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MM-82-127-19  
Person Interviewed: Jim Waddell & MACKON  
Interviewer: Arlyn Davidson

Date: July 30, 1981  
Place: Homer, Alaska

A- I guess you game hunted alot, how long have you been game hunting?

J- Well, I went to work for the Alaska guides in 1929 and that was my first year in Alaska.

A- Where was the Alaska guides located?

J- In Anchorage at that time.

A- And did anyone else in the area game hunt?

J- You mean around here?

A- Yea, around here.

J- Yes they did but just more recent years, Spud Dillon has been guiding.

A- And you guided right before him?

J- Yeah, but I haven't been guiding since 1962, and that's a long way back.

A- I see, well what kind of animals did you game hunt?

J- Well, everything along the big game that's in the country, moose, caribou, sheep, black bear, brown bear, grizzly bear and polar bear.

A- And this kept you faury busy through the whole season?

J- Well, not the whole season, we generally had to hunt once in the spring, that was generally for bear, the spring bear hunt. And then you would have a fall hunt. And we would be out for, oh, maybe sixty days.

A- I see, well what kind of animals are in this area?

J- Well, mostly, but on the Kenai Peninsula we got moose and sheep and black bear.

A- What seems to bring the most money, I mean which is the most propitable or did you get your money from just guiding the people?

J- Yes, which I would get so much for the hunt and they would pay you a contract with so much per person or so much a day.

A- Did anybody else work with you?

J- Oh yes, I've worked with parties where they've had fifteen to twenty out in the camps. As high as guides out there, of course in different areas... we would all be after the same type of animals, but we would be hunting in different areas. In fact, out at Tustamena Lake we would have big camps out there. There was about half a dozen camps where we could get one party segragated from other parties.

Another  
part of it

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A- How many people would each guide take out?

J- He was only allowed to take out one, or else one man and then a minor child,...

A- Well, what kind of people did you find mostly wanted to go on these game hunts. Were they mostly rich people?

J- Well, not always real rich but usually people that had a fair amount of money, and a lot of them were people that came up the hard way and made money too. But often too, many young hunters up here, except in family groups.

A- Were a lot of the people that went on these trips local people or did you find that a lot of these people were from other countries?

J- Oh no, I rarely ever guided any local people usually they were more from other countries all over, Austria, Hungary, France, Germany, all the states outside: Michigan, New York, to name a few, Vermont, Connecticut, California, and New Hampshire.

A- Were they here on just a visit to Alaska or did they come here just to game hunt?

J- Oh no, they would come just for the game hunt. For next year's game hunt they might sign up people this fall for next year's hunt. But they would have to put a deposit down, that way we wouldn't be stuck.

A- Was there usually a big waiting line for these hunts?

J- Well not necessarily, no. There are still several guides in the country but they guide on a lesser scale than us back in the thirties when we used the horses.

A- Is that how you got to those places like Tustumena and Caribou Lake, is that how you got there, by horses?

J- Well we took the horses up the trail, but they would usually take the hunters up on the river boat from Kasilof.

A- What about some of the local camps in the area, were there any right near Homer?

J- No, not hunting camps, not to my knowledge anyway. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

A- Where was the nearest one?

J- The nearest one, I guess, was back by the Caribou hills back there.

A- What kind of things came out of there?

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J- Moose and bear.

A- How long would you be gone for a trip up there?

J- Well, the longest trip I ever had over there was about two weeks.

A- And when you got up there, there was already a cabin or what?

J- Where I hunted up there by Caribou Lake, there was a small cabin, a place where a Supercub could land and take one passenger at a time.

A- Had this cabin been here before?

J- It's the one that Paul \_\_\_\_\_, and they used to own Inlet Airways and that's before Bob \_\_\_\_\_ took it over. Bob flew for Paul.

A- Paul, he was the guy who flew people in?

J- Yea, he was a pilot also and he had Inlet Airways. But he went broke, I think, and then he sold it to Bob \_\_\_\_\_.

A- Cook Inlet Airways was this the first airlines?

J- Laurence, the Laurance aircraft that's where Homer air is. They had a hanger out there. Yes, Laurance Aircraft had the first hanger, and then he was killed. Then Jay \_\_\_\_\_ had a service station here, He flew for Laurance Airways for a long time.

A- How did he die, what happened?

J- I don't know. I wasn't here at the time. No, wait, he died in a aircraft. Yes, it was a airplane accident.

