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Narrator: Jim and Marion Waddell

Interviewer: Arlyn Davidson

Date: July 23, 1981

Place: Waddell home, Homer

A. How long have each one of you lived in Homer?

J. I came to Homer in about 1934.

M. And I came in the fall of 1934.

A. Did you two meet in Homer or Seldovia?

J. No, Marion, you came to Seldovia in the fall of 1934. You came to Homer in the spring -no, wait, March of 1935.

M. Oh, yes, that's right.

A. Did you meet in Homer or Seldovia?

M. No, we met in Seldovia.

A. Did any other family members come with you to Homer?

M. No, no one came with me but Jim's brother, guy came up with him.

A. And other than that, nobody?

M. Other than that, nobody, that's right.

A. And how did you arrive to Homer?

M. Over from Seldovia with Tom Shelford, he ran a Mail boat between Homer and Seldovia then.

A. What encouraged you to come to Homer?

M. Well, I came because I married Jim.

J. Well, I came to Alaska in 1929. I worked with Alaska Guides then and they had a whole bunch of horses at the time and they weathered them in Homer. So, I had a job of bringing the horses down the beach to Homer, and they farmed them, some on the Spit, and different ones took so many head and that's sort of the way I heard of Homer. I was here the next Spring, the next Fall. I was here until the Spring of 1934 when I found out they had opened up a school section for homesteading. And then I filed on 160 acres right here in town.

A. Where was your homestead?

J. It was right where the old cemetery is now, That was all part of my homestead. It went 40 acres below the road and the rest above.

A. How long did you guys have your homestead there?

M. Well, we started to sell it in about 1940, we would just sell it a couple acres at a time, and just a few years ago, we sold the last 2 acres that we had.

Mr. and Mrs. Waddell interview. (2)

A. What kind of things did you produce on your homestead, what was your main source of food?

M. Well, about the only thing we grew is we had a garden and we had a cow, and chickens! We didn't raise any grain or anything although we did put up hay in summer.

A. O.K., well, where were these guide horses located other than the spit?

J. Well, on the spit, there used to be wonderful grass, you used to be able to keep over to 50 head of horses over the winter out there without feed.

A. This is before the earthquake?

J. Yeah, this is before the earthquake.

A. Now, like on your homestead, how did you obtain the ownership? How did you become the owners, was there any particular way?

M. Well, Jim was a veteran, and when you are a veteran, you only had to build a livable house.

J. Live on it 7 months.

M. Yes, 7 months. Of course, that's all you were required to live on it, of course, we stayed on it

A. And which war was it, was it World War I that you were a veteran?

M. Yes, he was in WWI.

J. Yes, I was in WWI.

A. Ah, that's interesting. Well, before you obtained your homestead, where did you stay?

J. Well, I stayed in Anchorage for the first 5 years I was down here ~~to~~ up here, then, in 1934, I came down here to stay, and I stayed in what was Andrew Svedlund place, and it turned out then, the Maddoxes had it down on the Slough, we called it the slough then. *Maddox*

M. It's called Maddox road down there now.

J. Yeah, it's called Maddox road now and at the end of the road there was a big log cabin.

A. Was this like the main place in town, where like, everybody would stay at?

M. No, no it wasn't. When we came here, there were no stores or anything, there was just a post office. Just 2 schools, and a Post Office and we had to go to Seldovia to do our grocery shopping, and there were now stores here.

A. When did the first store come in?

J. '1936, Mrs. Walli had the first one, then the next year, the Barry's *1*

Mr. and Mrs. Waddell interview. (3)

built one under the hill there where bishop's is.

A. And those were like the two main stores for a while, or did it sort of grow fast after that?

J. Yeah, it sort of grew after that. They finally got a dock out there, (on the spit), where Alaska Steam would come in to dock about every 3 weeks, to a month.

A. Ah, I see, now, you said there were 2 schools, where were these?

M. <Well, one school was on the east side where people call now Charlie Miller's Landing.

J. <Well, no it's about where Mickey's store is now.

M. And the other school was located down here where our present school is now, actually, it would be about where Vega Pratt lives now.

