I butchered it."

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh!

JEAN GRAY: So how long did the hat stay on the kid's head?

RUDY GRAY: You see the ramification there?

JEAN GRAY: Oh yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: How long did you let this go on? Or did he finally get over it or something?

RUDY GRAY: I don't know, yeah. He finally got – I mean he was the favorite of all the girls.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, right. You can't demean him in a couple of ways.

RUDY GRAY: Wow. He would have hated school forever after that.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yep, yep.

JEAN GRAY: It would have been a snowballing problem for him.

RUDY GRAY: But talk got around town that I couldn't handle the classroom, see. That I didn't know how to discipline.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: They didn't come to ask me either, why I did this or that.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And that came from, this – I forget his name, he was managing the field. I told him about the boy, and they spread it, and that's how they interpreted it, you know. And he was the one who worked here before he went to Bettles. And Fred – Fredericks blamed him for reporting the highway department –

JEAN GRAY: Oh the logs.

RUDY GRAY: On using the logs from the bridge to build the lodge. He blamed this guy for that. And he told me, no he never told department of transportation. But Fredericks –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That was – other people believed it.

JEAN GRAY: That was enough for him, yeah

RUDY GRAY: Believed it, yeah.

JEAN GRAY: He had to blame it on somebody.

RUDY GRAY: Somebody had a snitch.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Well, eventually two groups formed.

JEAN GRAY: Oh, jeez.

RUDY GRAY: For Rudy, anti-Rudy.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: They want Rudy removed. I'm ready to go anyway, but ah, I'm going to give them a little problem, you know.

JEAN GRAY: Try to resist for the first time instead of just –

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: Letting it go.

RUDY GRAY: So the school board down in Tanana or Nenana are going to have a meeting to vote on whether I go or stay. 'Cause the superintendent had been coming to Bettles and writing depositions from people. Not for my side, for the other side. A broken window I would not replace in the school, water –

JEAN GRAY: Got some drapes wet or something and they had stains on them.

RUDY GRAY: Drips, or – and I let the kids play on a big piece of machinery. Any little thing.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, collecting information.

RUDY GRAY: And that superintendent, he hated me, distrusted me. 'Cause he was doing something bad.

JEAN GRAY: Turns out, yeah. Find out later.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, turns out he was using the state car to go to Anchorage every Friday to do three hours of graduate work to get a doctorate. And charging the state, but you know, but that's aside.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Well, my group decides, "Hell, we're going to go down there and defend Rudy." And four – one, two, three, four, and the pilot get in an airplane, head for Nenana, and they crash.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh no.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, the engine gives out near – I forget – it's hard to make the strip, but on the right side there's this experienced pilot, but you're not the pilot so you don't say anything. He wanted him to land straight ahead, on the snow, instead of trying to make the airstrip.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Make the turn.

RUDY GRAY: Well, he didn't make the airstrip. They all end up in the hospital, the woman becomes paralyzed all her life, lodge owner's wife. Jack Thompson got hurt. They were – yeah all ended up in the hospital.

Oh I said, "I'm getting out of here."

JEAN GRAY: So you bailed before the verdict came out, or how do you do that?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: Just apply to for another school, or retire in this case.

RUDY GRAY: Even if they voted it didn't matter, you know. I didn't want to get a lawyer and fight it and all that bit. I just wanted –

JEAN GRAY: Try to end up staying there in case you wanted them to know –

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, I wanted to give them a rough time. Meanwhile, I had gotten to know all the trappers down river, on the Koyukuk. 'Cause I had fur too, to sell.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So that's what you did in the winter while you were teaching too?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah I had a trap line. Something to do.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right. So where did you go after Bettles?

RUDY GRAY: Let me go, let me –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You want to –

RUDY GRAY: Go back a few years.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Sure,

RUDY GRAY: We're back in Chitina.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: I'm helping those people.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: The man, who I paid for the oil, fuel oil – heating oil –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: He's a Gonzaga graduate, by the way.

JEAN GRAY: Oh right.

RUDY GRAY: That's how I learned about Gonzaga.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, go Zags.

RUDY GRAY: Had a friend in Seattle who opened up a fur store, and he wanted some furs to display. So I gave him a bunch of furs, and he took them down to his friend in the store. And he

started out robbed and the furs are gone. I never – they're going, okay, they're going, you know. I only knew this guy by phone.

So in my last year, I went to Hughes.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So we're back after Bettles?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: So the connection is coming, huh?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. I hear from this guy who had the store and was robbed, and he wants to know if I would like to be a buyer of fur for a Canadian outfit. See how that comes in?

JEAN GRAY: Mm-hmm.

RUDY GRAY: He remembered me.

JEAN GRAY: And how many years had passed? Only a year or two?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, oh yeah.

JEAN GRAY: Short time.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, well four or five years.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah you were in Bettles for four or five – for five years.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, okay.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, okay. And all of a sudden out of the blue. Oh okay, I'll be an agent.

JEAN GRAY: What do you do?

RUDY GRAY: Buy fur from all the trappers. That's how I started in the fur business –

JEAN GRAY: Oh okay, there you go. So he said he needed somebody and there you were.

RUDY GRAY: So I'm flying around and buying fur and shipping it out.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Were you teaching too?

RUDY GRAY: My last year in Hughes?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: I was buying fur from the Hughes trappers, 'cause I didn't get around yet. After that –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay after you, after you – finished hopping.

RUDY GRAY: After Hughes –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, for five years –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: I scooted around buying fur, you know. And I got tired of that.

JEAN GRAY: But when did you retire from teaching?

RUDY GRAY: In '80.

JEAN GRAY: And you got to retire – because you'd had military service – early.

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, that gave me a lot of –

JEAN GRAY: Retire early.

RUDY GRAY: I had reached the top of my salary, and there was nowhere to go.

JEAN GRAY: Your vacation piled up and your military service counted.