A- By plane, that was really the only way to get there then, or what?

J- Well yes. Whenever we would go to the interior with our horses, we would go over a trail. It's dog race to nome, called.....

A- Iditarod.

J- Yes iditarod, the iditarod trail. we would take a small crew of people and the horses. Fly in our supplies in.

A- The camp at Caribou lake. Have you ever had where you've been grounded from camp in some way and had to seek shelter some place?

J- Oh, yes. I've had a situation one time where a hunter was caught in weather, and I had game I had to take care of, and we got laid up in a \_\_\_\_\_ for two nights. We set up a stove, built a fire and we found a lid of a lard can and fried sheep steaks.

A: Where was this, that you stayed at?

J: It was in a Rainy Pass, along the Kuskokwim Range.

A: Where's this, towards the end of the river there?

J: Well, no. It was a stream there that drained into the Kuskokwim. It was the South fork of the Kuskokwim.

A: I see. Well, what sort of things did you use for clothing?

J: We all wore wool clothing back then.

A: Did you sleep in sleeping bags and everything like that?

J: Oh yes. We all had good sleeping bags. As a matter of fact, I've got two of my own downstairs.

A: What other things did you use for warmth?

J: Oh, that's it.

A: But you did have a stove in there and everything.

J: Oh, yes, except at Rainy Pass. We had no cabin. We stayed in tents. Same up here on the Kenai, up here by Tustemena. We just set up tents.

A: Did you ever have any problems with like a bear or something attacking your tents?

J: Yes, I had that experience in 1937 across the inlet. We were out hunting and my older brother had this party of two, a man and his wife from New Hampshire. And we had just got back to camp from hunting, and a black bear had been in our camp. And he had just messed up everything. He punctured three of the four air mattresses and dragged mine, the yellow one, and took it way out in the woods. One of the hunters had his coat folded up with a telescope in it. And we found that along the trail. Then he came back that night - it was still light though, you know, because it was may in apring. But we were all sleeping in the same tent, all four of us. My brother was near the mouth of the tent. I was beside him, and Mr. Peters and Mrs. Peters in the back. Well, this bear came strolling along about 3:00 in the morning, and he was scratching on the den. Well, I woke her up and had my rifle I had laying right alongside of me. Well, I caught alive, and there was the bear forty feet in front of me. And when he yelled, "Bear!", he just got out of there. And I just sat up in bed and shot the bear.

A: Didn't you guys camp in a different place after the bear came into your camp the first time?

J: Oh, no. A black bear, he'll come into a cabin whether he has to or not..

A: But you didn't have any problem with moose or caribou or anything else like that?

J: No, not that I can remember.

A: Your older brother now, who is he? Did he help you guide?

J: Yes, I had two older brothers, Guy and Lee.

A: And they just helped you guide or what?

J: Yea, well, me and Guy had a outfit just before the war here in Homer, and we had about twenty-five hear of horses that we hunted with us.

A: Where were these horses located?

J: Pardon?

A: Where did you keep these horses?

J: Wintered them mostly on the spit there. It's good feed out there then.

A: Even through the snow?

J: Oh, yes, on a lot of those trails they could eat, and the slough grass - but it was awfully wet.

A: Did you game hunt in the winter also?

J: No.

A: What, just during the summer months?

J: Yes, just in summer.

A: How early would be your earliest hunt in the spring?

J: Well, generally middle part of April, early May. We had a hunt, spring hunt That was our earliest one.

A: What would you usually hunt for in the spring?

J: Bear mostly.

J: What kind, black bear or what?

J: No, brown bear.

A: What about in the fall, would bears be out then?

J: Oh, yeah. They will be out until freeze-up, but the snow drives them in.

A: About how much gear would you bring with you on the actual hunt? I mean, how many pounds?

J: You would figure like, so many in the party at so many pounds per person.

A: Like, when you were hunting and on the trails and stuff, did you take just your gun and a little bit of food or what?

J: Oh, we would just take a sandwich and something else for lunch. And if you were caught out, why I imagine you would be a little hungry.

A: Did you have to, well, let's say you're out there and you shot a bear. Did you have to pack it in?

J: Just the skins. We just packed the skins in.

A: You didn't keep any meat?

J: No, not normally. No. Now, they have to bring in all the meat whether it's brown bear, black bear, or no matter what. They have to bring it in.

A: Is that a new regulation?

J: Oh, yes, that's been since I've guided though.

