

ESTHER WADDELL
ON
REMEMBERING KODIAK
@ 1968-1977

By
JENNIFER L. LARSON

On May 2, 1995
At Esther Waddell's home

Typist
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The following interview is taking place with Jennifer Larson and Esther Waddell. Today is May 2, 1995 and we are at Esther's house.

Jennifer: "OK Esther, why don't you start with your background, where did you come from, so on and so forth."

Esther: "OK, lets see, I was born in Newark, New Jersey, lived and raised in West Orange New Jersey. My mother had five children--I have four brothers. My mother was going to move to Texas and she learned how to drive with another lady and her children and my brothers and I in the car and that made about eleven. So, she was learning to drive a car with eleven people in the car, she did a good job too. And then in the middle of winter, an Eastern-Northern winter, she moved to Texas. I believe it was January and I think I was about eight or nine, maybe ten years old--more like nine. I remember we were going over the Smoky Mountains and everything and we camped out on the way and in the morning we were under a foot of snow and we could have froze to death. And my mother, I still remember seeing my mother take a dust pan and shoveling us out to get to the road to drive us down the mountain. We got to Texas and we moved around a couple places there where my mother got jobs and we were basically raised in the South but always considered Northerners, it was rather hard that way. Where I ended up was in Cappell, Texas which is now the Fort Worth Dallas Airport area. And in Cappell, the school was only six to eight kids in a classroom so it was pretty nice and you knew everybody. There was a boys town close by so there was 3/4 boys there, it was farming community. I moved in the middle of my senior year, in January of my senior year, which I don't recommend to anybody! We moved, we got a letter from my grandmother and we moved to Seattle, Washington where I had a hard time getting back into a school because I only had a half a year to go and it was very hard for them to place me. I had to take the Washington State requirements. I had all

the credits I needed, but I was under age, so it was hard finding a school to put me in. And being a Southerner now in a North-Western state, that was very difficult and I wasn't used to different ethnic groups and humongous school and I didn't dress the same. I was very out of place but I did finish school. The thing is, by that time we had moved to Edmonds, Washington and I was going to a school in South Seattle and my mother drove to work, say an hour one way, and she'd drive us at 7:00 in the morning down the freeway and I had no idea where I lived until maybe June of my Senior year. I'd be picked up at 6:00 at night to go back home and I'd sleep all the way. So that's why I never knew where I lived until summer-never could figure out that!

I met my future husband through my mom when she had a picnic with all her co-workers. My future husband was actually my mothers' boss. He came real late and we barely even talked and stuff, but when he was talking about going to Alaska, he said he would like to write me some letters and I said Oh yeah, sure, go ahead and he said would you write and I said oh yeah, uh-huh, I sure would; Really not thinking twice about it. By golly he kept writing and I'd just write back, nothing important and stuff. He came down the next year in March for a friend's wedding and invited me to the wedding. And we went to his friend's wedding. Then he asked me to marry him! Well I wasn't too sure about this, but by May a couple months later by May, I got a first class ticket in the mail and I was soon to be on my first flight, of any kind, to Alaska. He sent for me and I came first class to Kodiak. That was April 29, 1968. So I've been here 27 years, and three days as of this date.

Right before we were married I had no idea that he had a freak accident at sea. He had gone up on a wave and there was no bottom and he came down in a crash and he had a wooden boat , a wooden fishing boat, about almost an 80 footer called the Pacific Pearl and she split all her seams. He was just right out at Spruce Cape, and he could not make it in to town so he had to turn around and

go all the way to Ouzinkie and tie up to the dock and he finally made it into town and ended up in the shipyard. He did make it in safe, but it was really a close call and he never really said anything.