RUDY GRAY: I was getting the same amount of money whether I was teaching or not. So why teach?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Besides, ANILCA came in, and natives were getting restless. So, I had two competitors. The only way I can beat them – they have to earn money for their families, I didn't have to earn money, so I could pay better for my furs –

JEAN GRAY: And take less profit.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, but I still wanted to help the natives. Give them as much as I could, see.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, show them a good deal.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. So, when I would have three or four big boxes, cardboard boxes full of furs to take to the air freight to ship out, it would take about a week to get all the paperwork done and to ship out.

Meanwhile, like any market, you know –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh right, things would go up and down.

RUDY GRAY: Up and down, because the auction furs, you know.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: So I told my trapper friends, you know, it takes me a week, I'll give you so much for this fur. Now it takes me a week, and a week goes by, and I find the price went up a certain percentage, I'll give that money to you. If the price goes up \$10-\$15, that's a certain percentage of what I gave you, I'll write you a check for it, as if I bought it at the high price.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: So the \$4-\$5, \$10-\$15 checks I wrote were nothing. Because I was getting paid by how much I spent anyway, it didn't cost me anything.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: To create all that good will.

RUDY GRAY: Yes.

JEAN GRAY: And that – what's the word I'm looking for – not dedication, but “Oh we're going to wait for Rudy to come buy our fur when the other guy comes by.”

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, right. Oh yeah, they hated me, those other guys.

JEAN GRAY: Too much of a wheeler-dealer with \$10 checks, huh? Well it meant a lot too.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Was Dean Wilson Sr. buying furs at that time?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, sure! He was one of my competitors.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: I wondered!

JEAN GRAY Uh-oh.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: I've been here long enough that I'm starting to make the connections.

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah, but I never wanted to bother him down here. I bought a few –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Uh huh. This was kind of his territory.

RUDY GRAY: Right, right.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And he was up there.

RUDY GRAY: I bought a few from Fredericks, but I never went around –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Sure, we can take a break for a minute.

RUDY GRAY: It's interesting.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: After I quit buying fur, 'cause all I was getting out of it was money.

JEAN GRAY: What a problem. Well he's not a money kind of person, so. Luckily I am.

RUDY GRAY: Didn't mean anything to me, you know.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: Something's got to pay the bills.

RUDY GRAY: So I get in touch with one of my nephews, and he says, "Hey, why don't you come with me, I'm going on a buying trip to Kathmandu."

"Oh great, fine."

So I head to Kathmandu with him, stop in Hong Kong, bleach my hair black.

JEAN GRAY: Just had this thing like, "What would my hair look like if it wasn't gray anymore?" yeah.

RUDY GRAY: It got so black – like that, I said "No, no, no, no!"

JEAN GRAY: He got so gray, he got gray almost overnight from the Bettles thing.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: Tried to wash it off.

JEAN GRAY: So they could get it off?

RUDY GRAY: So, I don't know, yeah. God, I said, "What am I doing?"

JEAN GRAY: What are you doing? Trying to retain your youth?

RUDY GRAY: So instead of staying in Kathmandu, we stay on the edge. Like a village. Real Nepalese, you know.

JEAN GRAY: Village life.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, cattle in the streets and poop all over, dust, smoke –

JEAN GRAY: Dusty poop, who knows what else.

RUDY GRAY: Smoke. Kids pooping on the side of the road. Walls there where men go behind – like that book says, you know. Yeah that was it.

JEAN GRAY: Culture shock.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And what was – what was your nephew there for?

RUDY GRAY: Oh he would buy cultural artifacts.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: Those brass singing bowls or something –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: In the Buddhist ceremony or – meditation things. So you end up in Hong Kong as a visa thing or?

RUDY GRAY: I stopped – yeah, yeah you'd stopped in Hong Kong.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: All planes stop and refuel.

JEAN GRAY: Oh okay and you'd head off to other countries.

RUDY GRAY: Well now the planes can –

JEAN GRAY: Can make it, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Make it. So after, I went back my second year without my nephew, I knew the ropes already.

JEAN GRAY: Did you go to Kathmandu – did you go to Nepal again?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, oh yeah. Yeah I went there three times.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: To buy things or just to visit?

RUDY GRAY: Just to visit.

JEAN GRAY: Just as a tourist. As a tourist.

RUDY GRAY: Kind of a tourist.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: Never did the trekking though, did you?

RUDY GRAY: No, no. Trekking?

JEAN GRAY: I don't think they called it that then, but you know how it is now.

RUDY GRAY: Walking, where, where are you going?

JEAN GRAY: Up that big hill and then back again!

RUDY GRAY: That's stupid.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That's not your idea of fun.

RUDY GRAY: Well, my nephew had friends, Alexandra, whose parents came down from the mountains and headed for Bodh Gaya in India to attend a teaching by the Dalai Lama. Oh so I got into the RV that my nephew had managed to get ahold of. Some English people had driven all the way from England. All the way across Europe.

JEAN GRAY: Holy mackerel.

RUDY GRAY: And ended up in Kathmandu.

JEAN GRAY: So how many people in the RV? And how long of a ride?

RUDY GRAY: Two, three, four, five, six.

JEAN GRAY: Jeez, and how long of a ride to Bodh Gaya, India?

RUDY GRAY: Oh a couple days, couple days. Well, we got to Bodh Gaya, and I got to where I could take a video of the Dalai Lama. And all the people from all over the Far East.

JEAN GRAY: Thousands.

RUDY GRAY: Thous – oh one hundred thousand people there. All kinds of dress and –

JEAN GRAY: And is this Dalai Lama now?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, yeah.

JEAN GRAY: When he was much younger. That would have been what, middle of the '80's or something?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, '80 – '86. '87. And the second year I stopped – my nephew introduced me to the Chungking Mansion –

JEAN GRAY: In Hong –

RUDY GRAY: Chungking Mansion, on the 15th floor of this high rise –

JEAN GRAY: In Kowloon.

RUDY GRAY: Right on Nathan Avenue, busiest place in Hong Kong.

JEAN GRAY: It's Kowloon.

RUDY GRAY: Kowloon, yeah.

JEAN GRAY: It's the other side.