A: What changes were made while you've been game hunting?

J: Well, they never changed too much while I was guiding before, though he would just have to buy a license. But now you have to buy a license and a tag for each animal you get.

A: And you don't have to do this now?

J: No.

A: What kind of food would you bring with you to the camp?

J: OH, just food like at home, that's all.

A: I guess you had a homestead out there. Would you ever take things from the garden?

J: Oh, no. . .

M: Jim used to outfit in Anchorage most of the -

J: Yea, in Anchorage.

A: What has been your most exciting adventure that you've had while game hunting? Are there any other instances that have been real memorable?

J: Well, the one I'll never forget is the wounded brown bear charging.

A: What happened, Did you end up shooting it?

J: Well, a lady hunter wounded a bear and that was across here, at \_\_\_\_\_ Bay across the inlet. This was about the same time that little black bear wrecked our camp. Anyway this lady hunter had wounded this bear and I didn't think it would get off its feet, it was just dragging itself down the hill. I was just following it back. You know, I couldn't see it but I was just following it back on the trail, in the grass. Finally I got down where I could hear it wheezing, breathing real hard and then I yelled for Mrs. Peterson to stay back saying there's the bear, you know, and it just charged straight out of the grass, and alders, coming straight for me. And actually it wasn't very far away, so I shot him once and hit him in the breast but that never even slowed it up. I shot at him again and I hit him up in the nose and it shattered his lower jaw. Well the next shot, he was right on me and I picked the gun and pulled the trigger, I guess it was a lucky shot though that I hit it in the top of the head. I could reach down and touch almost.

A: And you found this kind of living fairly successful?

J: Well, you could make a little bit of a living that's all. There wasn't any big money in it.

A: What sort of things did you have to do to make a good living?

J: Oh, I did a lot of work here in the summer time on the road, things like that.

A: All right, well when you came to Homer in 1934.... or is that when you did come?

J: Well, that's when I came to Homer to live is in 1934 but I had been to Homer a number of times before.

A: Well, what were your first impressions, were you...

J: Oh yea, I liked it, I liked the people that I met, there weren't too many here though.

A: What sort of jobs did you do before you game hunting or before you moved to Homer. Or, excuse me, what did you do before guiding?

J: Well, I really didn't do anything, I trapped a lot in the winter time but I guided just in the summer time.

A: When you came to Homer where did you first stay?

J: In a little cabin down on Maddox Street right down by the lake there was a log cabin there.

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M. It used to be the old Andrew Shoulands place.

J. yes.

M. Yes, they raised foxes here.

J. He, was an uncle of Carl Soulands.

A. I see, well by any chance, just one last question back to game hunting, did you hunt for foxes?

J. Oh, i've trapped them,

A. But you've never hunted for them?

J. No.

A. What was like the main industry for homer, you mentioned a couple things like foxes and maybe game hunting and guides but what other than that?

M. Raising foxes the main industry.

J. Yeah, Fox farming.

A. What about after that?

J. The fur prices all went down and the fox ranches folded.

M. Then the main things were the canary and the road, but then of course, the FAA came in here.

A. FAA? What's this stand for?

J. Sell, FAA stands well, let me see.....

M. It used to be the CAA.

J. Yeah, CAA.

A. For fox farming was this just in the area or was this all over?

M. Oh no, even up in Kasilof they had lots of Fox farms, in fact I think they had more foxes up there than up here, they raised silvers.

A. Silver Salmon?

M. No, Silver foxes, they were the big money makers on the market, they didn't raise the red fox.

J. Silver's and blues.

A. Oh, I see, well how many types of foxes are there?

J. There's the wild fox here then there's the red and the cross.

M. See, these others were the tame foxes they raised.

A. What about crabbing and fishing, when did that become a main part of H<sup>U</sup>omer?

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J. Oh, that didn't come in until alot later.

M. Yeah, that wasn't until recent years, yeah not crabbing. I don't even think we tasted a crab in the first few years we had lived here.

A. Other than that, what did people do for a living?

J. Well alot of them worked in the canery.

M. And of course there was always fishing at one time there was,...

J. 3 canneries?

M. Yes, 3 caneries, but before that the herring were over there and there were lots of people and the herring was a big industry.

