

Narrator: Buddig Waddell
Interviewer: Mariah Maloney

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Homer, Ak

M-Buddig, could you tell me why you came to Homer?

B-Well I came to Homer many years ago, quite a few years ago. I came from the old country, Wales, and I came to Seldovia first to be with my aunt and uncle and their two babies. And I came in 1928, to Seldovia for quite a few years. Then I came over here. I had some friends over here that I used to come over to visit, a teacher. She was Mable Svedlund, she came and got married here in Homer. She was transferred from Seldovia here. I came over here. And then I met a man here and I got married and came over here to live. That's why I came to Homer.

M-OK, you came over here and got married right?

B-Yes

M-And you had a farm right, a ranch?

B-Yes a little ranch.

M-Could you tell me something about it, like describe some of the things?

B-Well we lived on the West Hill road we had one little cabin, just a small cabin. After we got married, my husband built this one room cabin. Then we put another room on it. Put a bedroom on it. And we made it bigger, and we lived in there. And then I had two children while I lived there. When we built on and after we built on the top, we put a basement under it.

M-oh!!

B-They have to lift it up.

M-Yah

B-And put the basement under it and we had that and we did it all by ourselves, just my husband and I.

M-No machines?

B-No machine or anything we had to...He lifted it up with oh, what they call them jacks or whatever, and we carried the sand and rocks and stuff from the beach. We had a truck and took that up and filled the basement under there, a concrete basement. And so we had a real nice house. And the house is still there right on the West Hill road right as you go around that turn on the West Hill road going up towards the Childs and Turkingtons and all this right on the oh...

M-Right on the corner?

B-Yah, turn the corner there that's the house there's a basement under it.

M-Do people still live in it?

B-Ah yes, people are still in it. Yah, we finished it all up. And after that we sold it and went outside for a year. My husband didn't like it there in Oregon. He was born in Oregon, and he lived there while he was a young boy, but he wanted to come back to Alaska. He was a big game guide, so he liked that. And so that's way we came back, because he wanted to go back to his guiding again. He used to be a guide before we went there.

M-Oh, well when you came back where did you live?

B-Well, when we came back we bought Pa Svedlund's house right out east, right by-let me see now-I think the Kilcher girl had it, Thompson's bought it from us and it's kind of two houses together.

M-Yah, ok Fay Kilcher bought that and then she moved to Anchorage.

B-That's the house we lived in, that big house there. That used to be Pa Svedlund's house, we bought it from him and we lived there for two or three years. There we went into partnership with Mr. & Mrs Gully at the Sefair Motel down here. So I lived in the seafair for several years until 1970.

M-So you did quite a bit bit of moving around then?

B-yah I sure did.

M-Before you went to Oregon did you have any animals & gardens at the place where you were living?

B-Yah, we had animals on the little farm we had up on the hill. My husband had 25 or 26 head of horses, that he took on hunting trips. And we had cows. And we had a cow on the other little place too. After we moved to east end we had a cow there and had a few horses there.

M-What was the ground like?

B-Was good, good. We had a big garden and we had chickens, pigs, ducks, and turkeys. We had all kinds of stuff. I had two kids, a boy and a girl, Billy & Enid. They had rabbits and stuff like that.

M-Oh yea, they probably really liked rabbits.

B-Yea.

M-If I were to be a farmer I would really enjoy having animals around.

B-Oh I think it's nice for young people to have animals .

M-Yea, now where I live, I don't have any animals. But we do have a dog and we had rabbits but they got loose, and our chickens got eaten by a dog.

B-Oh dear.

M-So our dog isn't a very good farm dog.

B-Yea, well we had dogs and cats and all that too.

M-Were your dogs pretty good around animals?

B-Oh yes, they were lovely dogs, chesapeakes. They were good dogs.

M-Yea, my dog that I had -let's see-I had one dog and it was a real little dog. It was a poodle and pekingese and it was really friendly and it liked the chickens. But my other dog was a collie. He'd always chase birds and everything.

B-Yea, I have a little dog now down in Southern California, it's with my grandchildren. He's a little chihuahua, he's real cute. I'm used to big dogs but this is the first little dog I've had.

M-On your farm was there alot of problems with coyotes?

B-No, the only problems we had were the chickens, there were lots of hawks, chicken hawks you know. But we were not far enough to have coyotes. But chicken hawks used to come into our yard and get our chickens. I had two big fires and one fire was up on the farm on the West hill there. I had a chicken house and all the chickens in there and I had the ducks in one end, ducks and geese. And I happened to wake up one night and see the flames when I went to the bathroom and I ran out there and got all the chickens out and the geese out before it all burned down. So I threw them all out in the snow, this was in the wintertime and I had to carry them into the barn. Then I had a fire down here at the Seafair, I lost everything there in the fire.

M-The house was on fire itself?

B-Yea the house, the house burned up.

M-The stoves must have been hazardous. What were the stoves like then?