RUDY GRAY: Wow. And as with any place where backpackers, college kids travel –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh right.

RUDY GRAY: They're all like one family. They've all been to the same places throughout the Far East. And they always leave messages about. If they like a place they'll put a message on a bulletin board.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: Just like the way Facebook is now, but there were bulletin boards in a lot of these lower class hotels

RUDY GRAY: Yeah that's – that's what, yeah it was a bulletin board, Facebook, right?

JEAN GRAY: Yeah or Yelp, or whatever you want to call it. One of those kinds of things.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah so I was watching – reading, they're interesting.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You know what, I'm going to change the battery. If you don't mind stopping for a minute, I just – I don't – it's blinking, I don't know why it's blinking.

We're recording again.

RUDY GRAY: You're going to lose my priceless narration.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah we better just –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And that's why if you want I can send you a CD of this.

JEAN GRAY: I would love it, I was going to ask you how do I get a copy.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So yeah, we can send you a copy of it, or a CD or DVD, I've got to figure it out. It's a higher resolution recording, but we'll send you a copy.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So – so we were talking about Hong Kong after you saw the Dalai Lama.

RUDY GRAY: Yes. Second time we stopped in Hong Kong – at the Chungking Mansion.

JEAN GRAY: It's no mansion, believe me.

RUDY GRAY: Nice Chinese people, became friends of ours. I was reading the bulletin board, and somebody came up beside me, a young lady. She said, "Hi, where are you going?"

"Oh, I'm going to Kathmandu."

"Oh yeah, have you ever been to Bangkok?"

I said, "No."

She said, "Oh you should stop over in Bangkok, I think you'd like it. Here's a number, when you get to Bangkok just call it." See how it works?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: All these people.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Just this network of travelers.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, if you ever get to Bali, go to Joe's place, here's the number.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yep.

RUDY GRAY: And they don't know, they just met.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, yeah. I got the number from what's-his-name in Kowloon, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, just fabulous. And there I am, gray hair.

JEAN GRAY: Not a backpacker, he ain't backpacking.

RUDY GRAY: And they're all – she did invite me to meet her friends at someplace else. It's called Someplace Else. At a hotel, you know, 'cause they had margarita freebies, buy one get one free. And the table was – six of us around a table this big, you know. And the margaritas were this big, and it was all white, shredded ice.

JEAN GRAY: Ice, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Fabulous. And I'm taking to these guys – kids, like I'm a kid!

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right.

RUDY GRAY: Fabulous.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you went to Bangkok?

RUDY GRAY: So, on the way back – well that third year, yeah, I'll stop in Bangkok. Call up this number, or give it to the tuk tuk driver –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And he takes me to this address. And I give it to the Thai lady, she says "Sorry, but I have no room."

"Well is there any other place here?"

"No, no, no, there's no other place here."

Her husband is a Caucasian, and he's working some place, military or something. And she's running the hostel. "Wait a minute," she says, and she walks away. She comes back with two young girls, each of them grabs one of my traveling bags, "Follow them." She says.

Okay, I follow them. We go down the street through a market, up through a store-like place, up the stairs in the back, open the door, take my bags in there, and there is a big room with a bed. I learn it's her father's place –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh his flat.

RUDY GRAY: And he's traveling some place. And I can stay there meanwhile. Wow. Look out the window, to the tops of the canvas umbrellas covering all the shopping –

JEAN GRAY: Shops on the street there, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: It's a big, big shopping area. All kind of meats hanging and fish. And the canal is smelly, and across the canal there's an avenue, and there's stores there. Well, I like to go to the stores and see what, you know, what these people are buying.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: What's for sale?

JEAN GRAY: Right, see what's going on here.

RUDY GRAY: And I'm walking past the stores, and they're selling shoes, just like us –

JEAN GRAY: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: And, you know –

JEAN GRAY: It's a big city. Clothes and –

RUDY GRAY: Clothes and whatever. No different. Previous to that, when you think of Thailand, wow, they must be wearing those baggy pants and –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh right.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, you didn't know. What do you know about Bangkok except for the people who had been in Vietnam to see the city? And even then, who knows what it was like in the '60's.

RUDY GRAY: I'm walking past one store, it's a soup kitchen – or a soup restaurant, and just on the other side of the room is a watch store and watch repair store. And there's a young Thai woman standing behind the display cases.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And I happen to glance up and she's looking at me, and we make eye contact. And I nod my head, another occasion where I nod my head, and I smile. And she smiles, you know. I kept walking, look at my watch, and it's got water in the crystal, from the humidity.

JEAN GRAY: It's hot. Bangkok hot.

RUDY GRAY: So I stop. Here's a chance for me to get it cleaned up –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: You know, ruined my watch. So I walk back, take my watch off and hand it to her. And point –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Point to the water.

RUDY GRAY: To the water, and she calls a gentleman over, he comes over, looks at the watch, and walks back there, out of sight. And I'm waiting. "Oh can I help you?" Oh here's a young Thai woman dressed in waitress – she's the daughter of the owner I learn later – the restaurant. And she speaks very good English, so we start a three-way conversation, you know. He-said, she-said.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Oh he said –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: The translation.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Then he comes down with the watch, hands it to her, says something to her, she says something to him, she says something to me. He says, "Don't wear your watch in the shower." Oh okay. Then something else is said, where are you going, where are you from, all this small talk goes on.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Oh where – "Oh I'm going to Chiang Mai and,"

"When are you coming back? He wants to know when you're coming back."

"Oh I'm coming back Thursday or Fri" whatever, you know, backpack –

"He says when you come back, you stay at his house." Just like that. You stay at his house. I don't know what kind of house it is or whatever –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: It doesn't matter, I'm getting involved –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: In the people. I'm going to live like they – you know, what an opportunity, I thought. He says, "Here's my number, when you come back, call me, and I'll go pick you up at the bus station. And we'll go to my house." So I do that.

Picks me up after a couple of days in Chiang Mai, come back, takes me to his house. And his house consists of a three-story cement block, triplex, three stories high. And each 'plex –

JEAN GRAY: Bunch of buildings like that in this alley.