J. Hal Macoy was a big herring plant over ther in the early days.

A. Well, what about self employment I guess Mrs. Walli started her store and stuff but how was self employment.

M. Oh yes, once the stores got started, people started to come in Mrs. Walli's store was the first and then there was a garage about where the road commision is and there was a theatre where the Methodist Church is now, that was <sup>the</sup> first theatre was, then I think the next one was, well we were gone. The next one, though, was across from Bishop's some place. I, Bob Turkington owned the second theater.

A. How long has Bob Turkington lived in Homer, do you know?

J. Oh, I don't, he came here when we were gone up in the mines, so I don't know how long.

M. They were here when we came back, that was in

J. 58, no 59.

M. Yeah 59, when we came back from \_\_\_\_\_ miles, they were here then, they had been here before that some time.

A. Where was this you went to, some mines?

M. It was up near Healy, the <sup>Suntanna (?)</sup> Cungranna coal mines. Healy is 150 miles on the railroad, this side of Fairbanks, it's now which you hear on the news, Youthabelic coal mine, bought it out, that is the big coal mine that is shipping coal to Korea.

A. What about <sup>Usabeli (?)</sup> after the road, did you find that Homer grew more rapidly?

J. Yes, well, alot more people came in.

A. And did alot of People start their own businesses?

M. I don't think that much started until the last 10 years. You know, it's been sort of a slow process, but not until the last 10 years have that so many businesses have sprung up and so many new people have come into Homer.

M. Because even when you moved out there, I know there's a lot you can remember.

A. When the road came in and when I drive up to Anchorage, I see a lot of communities or towns along the road, is that when these places did come in is when the road came?

J. Oh yes.

M. Yes, Soldotna was here when we came down over the road, and I think all of those communities.

J. Yeah, all of them came after the road was built after the road was through.

M. Yeah, after that, but Soldotna's growing all the time now.

A. Was Both Soldotna and Kenai?

J. Kenai was.

M. Soldotna wasn't though.

J. Soldotna wasn't there until the road came in.

M. But it wasn't until the military went into Kenai that they put the spur road in from Soldotna to Kenai.

A. What about the other towns like Kasilof were they there before?

M. Kasilof was there but it wasn't a town. But Kasilof, Mimilchik, they were there before. *Ninilchik*

A. What about electricity, did it come in before or after the road?

M. Before the road, but Homer was the one that got the Electricity first, and then it expanded from Homer. What was it one or two generator in that old power plant?

J. Two I believe.

M. Two engines for the electricity.

A. And what sort of things did the electricity bring in?

M. Oh, light.....

J. Electric stove,

M. Refrigerators, all the good stuff.

A. What about before this, what did you do for refrigeration and cooking?

M. Well, we used a coal stove, we canned our food.

J. Canned all the meat?

M. Gas lanterns also.

A

A. Not propane?

M. No just gas, <sup>D</sup>lazo they call it now, that and Kerosene~~d~~ lamps.

A. What year, about was this that the electricity came in?

M. It was after we went out to Oregon, what year did we go out ther, Jim?

J. 46, no 47.

M. It was probably somewhere between 46 and 48, I think. It was right after we left that they got it in.

A. And you left in 1946 to Oregon?

M. Yes, we went out the states for 5 years.

A. And did the road come in....

M. It had just started, they had just started to survey the road when we left here, and by the time we came here we went right up to the mines and we were up there 7 years and then when we came down here the road was all put in. It wasn't paved off but, well I don't think any of it was paved off when I made the trap.

J. No.

M. It was just gravel.

A. Back sort of to game hunting, what did you do whil Jim was gone on these trips?

M. Oh, I just took care of the house, and ~~G~~ail, and raised a garden.

A. Gail?

M. Yes, my daughter.

A. How old was she at the time this was all going on?

M. Well, the first time he left, whe was 6 monthes old and by the time he got back she was 9 months old, so he was gone 3 months.

A. So that was one of the longer trips then.

M. Yeah, he was gone down in the chain hunting that time.

A. The changes of Homer, How dâ you feel like the attitude of the community had changed, do you feel like the attitude for trying to get work done has changed?

M. Well, I think we were more<sup>re</sup> laxed then for the reason we didn't have bills to worry about. We went to the beach alnd got our groceries in the fall. So we just didn't have any monthly bills, so it didn't make any difference whether you had a job or not because you could eat and live any way.

A. So, I guess when the electricity came in it changed alot of things?

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M. Yeah, it started to change the things and then you started getting monthly bills, and then you had to bring money in to pay those monthly bills, which we didn't have to then.

A. Ah I see.