B-Well, in the chicken coop, we had a lamp, you know, to keep the water from freezing in the winter time. And the chicken some how or another got some hay, I mean straw to close to the lamp and it started fire. That's how the fire happened. Then the fire in the Seafair motel in my house down there started from the coal stove from the basement. You see, the creosote caught on fire in the stove pipe and started the wall on fire.

M-What kind of house did you have down there at the Seafair?

B-Well, we had a little just by itself next to the Seafair. The Seafair all by itself and then the little house on the side of it. We were able not to burn up the apartments. The fire truck came down in time to save the apartments for me, but most of the house was burned down. I lost all my husband's pictures of all his hunts you know and stuff like that.

M-Oh that's too bad, but you still remember them real good.

B-Oh yea.

M-It's a good thing we have memories. Did you ever go and sell your vegetables to anyone?

B-No, we didn't have a big enough garden for that but we gave lots away you know. We had a little greenhouse and we had tomatoes and cucumbers.

M-Cucumbers?

B-In the greenhouse you know.

M-Oh yea.

B-So we just had enough for ourselves and to give some away to the neighbors. We didn't sell any of it. But one year we had lots of potatoes/Gordon's and ourselves put in a big reel of potatoes. That was during the war, we took them out to the dock and we were selling them to the navy there in Kodiak and they were supposed

to come and get them, so they all froze on the dock before they came and got them so we lost them all. It was hundreds of them, lots and lots.

M- Were they all sold already?

B- Well we had sold them to the Navy, never came and got them in time so they all froze so we lost all of that.

M- Yeah, it sounds like you had a few cold winters. Were the winters real cold then?

B- Oh, Yeah they were cold winters. The potatoes would freeze out there if there was no fires out there. We just put them on the dock and they were supposed to come by so and so a time and they did not come for another day. They all froze up.

M- Yeah, We had that problem in our house. We live in the house about eight and a half miles out. We store our stuff in this one place. One year we went to Minnesota and it got so cold in Homer the house froze and so did everything in it. So when we came back the potatoes were all rotten and it was gross!

B- Well, you live close to where I live. I live up the subdivision road close to the Mormon Church.

M: Yeah, I live about three and a half miles out from town. Did you guys ever have track meets, or did you do any running?

B: Oh, yeah, we used to walk all over, and we lived up on the hill. I used to walk downtown with my kids nearly every day, and they would walk to school. We lived about a mile and a half up the road. My kids used to walk a mile and a half every day to school and back.

M: They must have been real farm kids.

B; Yeah, they were.

M: But, I guess most of the kids were farm kids in those days.

B: Yeah, that's right. But there were only small farms those days. There were never any big farms here in Homer. Just small places.

M: Did you have like cows to get milk?

B: Yeah, we got all of our milk from the cow. We made things from it. We made butter.

M: Oh, did you make cheese?

B: We made butter. No I never made cheese, but we had enough for butter and whole milk and buttermilk. We had eggs, and we lived right off the farm. Really we had a nice garden and everything.

M: Were there any years when everything dried up and there was a lack of something.

B: Oh, sometimes it would be that way, you know, sometimes it would. But we had everything all here in Homer here. And we had a pretty good time for the summers here. It was pretty good for the garden. We had a pretty nice garden. We always had a nice garden.

M: Do you still have a garden?

B: Yes well, I live with the Inglimas back here, Dick and Lynn Inglima. He has a beautiful garden. We're eating right out the garden right now. Cauliflower, broccoli and cabbage. Well, the cabbage isn't ready, but it's starting to get there.

M: Yea, my mom likes vegetables alot and so she's always growing lettuce and tomatoes and stuff like that.

B: That's nice. Yeah, a lot of people have green houses around here, too. Like the Turkington's. They have a beautiful green house. All their tomatoes are ripe right now, you know, and they're just beautiful.

M: Did you have tomatoes? I mean did you grow them in those days?

B: Oh, yeah, sure. We had a greenhouse on the hill. My husband built a nice greenhouse, and we had tomatoes there, and cucumbers growing in there and peppers, green peppers in the greenhouse.

M: Green peppers! Wow! Did they get full-size and everything?

B: Oh, yeah. There in the greenhouse you can get everything real nice and warm. Yeah, we had a nice big greenhouse.

M: Yeah, it sounds like you had quite a farm.

B: Yeah, we did. Well, it wasn't big, but it was nice.

M: You had everything you needed, really, on your farm.

B: That's right.

M: Did you ever make kimchee? It's a real hot dish with lettuce and stuff?

B: No, we never ~~did~~ that. I never did it anyway. Maybe somebody did.

M: Yeah, well, your farm really sounds neat. I wish I could see what it was like then.

Well, even in the old country I used to live on the farm, too, you know, and I was in Wales. We had a nice farm. We had two cows, chickens and pigs there. And we'd put up hay in the summertime. There we always had a big barn to put our hay in. But here, you know in Alaska, we didn't have a barn to put the hay in. We just made stacks, hay stacks. My and my husband put all the hay up for all the horses we had here.