RUDY GRAY: Rented by people, you know. And he has one-third of it. And his wife has a big –

JEAN GRAY: Noodle shop.

RUDY GRAY: Noodle shop.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Ah, okay

RUDY GRAY: She's stirring this big stuff –

JEAN GRAY: Big chicken broth and noodles and oh gosh –

RUDY GRAY: Delicious, delicious.

JEAN GRAY: That soup is so good, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: And it's an alley, it's not a street, it's an alley.

JEAN GRAY: It's an alley, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, the only traffic are three-wheeled bicycles and the occasional car, because it's very narrow. On the second floor and the third floor – this is a high, eleven foot room –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: High ceilings.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah ceilings, and the second floor is pretty high up, I'm on the second floor. There's – there's Jintina – the girl who smiled at me,

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right

RUDY GRAY: Her sister, their mother –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So it's a multigenerational household.

RUDY GRAY: And the son, and the daughter, all living there.

JEAN GRAY: And the man who fixed the watch was the father, and Noi was the woman with the soup.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: So the – her sisters, her sister and her mother and another sister? No, at that time –

RUDY GRAY: The daughter, yeah

JEAN GRAY: Chewan and Noi had three kids.

RUDY GRAY: Okay, “You stay at my house,” six people there, “You stay at my house.” They don’t think about “Oh I don’t have a room for you.”

BARBARA CELLARIUS: They’ll find a spot for you.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, if you say yes that means –

RUDY GRAY: Of course you take your shoes off.

JEAN GRAY: You’re going to be open to –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: Something, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: And I don’t know where I’m going.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah what do you expect, you don’t know much about this culture at all.

RUDY GRAY: Chewan’s English is very sparse, and Jintina, hardly anything at all.

JEAN GRAY: His sister-in-law.

RUDY GRAY: And none of them – they’re all Thai. And I’m there,

JEAN GRAY: He doesn’t know anything –

RUDY GRAY: Trying to get –

JEAN GRAY: What – what are you doing?

RUDY GRAY: Trying to get contacts, you know.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: How do you –

RUDY GRAY: What do you do?

JEAN GRAY: Communicate?

RUDY GRAY: But they find value in me. They want English.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, they want to learn so much.

RUDY GRAY: And here they got –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: They got a teacher.

RUDY GRAY: They got a teacher, right.

JEAN GRAY: They didn't know that part, but, you know, seems like a nice enough guy –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: Maybe we'll learn a little conversation.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, right. I didn't know that's how they valued me.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Right? Okay, weekend comes, and Chewan has a video camera and Jintina had a still camera, and they are contracted or hired to take video of a wedding.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: And later on I learn and funerals –

JEAN GRAY: Ordinations.

RUDY GRAY: Ordinations.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: People hire them to take pictures. And I go with them, on a motorcycle. Jintina takes the taxi with a big camera –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And Chewan and I get on the motorbike and *bzzzz* –

JEAN GRAY: Just zip through.

RUDY GRAY: Through all that terrible traffic. And I take my little video camera, too. But he finds value in my presence with all these Thai people. This Caucasian, you know. They're impressed it seems, with him having a Caucasian friend.

Didn't matter to me. I didn't know what he was thinking – using me or not,

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, it's like, so what? They're nice enough people and he's a nice enough guy.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: They're all going to get something out of this.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So how much time did you spend there?

RUDY GRAY: Oh this goes on for a couple weeks, you know. And I get to be a member of the family life, see. And then time for me to renew my visa, so I have to fly out or take the train out to the – Singapore or go back to Hong Kong and then come back.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: But to me, this is all very new and adventurous. I'm not going home. Meanwhile, while they're at the store, I'm walking around soaking in all this –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Just exploring.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, I was in this one store looking at the different durian –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: The fruits.

RUDY GRAY: Kind of fruits, you know. "Hello!" I look and there's a woman. She starts talking to me, "I'm having a birthday party, would you come?"

JEAN GRAY: Just like that?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. A Thai woman.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: But she spoke English?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah she spoke English. That's what got me.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, of course, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: “Oh, where are you staying?” and I told her, you know.

JEAN GRAY: Here’s my friends.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. She says – oh let’s go back to Kathmandu.

JEAN GRAY: Oh you want to back up a little bit?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. I’m sitting there ‘cause I want to ship out some carpets, at the shipper’s office. And I’m holding my video camera, and a guy says to me, “Oh you take video?”

I said, “Yeah.”

“You come and take video of my wedding?”

Oh my, “Sure, I’ll take a video of your wedding.” A Nepalese wedding? Wow, I don’t want to go into detail, Barbara. It was something, this wedding.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, really interesting. We don’t know what’s going on, but it’s really interesting.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah all the crying, all the throwing petals and berries and nuts, and chanting and the dancing, and pots and pans – oh, just something. At any rate, that’s how things are happening to me, all of a sudden –

JEAN GRAY: So instead of saying no, he says yes.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, “I’m going to send a car, pick you up.”

JEAN GRAY: Yeah for that wedding, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: This woman says.

JEAN GRAY: Oh this one? Oh okay, for the birthday party.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, her birthday party.

JEAN GRAY: So what did you tell Chewan and Jin?

RUDY GRAY: That somebody’s coming, that I’m going to visit someone, you know.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You have an invitation and you’re going somewhere.

JEAN GRAY: And you don't even know who this person is!

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: God knows what could happen, white slavery, we don't know what could happen!

RUDY GRAY: Oh, later on I learned that she's a wealthy woman, she's got friends and property, and she says, "Why don't you stay here in this empty house."

JEAN GRAY: It's like now what? Yeah you don't want to –

RUDY GRAY: I don't want, no, I didn't want to leave Chewan --

JEAN GRAY: Can't be rude to those people.

RUDY GRAY: And that family, you know. She really –

JEAN GRAY: Put you in a spot.

RUDY GRAY: Put me in a spot, yeah. And I said "No, thank you." And it didn't matter with her, it was alright, you know.