A. And why isn't it still there, what happened to it?

M. <Well, the one out east, Mickey Rossi used it as a storage house for groceries, and then the one on this side was sold as part of the Inlet Hotel.

A. That's down by the bowling alley there?

M. Yes!

A. <Well, like the one out at Miller's Landing, I know they are going to have a new one out there, but like when did it sort of die off?

J. Yeah, in about 1941, when they built the school house down there (the high school) then they abandoned that one out there.

M. That's when you had the school bus, Jim.

J. No it isn't, I didn't have the first school bus.

A. You drove the school bus?

J. I had a school bus contract there for one year. Well, actually 2 years, but I only ran it for one because I had back problems, the second.

A. You mostly did game hunting I hear, well, what did you do in the off season?

J. You mean in between game hunting?

A. Yea!

J. <Well, I worked on the road a lot here with the Road Commission.

A. I see, well, when did the road come in?

Mr. and Mrs. Waddell interview. (4)

J. Pardon!

A. When did the road come in?

J. <Well> this road here, they didn't start until, I mean a true road, until 1946, but up to that time, we had no road. The farthest out east you could go was the old Thurston place, and we had no road out this way, past Bidarka creek.

A. About how far out east end road was this?

J. What!

M. About how far out east is Therston's place?

J. Oh, it must have been about 10 miles.

A. 19 miles you said?

M. Yeah, there was about 12 miles of road to Thurstons, and there was a road down there where Walli's store sat, down to the beach past Bishop's store, there was a road down that way.

A. Where approximately, was Walli's store?

M. Where Proctor's store sits now.

J. Where the big warehouse building was, that was the store.

A. And, I guess, Mrs. Berry had a store where was this located?

M. That was located where we now call the Bishop's store.

A. Bishop's sore?

M. Down by the beach there where you turn off into the ^IEnlet Hotel, that was the Berry Store.

A. Now, I guess, the Inlet Trading Post has been here for a while, How long has it been here?

M. That was called Mrs. Berry's store.

A. Now, more on the subjects of roads, was there just one main road through town, or were there more?

M. Yes, just one main road through town.

J. <Well> you could go down Mud Bay and across at certain times. And, at certain stages of the tide, we could drive down on the spit.

A. Was this mainly in the summer, mostly?

J. Yes.

A. Let's say you had to go to Homer to Anchorage what would you do then?

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Mr. and Mrs. Waddell interview. (5)

J. Boat.

A. When was the first trail, or road, whichever came first?

M. Road to Anchorage, you mean?

A. Yeah.

M. That didn't go in till,

J. Well, it didn't start 'till 1946, but we worked all that winter. Just slashing right away, it was around 1950 before you could, then you couldn't drive to Anchorage, you could go to Seward or the Moose, but it was later before they got the road around the Turnagain Arm area there.

A. What about supplies, did you get those from Seldovia, before the store?

M. Well, until they put in the dock and until Alaska Steam ships would come in, before that, though, we would get our supplies from Seldovia. But again, once the dock was put in, we got all of our supplies from the Big boat that would come in.

A. And what about electricity, when did that come in?

M. The first electricity?

J. No, we weren't here then. We were up in the mines when they got electricity up here, there was some in the homesteads in the early '50's.

A. And did things like phones and other things like that, follow in right after electricity?

M. There were phones in Homer when we first came here, but it was just one line that was put up by the people and then taken care of by the people, it was just one of those old-fashion phones where your ring would be one long and mine would be 3 long and one short, and that was our first phone. There wasn't any system until....?

J. Homer High.

M. Homer High built the first phone system, comparative to the one we have now, and then, I think, he sold out to Glacier State.

A. So the people took care of it, so there wasn't any forms of Government or no Mayor or anything?

M. No, that's right, all the first phones were taken care of by the local people here in Homer.

A. And what forms of Government was there in Homer?

M. It wasn't until we came here and the first forms of Government was called the P.U.D., and that started in

J. And that started in the later part of the '30's.

Mr. and Mrs. Waddell interview. (6)

A. What does P.U.D. stand for.

J. Public Utility District.

A. No, this was just not for Homer, but for the district also.

M. No, it was just for Homer, it was the Homer Government.

A. The comparison of Homer Government now and then, How do you feel the P.U.D. handled things compared to now, was it better or worse?