M: You must have had a lot of horses.

B: Well, he had about twenty-five, twenty-six heads of horses, when he was taking them guiding, you know. Take them up to Anchorage and those places. Oh, going after sheep and mooses and caribou and stuff like that.

M: Did your kid ever go hunting with your husband?

B: Well, my son always went with my husband, Billy, yeah. He was hunting for quite a few years with his father. He's not hunting any more, though. He gave that up. When his father was alive, he always went with him for - oh - several years. But my daughter didn't go. She was a beautician.

M: Beautician, really? Did they have barbershops then?

B: Oh, yes, right down here by - oh - let's see, what do they call it now? It used to be the bakery shop. Yeah, that's where they used to have a little place there. That's where Enid was a beautician along with another lady. It was just a barbershop really. She used to cut men's hair, too.

M: Did you ever go and get your hair cut there?

B: Oh, yeah.

M: Your daughter cut your hair.

B: Yeah, she still cuts my hair in Redding, California.

M: Does she still do barber work?

B: Yeah, she still does it, but in the wards there. She's been there for fourteen years, and she still cuts hair on the side, too.

M: Yeah, it sounds like she has really stuck to her career.

B: Yeah, she still has her license, her Alaska license. She renews it every two years.

M: So she was on the farm, and she learned to be a beautician.

B: Oh, yeah. Well, she didn't care much for farm work. She was afraid of the chickens, and she didn't like the cows too well, although she and Billy had to milk the cow quite often, but she didn't like them too well. She was afraid of the horses.

M: That sounds like me. I'll go out on the farm, and I'll be really afraid of the animals.

B: Yeah, she's afraid of the chickens. She's afraid to go and get the eggs, because she's afraid the chickens would bite her or something.

M: I would think it would be fun finding the eggs.

B: Yeah, I think so too.

M: How many eggs would you get really?

B: Oh, we had quite a few chickens. Oh, maybe a dozen chickens or more. We'd get enough for use and sometimes we even had enough to sell. And they're easy to cook and eat.

M: You must have made a lot of egg dishes and stuff.

B: Yeah.

M: Did you have a lot of rice then?

B: No, we didn't care that much for rice. I had a little rice, but not a whole lot. We too much liked eating moose, caribou and sheep and stuff like that. Potatoes and just good old farm food, you know.

M: So you had a lot of meats then.

B: Oh, lots of meat. My husband was quite a guide and so he always used to bring home lots of meat home, you know. We used to have meat: sheep, caribou or moose. He always went after bears, but we never had any bear meat. He didn't like the bear meat. Well, you can't eat the brown bear, but the black bear they say is real good but he didn't care much for it, because he's cleaned too many of them. And they looked too much hanging up like a man hanging up there.

M- Yeah, I don't like fish to much because when I was little I used to always see them gutting it.

B- Oh, is that right? I like fish, you know-cooked fish.

M- Shrimp and crab I'll eat, and I'll eat halibut.

B- Oh yes, it's very good.

M- And sometimes I'll try to eat salmon

B- You don't like salmon?

M- When I grow up. There won't be as much, and it will be alot harder to get.

B- Yeah, and salmon is really very good for a person too.

M- Did you ever go fishing?

B- Well we'd just go and camp overnight with the kids, you know.. And we use to go and catch trout and stuff, right up in the creeks up above there by Anchor River. And we had...and then we'd stay overnight, and we'd cook the fish right outdoors, camping you know. And just nice. And of course we went fishing in Anchor River, too, for trout, I mean, not trout but salmon and steelhead and stuff like that.

M- Did you have fishing poles?

B- Oh yes, sure we all had fishing poles.. Yes, if we didn't have them, my husband would make some out of, you know, pussy willow.. And fixed one for us too. But he always had a fishing pole. And in the wintertime, we went skiing and stuff like that.

M- Did you live on rolling hills and stuff like that?

B- Lots of hills back there, just real nice. Well, you know, you go right up there by Ohlsen Mountain and they had a ski tow up there then. Yeah, we had a big ski tow up there and we used to go up there and ski when my were little. And they used to have a...oh,they had that for years, I don't know. I guess they still have it, I don't know.

M- Yeah, they might still have it because my friend is always talking about when he went there.

B- Yeah, you go way way up. Yeah, I think they still have it because they had it there when my children were little. We used to go up every weekend. Dave Schroer was teaching school you know.

M- He's still a teacher.

B- He still teaches, well he was teaching my son and my daughter. And he used to take them all up there skiing. He was a very good ski instructor.

M- He's still skiing.

B- Really, he's still skiing, is that so?

M- Yeah, he's got a ski team, and they got to ski meets.

B- He taught my son and my son's in his forties, and he taught him then. You know, to ski.

M- Our math teacher was taught by him, and now they're both teachers.

B- Oh, is that so. Wow, that's very interesting.

M- Well I think I've learned alot about the gardens and everything. I'll come again and I'll find out something about the old Homer and get more in detail, thank you.

B- Yeah, thank you.