But she says, "Oh tomorrow, I'm going out to my farm, you want to come?"

"Oh, sure."

JEAN GRAY: Did she have family? Was she alone?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, she's alone. So the next day they pick me up and we drive out to the country. And she's got workers there, on this –

JEAN GRAY: What, coconut farm, or?

RUDY GRAY: I don't know what kind of farm, but she had to oversee something with her workers, and make some decisions with her work or something, you know. Impressing me, right?

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Well I still don't change my mind. I'm going to stay with Chewan and Jintina. We get back, the party was nice, the birthday party. You know, food and talk. A lot of her friends speak English. But that's it that was two days. You know, that's it, I didn't want to spend any more time with them.

So the next year, I return to Bangkok. And the same procedure of taking video, and traveling with the motorcycle to – speech –

JEAN GRAY: Oh, toastmasters!

RUDY GRAY: Toastmasters. 'Cause he's a business man.

JEAN GRAY: He's a business man –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: He wants to move up.

RUDY GRAY: He wants to move up, you know. It's the Thai language Toastmasters, you know.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Meanwhile, people in the neighborhood, one particular house that had upper class people. They had walls and a gate – had heard there was a teacher living there with Chewan, they came and asked me to teach their children English, ESL. "Oh sure, send them over." There I would have four or five kids, or teenagers, sitting there, and I'm bare chested –

JEAN GRAY: It's so hot!

RUDY GRAY: It's so hot, the fan blowing on me, you know.

JEAN GRAY: It's so hot, the humidity, oh my gosh!

RUDY GRAY: And I'm giving them ESL, you know. Now, I'm not always dressed like that.

JEAN GRAY: He usually wears clothes.

RUDY GRAY: I dress up because one of my lessons is to take them for a walk and teach them how to say words, see. And to exercise their muscles.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: English language kind of skill, yeah. You know, muscle-wise.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Can you move just a little bit closer to the –

RUDY GRAY: Oh, so the –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: There we go.

RUDY GRAY: So the family invites me to go on Sunday to go to their summer home. So we drive out to the country, to their summer home. There's a bunch of kids out there, playing soccer, I guess, yeah. And there's one girl there, in the corner, leaning on the fence, and she's got

crutches. Once in a while she walks a little ways, I can see one foot is disfigured. So I asked the hostess, you know, “What’s wrong with that girl?”

“Oh she has polio.”

I said, “Don’t they have a doctor or a medic in the villages?”

“Yeah, there’s a government medic in the village.”

“Yeah, where is he?” So they take me to him, and I ask him “Why has she got polio?” Because the polio vaccine had been available. And all the rest of kids were –

And he says, “Well the family was out of town when they vaccinated all the kids.” Well I had a Polaroid camera, and I went over to her and snapped her picture, *zip, zip, zip, zip*, and I showed her the picture, oh she was so happy. She called all the kids over and looked at the picture, and I snapped pictures of the kids and gave them pictures, you know. She was a member of the crowd now.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, she had something that they didn’t have, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Okay, we go back to Bangkok and some days later, Chewan and I are going down the street, and I spot a guy on a tricycle. An adult tricycle, with some kind of hand –

JEAN GRAY: Control, or pedal kind of thing?

RUDY GRAY: Pedal thing.

JEAN GRAY: So he’s doing it with his hands, not his feet?

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, his hands.

JEAN GRAY: ‘Cause his legs don’t work.

RUDY GRAY: You know. “Hey, wait a minute Chewan! Let’s go over and talk to that guy.” He talks to the guy, and it’s a custom-made tricycle. “Who made it?” He gives him the name of this individual who makes these. *Coughs*, excuse me.

Chewan gets in touch, we order one. We order one. And we had one made, and this summer home family, I asked them to take it out to the village and give it to this girl. So she can now –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So she can get around on her own.

RUDY GRAY: She can get around on her own now, without having to walk to school on crutches, always behind everybody, you know.

Well, couple evenings, couple evenings a week, Chewan goes to Toastmasters. Well, in Toastmasters, you have to get up and tell a story. So I'm sitting in the back there, and Chewan's up front telling a story, and everybody turns over and they look at me. And I learn later he's telling them the story about the bicycle girl and me, you know.

And then a woman gets up and starts, in a tone of voice that was kind of reprimanding, you know. And what she was saying was "How come the government wasn't taking care of this girl? Why did somebody from America have to come here and take care of our citizens?" or something, you know. So I don't know what we started, but –

JEAN GRAY: And how it ended, or what got going, but the connections of the business people, who knows where it got to?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, that's really interesting.

RUDY GRAY: Right.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So it sounds like you've been there too?

JEAN GRAY: I was only there one time, in 1990. Yeah I met Chewan and stayed at the greenhouse.

RUDY GRAY: We'll come to that, I hadn't met her yet.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, I didn't meet him till '89.

RUDY GRAY: No. So third or fourth year, I decide I have to reciprocate these people's kindness. I'm going to bring them to Alaska. Wow. So we get through the red tape, and I get them here to Jack Lake.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So how did you – so you've moved around different parts in the state, how did you end up here?

RUDY GRAY: Oh I –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You didn't tell that part of the story.

RUDY GRAY: I used to take the Mentasta boys out here, hunting.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay, so that goes back to when you were in Mentasta?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah. Yeah, the caribou are thick out there.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, this isn't an Alaskan story, dear. So tie it in. Got the Thai people to come.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, they came here, and Chewan looks out there across the lake, no people. No people. That's all he could say. They're so much in awe, no people. Because they're so used to seeing people constantly.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: 24 hours a day. They can't comprehend this, no people, no houses, oh! It's overwhelming. We can't appreciate the awesomeness of it. Amazing, yeah.

Well anyway, he video tapes everything, the mountains, I take him here, I take him there, and he's videotaping everything. And he goes back home. Goes back home, and he's showing people Alaska, and they take it that he's a world traveler.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, so now his status has gone up.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: And he's getting so much calls for business, in particular families who want their – wealthy families who want their vacations videotaped. Pretty soon we're getting post cards from Paris –

JEAN GRAY: And Switzerland.