J. (Well,) our government then just involved the people living in the area, of course our form of Government now, that's the state, that's controlled form Juneau.

A. Could P.U.D. have access over your land, could they, like, take away? I mean, not take it away, but were they pretty much in control of things in that sort of way?

M. (Well,) did they have taxes under P.U.D.?

J. No.

M. No, we didn't, but it was a form of Government quite like our city except there were no taxes. They mainly just tried to shape things up until they got a better system going.

A. I don't know when this was, but the Kachemak Millers Landing area and the Homer area, they were separate for a long time?

M. You're talking about Kachemak City?

A. Yeah, over there, but I guess up by Fritz creek, lot's of people lived out there and I guess it was even there before Homer went city-wise was there?

M. --Bu

J. (Well,) Kachemak City sprung up after Alaska was declared a State, and Homer went city wise.

M. But there have always been people living in that area.

J. Those people out there just didn't want to be in Homer's city limits, so that's why Kachemak city was formed.

A. And what kind of community was up on the hill?

M. There was a school up on the hill....

J. Back by Twiter Creek.

M. At that time, there were alot of families living back there on the hill, the Edens had a homestead up there, and there were so many school children, that it was easier to have a school up there than have them come down here, because they would have had to walk down here, they had no bus system up there and when did that school up there close, Jim?

J. I don't remember.

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Mr. and Mrs. Waddell interview. (7)

A. ~~Well~~, when did the road come in from the hill to here?

M. ["] When did ~~the road come in from the hill~~ that road go up by Guy's, Jim?

J. The west Hill road?

M. Yeah.

J. About in the later part of the '30's.

A. Did electricity come in up there about the same time as here?

M. ~~Well~~, yeah, when it came into Homer, here, it came into all the residents in Homer got the electricity.

A. Homer has changed alot throughout the years, like I can see where you guys used to have your homes out there by the cemetery, and now it's really crowded out there, how do you like the changes of the population, do you wish there were more or less people?

M. ~~Well~~, one thing about it, you can't stop progress, and you couldn't expect it to stay like it was over, I liked it much better in the old days when there was fewer people, but we got to go along with progress.

A. Yeah, do you feel like that, why do you think that, I guess Seldovia used to be alot bigger than Homer, but why do you think that, Homer became more of a major town than Seldovia?

M. ~~Well~~, I think one reason Homer grew and Seldovia didn't is because Seldovia the only way out of there is by air or by water, and that would stop alot of growth, and, of course, Seldovia always had the big ships that went into Homer- or into Seldovia, which they didn't have, so they had to depend on Homer and Anchorage. Through Homer, Everyone was going to Anchorage.

A. About how many Homestead, altogether, approximately were there in the whole community in about 1935-40?

J. Oh, that's about a \$64 question, there are so many homesteads back there on the hill.

A. Oh, really?

J. Yeah, there were so many people that lived up there on the hill.

M. They would come and go. They would stay just long enough to prove up and then they would leave, they wouldn't stay, so it's really hard telling how many because a real awful alot homesteaded up there on the hill back on up there.

A. So, it was just sort of a come and go process?

M. Yeah, but even on the lower area, the lower flats down here there were still lots that came in and didn't stay.

A. What about when the earthquake came in, what happened then? Did it knock off any homesteaders?

M

Mr. and Mrs. Waddell interview? (8)

M. Aw, no.....

J. No, I don't think so.

M. I don't think the earthquake did any damage here as far as people leaving the country, or as far as property, but the only thing the earthquake did was lowering the land on the spit.

A. How big was the homestead on the spit, I guess before the earthquake there was one out there?

M. Well, I guess there was one homestead out there that was 160 acres/ There was just one out there, right Jim?

J. Yes, that's right, just one Homestead.

M. When we came here, there was still fences put up out there around this homestead.

A. really?

M. This was about half-way out on the spit.

J. It was Herrington who owned it out there.

A. You said Herrington owned it out there?

J. Yes, old ^{Bill} Herrington owned it out there. ~~No, it was May Herrington.~~