RUDY GRAY: Switzerland!

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Wow.

JEAN GRAY: And they're standing in snow, it's like –

RUDY GRAY: Jintina and Chewan, they're traveling the world.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, in three years, in three years everything changed.

RUDY GRAY: Well then he got it into his head, you know, he goes to these homes to video tape weddings, and it's so crowded, there's so many people there, they can't handle all these people. And there's no place in Bangkok except these expensive hotels where you have to pay \$10,000 just for a banquet room or something.

JEAN GRAY: And he also watched the fact that at these ceremonies, on the ones that he has done, at the Hilton or some of those other places, they don't have a true Buddhist ceremony. So there's a niche that he's looking at.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: So, he rents a building. That's number one. You know, and he decorates it Thai style with the images and the drapes and everything. And he starts – he names it –

JEAN GRAY: Ruenjoawsao, it means “bride's home”.

RUDY GRAY: Bride's home. So the brides can feel that she can invite her friends.

JEAN GRAY: A lot of people, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: Now they can handle more people, you know. And he caters, the food.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah. Or he brings someone else in to do the food.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: But he kind of has the facility.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah he does the ceremony

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, now he has a building and he's more in control, they get more people, more money.

RUDY GRAY: He's a master at ceremonies, yeah, right. Well –

JEAN GRAY: That goes very well.

RUDY GRAY: He gets phone calls, “Well no, I haven't got – I better get another place.”

JEAN GRAY: So he gets another place.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Business is booming!

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, and this would be –

RUDY GRAY: He gets another place.

JEAN GRAY: This would probably be about the middle of the '90's, we're thinking when this started.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: We're not really sure because we really can't get real answers, you know, the one kid's English, the youngest boys' English is very good, but we just didn't get into it.

RUDY GRAY: Okay he's got two places now. Pretty soon two places is not enough. He needs more room.

JEAN GRAY: Bigger spaces.

RUDY GRAY: Builds a bigger place.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah number three.

RUDY GRAY: Number three. Go get number four, honey. Honest, this is –

JEAN GRAY: An amazing story.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It's a really interesting story.

RUDY GRAY: Amazing. Number three, and all within the family.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: You know, and he's very charitable. He would do charitable work and getting food to poor people, the Buddhist thing he's doing. Pretty soon, number three is not enough. He builds number four. She'll show you a picture of number four.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay. Wow.

JEAN GRAY: So he built that one and he's now probably finishing number five.

RUDY GRAY: And now he's finishing number five. That's where I stayed, yeah.

JEAN GRAY: 'Cause he's got some rooms there, and –

RUDY GRAY: Isn't that amazing?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

RUDY GRAY: From the motorcycle and –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: The cement building –

JEAN GRAY: In – well it probably took a good 15 years –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, but still.

JEAN GRAY: To get to this point, yeah. And this is their second home, out in the country by some waterfall. We don't know much about it yet, it's hard to get information. And this is an article that was in the Bangkok Paper about him.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh cool.

JEAN GRAY: I don't have a – there must be a date in here somewhere.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That's really interesting.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, and the really interesting thing is so they came to visit in 2015, and they came back again, and Jin – Jintina, the sister-in-law, and the youngest boy New, who's 27-28 at this point, his English is really good. So they came here to visit, and they're Buddhists, and they can drink alcohol, it's just never to excess, you don't do any of this stuff to excess. So the kid knew he was drinking beer with me – I have like one beer every two weeks, you know – you know, we had a few beers.

And they sat down to one of the last meals we had here, they said, they pulled out their Buddhist book, they had it in English, and they said they attribute their success to Rudy. And the Buddhists don't forget this stuff. They make these connections, and they attribute it all to him.

Now, like we said in the beginning of the story, we don't know who used – and we don't want to use that word, these people are wonderful people – but look how everybody gained.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: Everybody won in this situation.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: They got something.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah. And then Jin says to Rudy or me, we were cooking or something, we were in there cooking 'cause she did a lot of cooking, it was fabulous stuff.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh that would be nice.

JEAN GRAY: Went to New Sagaya, somebody who knows what they're looking at –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: You know, that was the best part. Obviously, there's more best parts than that, but she says, "You know, we have money." But they're working like crazy, this stuff, these are five hour ceremonies –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: To make it work, yeah.

JEAN GRAY: Things have to be cleaned and organized, and they've got four buildings going now. They've got the whole family is divided up, you know. Jin's got one, and Noi, the wife's got one, and the oldest son and his wife working another one, and New and Chewan are in the last one. And I don't know what they did with number one, they might have got rid of number one. And now number five, that means New or Chewan is going to have to move to number five, it's like – and they're working all the time, and they have almost no time.

Now, the people who are Buddhists have heard about this place in Thailand, so they've got weddings for people from Australia –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh other parts of the world.

JEAN GRAY: And Germany, and America, and – it's like, he's just – it's amazing. He's been on TV, he's been rubbing elbows with generals and presidents, and – whoa! It's a really amazing story.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: And so Rudy went to visit last October.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

RUDY GRAY: They flew – New and –

JEAN GRAY: New and Jin, and New's girlfriend.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. They flew to Taipei, to escort me to Bangkok.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh to meet you.

JEAN GRAY: On the last leg, yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That's cool.

JEAN GRAY: And he sent me a text with a picture in it and – I didn't go – and so I'm sitting there, and here comes the text, and it's like, he shows me one of, or someone –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: These pictures or something, and it's like, whoa, we meet Rudy in Taipei! It's like, you know, Rudy, he's a little elderly, and you know, a 12 hour flight across the ocean –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: And you've got another 4 or 5 hours to go. It's like, you know, if you've been on flights like that, it's not pleasant.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: No, it's long.

JEAN GRAY: And it's like all of a sudden the girl – what's her name? Chan, Choi – the girlfriend.

RUDY GRAY: Uh.

JEAN GRAY: Here it is. She's sits down in this Taipei – and you know, it's probably the middle of the night or whatever it is at this point –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Ploi.

JEAN GRAY: Ploi. And she sits down and starts speaking in English to Rudy. And then she looks up, and there's New standing there and Jin standing there, in the airport! They got on the exact same plane, so they knew our itinerary, knew his itinerary.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: So they got on the exact same flight.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, escorted me. Held my elbow like I was, like I was –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Elderly.

RUDY GRAY: Elderly.

JEAN GRAY: Like he'd trip over everything, you know.

RUDY GRAY: Because elderly people are usually like that.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Well sometimes that is the case.

JEAN GRAY: Yes, that is the case. Anyhow, so.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That's a fabulous story.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah an amazing story.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So, just to go back to how you ended up at Jack Lake. So you came out hunting here when you were teaching in Mentasta, you hunted out the Nabesna Road.

RUDY GRAY: In my first years up here, summertime I worked in Jackson Hole. At a boy's ranch.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you would go back to Jackson Hole for the summer?

RUDY GRAY: For the summer, right.

JEAN GRAY: Where are you going with this?

RUDY GRAY: How I got the property.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yep.

JEAN GRAY: Oh, oh, okay.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yep. That's my question.

RUDY GRAY: I had neglected all those years to get Homestead Act property. 'Cause I thought it was going to run forever, you know. But then the challenge came, get your land by 1970-71, they're going to rescind the act, the law. No more homestead land available. And BLM people warned us, "Get your land, get your land."

Oh okay, well. Let's see, I couldn't homestead or couldn't home site 'cause I was teaching.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: I'll train manufacturing, I'll run a business. What kind of business can I run? A boy's camp. So I built a cabin, called it Arctic Bound.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: What was it?

RUDY GRAY: Arctic Bound.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Arctic Bound.

RUDY GRAY: Organized it the way the camp in Jackson Hole was organized. Did all the paperwork, did all the necessary –

JEAN GRAY: The banking, advertising –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: And only 30 years later did I find out, as a veteran I didn't have to do it.

JEAN GRAY: Oh really?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That you could've – there would have been another way.

RUDY GRAY: I could have gotten –

JEAN GRAY: That you could've gotten it at any time.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: But who knows if somebody else would have gotten this spot.

RUDY GRAY: It didn't matter. It didn't matter. I did all the work, I got the patent. And now it's a national park.

JEAN GRAY: And we like to say – Rudy likes to say we have five acres to build on, and 14 million to play in.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: There you go! So then when you retired, then this became your base? When you weren't off adventuring?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yes. And then one year, I was on the road, and this car came by throwing dust, and I had to get in front of it. And fortunately the car in front of me was thoughtful enough to realize, you know –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: They were creating the dust.

RUDY GRAY: So they stopped, yeah. It was her.

JEAN GRAY: I wasn't going fast, the road was a nightmare.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And what were you up here doing?

JEAN GRAY: I was on vacation.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: Where else? What else would I be doing on this road?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: Of course, when I had been in Copper Center in 1989, you know after a few things, looking at some maps, and whatever they had there, it was the old building, of course.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right, the old Park Service.

JEAN GRAY: And said, "Oh everybody goes to McCarthy." So I went the other way.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: Still haven't been to McCarthy. Yep. And I wasn't going fast. I was in a rent-a-wreck, when they still had a company like that –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh right, right, I remember.

JEAN GRAY: And the road was just – and the rocks, they were as big as your camera. Oh it was horrible.

RUDY GRAY: So what did I accomplish?

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You've had a really interesting life. And you've probably made a difference in other people's lives, that's what teachers end up doing.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah we just saw a guy at Tok, last year at the grocery store. We're walking in and he's walking out – or other way around, it doesn't matter, "Mr. Gray!" It was some student from Mentasta, right? Or –

RUDY GRAY: Dot Lake.

JEAN GRAY: Dot Lake. "You're still alive?!" Just came right out of his mouth.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah he was a Charles, Branford Charles.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So it was in the '70's then that you got the property here?

RUDY GRAY: '71.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: '71.

RUDY GRAY: Didn't get the patent till '76 or something, you know, it takes time.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Paperwork.

JEAN GRAY: And by then had you added on? Or was it still the cabin, only?

RUDY GRAY: Well, my visitors from Anchorage needed a place to –

JEAN GRAY: Woody Long, the trooper.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: And the family became best friends, best friends. Still, to this day.

RUDY GRAY: So I built a –

JEAN GRAY: That other building, over there by the stairs.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh okay.

JEAN GRAY: That little small building.

RUDY GRAY: And kids grew up, needed a little bit more room, I built a sunroom.

JEAN GRAY: On the east side, there.

RUDY GRAY: Well, more food, needed a bigger kitchen.

JEAN GRAY: Need a kitchen, yeah.

RUDY GRAY: So I built a kitchen. Well I needed more room to sit down to eat, built a dining room. “Oh make it two stories,” she says. By that time, I met her. Okay so we did a two story.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And do you live here year round?

RUDY GRAY: No, her cold weather asthma is – pretty bad.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Oh, uh huh. So when you go outside in the winter –

JEAN GRAY: It’s just hard. Yeah it’s really hard. It’s an intrinsic kind of asthma, not exercise induced. Cold air – I got to sit back or prepare with an inhaler –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: That whole thing, jeez. Supposed to be going away, but it’s not going away. It’s hard. And it’s hard up here, imagine, there’s no water.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: You have to have snow machines, this hill, oh man. We were here, we’ve been here.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: You’ve spent some winters here?

JEAN GRAY: Not the whole winters, but I’ve been here every month but February.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: I don’t mind the dark, I don’t mind the cold, but it’s just the –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: That cold air.

JEAN GRAY: It’s hard to do anything. You don’t have water.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah.

JEAN GRAY: You don't have water.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: And you have to figure out a way to haul the water, store it, you can't leave. Man, you know, some people can do that, and that was before solar panels –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, right.

JEAN GRAY: And things like that that might make your life a little easier. But it's just hard.

RUDY GRAY: So that was my last adventure, Jeanie.

JEAN GRAY: I'd love to try to stay, but that means more firewood, oh man.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: No it's more complicated, everything's more complicated in the winter.

RUDY GRAY: Oh I've had enough winters.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you met in '89?

JEAN GRAY: Mm-hmm, yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you've been together since then?

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, yep. Yeah, we got married in '91. Yeah, come up here in May, or earlier, and try to hold out until October, but we have a trailer that was ransacked by a bear, so it's in Palmer getting fixed.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay.

JEAN GRAY: Twice it was ransacked by a bear.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Did you hear that somebody –

JEAN GRAY: It got shot.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: A bear, a big brown bear.

JEAN GRAY: Yes. We're waiting for the protection officers to show us a picture, 'cause I got a good look at that bear when it broke that window.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: The one that tried to come through the window at you.

JEAN GRAY: Yes, and we've seen him here before. Seen a very blonde bear here. I saw him years ago on that hillside, about this time of year, or a little bit later I think, 'cause it was the angle of the sun and this guy looked like a polar bear out there.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Interesting.

JEAN GRAY: He was so light and playing with the trees and rolling down the hill, he looked so cute! And he's walk around here and keep going, you know, you don't pay any attention to them.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It's okay if they keep going.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, 'cause they might walk down here on the trail, but they don't care, we just stand there.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah, one came up to the deck once too.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah we had one walking on the deck, but –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: It just kept going.

JEAN GRAY: You know, dawn or something like that.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: They just keep going, they don't know this from a rock.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So you've seen a lot of changes in your time here?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yes. It was wilder, you know. Now you're excited when you see a rabbit.

JEAN GRAY: We haven't seen rabbits for a long, long time, till this year.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: I have one in my yard.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, we had them up here on the trail.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: But this year, this year.

JEAN GRAY: Seemed to be one of those boom and bust years got farther apart. You know, from our vantage point.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right. And you haven't been to McCarthy?

JEAN GRAY: No I still haven't been to McCarthy. I hear the road's better.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah, it's, there's – I drove out to the Kuskulana Bridge a couple weeks ago. And it's about Mile 17, and it's actually chip-sealed out to there. Once you get up out of the – you got to get up sort of off, out of the river bottom, of the river channel –

RUDY GRAY: When I was there, the only people in McCarthy were the Green brothers. That's all. Just two bachelor brothers. Their name was Green, I forget their first names.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Loy was one of them –

RUDY GRAY: Loy, yeah, right.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: And I can't remember the name of the other one.

RUDY GRAY: Yeah. Now, god.

JEAN GRAY: Well I only saw part of that TV show once. Edge of Mc – Edge of –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: *Edge of Alaska.*

JEAN GRAY: *Edge of Alaska.*

RUDY GRAY: And the only way to get across was the cable.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: 'Cause they built the trestle bridge for the railroad, but they were anticipating that the river would take it out, and what would take it out? It was a stream. They have to build a new one.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Now but you could fly to the other side, right?

RUDY GRAY: Oh yeah there was a strip there, and they enlarged the strip because Mudhole Smith wanted to bring the tourists in there to ransack Kennecott.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: I heard something about a ledger?

RUDY GRAY: I have it, yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: From the hospital? So you found that when you were – when you were –

RUDY GRAY: When I was helping these people, yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: When you were helping with that, yeah.

JEAN GRAY: Way back when he was teaching in Chitina. That time frame.

RUDY GRAY: There was no restriction on –

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

RUDY GRAY: Going there.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah we salvaged it. It's in Washington, we show it people, we show it to doctors, we took it to our doctor, and showed it to him and he showed it to the other doctors.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah one of my colleagues expressed an interest in seeing it, or scanning it.

JEAN GRAY: Well yeah, if the park wants it and puts it in a place, they can have it.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: So we – I mean, we – if you wanted to donate it to the park we would take care of it. We can accept donations with restrictions on them, but I mean we would obviously be responsible for taking care of it.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah I mean, we'd rather not really have it, I mean it's – we don't get to show it to that many people. And we've pretty much shown it to everybody who's interested in it. There is no problem, yeah.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: We would definitely be interested in a donation.

JEAN GRAY: I don't know how Rudy feels about it, but I'd really rather you guys have it. You know, we really have no right to it. And if you can keep it and show it to people, that's fine, that's great.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Yeah depending on the condition, what we might end up doing is scanning it and having a copy of it so that people can see it, and keeping the actual document in a controlled environment.

JEAN GRAY: It's in pretty good shape. You know, Rudy's kept in a box –

RUDY GRAY: Fascinating reading.

JEAN GRAY: And wrapped it in tissue paper.

RUDY GRAY: Just diagnosis, treatment, god.

JEAN GRAY: We brought it in a few years ago and showed it, that's how you know about it. You know, it's like that. Good size – regular ledger book, probably for bookkeeping or something.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right. So yeah, definitely. I mean I know there's – we would be interested.

JEAN GRAY: Good, yeah, 'cause when we brought it in it didn't seem like they were. And this was probably – the new building was there, this may have been all of 7, 8, 9, 10 years ago, whenever, I don't know. Seemed like, you know, we were sort of like waiting for them to say, "Can we have this?"

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right.

JEAN GRAY: And nobody did, so we took it home! You know.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Well, there's definitely an interest.

JEAN GRAY: Yeah, good, good.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: We have a new, actually a new person, a new curator – museum specialist, so.

RUDY GRAY: Oh.

JEAN GRAY: And I think this was right when Kennicott was purchased. Nobody was ready for anything yet.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Right, and I think, I think that things have changed, and that now we would be ready so that's great. Well, before I turn off the recorder, are there any other stories that are particularly memorable that you think would be good to get on tape?

RUDY GRAY: Oh, not to be public, no.

BARBARA CELLARIUS: Okay. Alright, well thank you very much, I'm going to turn the recorder off. I really appreciated the time you spent with me today.