So we got married and that's another story by itself. I flew up here, when I flew up here I of course had never been on a plane before and I was pretty scared. I sat in first class and I was very quiet and scared and all the people were old Alaskans, old-timers and stuff and they were just partying up a storm. The pilot was a friend of my husbands, and he came out and saw me and talked with me and stuff. He said he was hand-delivering me to Dick. I thought that was kind of cute! That's the only person I got to talk to the whole flight that wasn't drunk! I came in on a Constellation, a Western-Airlines plane. It was a four-engine and the three tails, three or four tails, and you don't see those anymore in operation. I wanted to be married in the church, there wasn't very many churches in Kodiak at that time, especially one to be available to be married in. We finally found a church that would marry us—it was the Episcopalian Church. We were discussing with the priest about everything and the thing that concerned me the most was all these hot dogs defrosting around the heater vent and I didn't know what was going on. We had cases and cases. I can't even imagine how many cases of hot dogs defrosting around their heater vents and I had to ask this question. Are they going to be here for my wedding? These hot dogs were for the King Crab Festival, which I didn't know anything about. In those days the King Crab Festival was in early May, not in late May, I do believe its gone back and forth several times. It doesn't matter when it snows around here, its going to snow either way. But they were defrosting and they promised those hot dogs would be out of the church before I got married that evening. I was married May 4th, and they did get them out of the church! I wanted a white dress and I got the only white dress in Kodiak, and it fit, I got the only white shoes, I wanted patent shoes, shiny shoes, but I got flat (matte) shoes. I had no idea who my best man was, but it was Blake

Kinnear, who owned Kinnear and Wendt, my husbands boss. I had a bridesmaid, I had no idea who she was. She was my husbands bookkeeper's daughter. Basically I knew no one in town--just absolutely no one. Everyone thought I was quite very, very quiet and I was because I was always so scared to death. During my wedding, here I came all this way and I'm absolutely scared and quiet and my husband, saying his vows, I turned my head and I noticed the priest repeating it and he kept repeating and repeating and repeating it. The third time we were all watching my husband start to faint. He turned absolutely white, and I couldn't believe it, there he went, we were both kneeling, but he ended up on his feet just kneeling down on his feet. Of all people I couldn't believe he was the one who was going to faint. He also almost didn't make it through the little blood test you take right before your wedding because he said go first and I thought he was being polite and he was just scared of the blood test. So that was really funny, I just couldn't believe it. Also before the wedding when they asked if it was going to be a two ring ceremony he said oh, no I only got her one ring, and I said no, no, no, he means am I giving you a ring and are you giving me a ring. Which it was the case definitely, but he said no, I was only giving her one ring. So I thought that was kind of funny.

We got married, we had no rehearsal, I was very somber looking and we had a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful reception. The reception was at Blake Kinnear's brand-new house. He called it an opening-house and wedding party for us at the same time. I, looking back, realize how super special that was. All the people that were there, absolutely no one I knew, (except my husband), all of them were all the old-timers, the people that were here from Kodiak from years ago, before the earthquake and a little after the earthquake. A lot of them are deceased, gone. A lot of wonderful memories with those people. They're all gone. That was a pretty nice time. Our honeymoon was a little bit different than anybody can imagine, because of the accident (before we were married) on the

boat, the boat was in the shipyard and there was a big shipyard out there across from the Coast Guard base, a lot of people don't remember that. We spent our whole summer pumping out our own boat twice a day so it wouldn't sink at the dock. We couldn't get anybody to work on it because they were busy doing other things. So my husband hired on at the dock, we lost our good crew and everything, because they have to go on with their lives. Our life was pumping out the boat. That was our honeymoon! Twice a day--go pump out the boat. So they finally fixed it and everything and all of a sudden the shipyard burns down and all the paperwork, everything, all the proof of what was done, all the proof of insurance and everything, all went up in flames so the shipyard was burnt to the ground, flat, and we ended up holding the bag on our boat and it still leaked quite a bit. Dick finally fixed it and went fishing. He was a shrimp fisherman. In those days, shrimping was year round. Only a few boats fished shrimp. The Pacific Pearl Cannery and a couple others and just a few boats. But then in those days the King Crab fishers stayed in their fisheries, the scallopers stayed in their scalloping fisheries and the halibut and on and on, the salmon fishermen just strictly salmon. It was a nice life, it really was. It certainly isn't that way now. Times have certainly changed there. Since I never really got to know anybody for years I went with my husband and in those days, it was kind of taboo. I was the only female that went out on a boat but I had nothing else to do except wait for my husband to come home. In those days he was only gone three days, that was the maximum you can hold shrimp on board was three days, you used real ice and then you had to have it delivered on the 3rd day to the canary. I remember the first Thanksgiving he wasn't home, he disappeared at sea. I was listening to the boat schedule, (they had a schedule twice a day, 10:30 and 3:30, for the Pacific Pearl Cannery boats) they always called all the boats on those two times. One time he never answered, it lasted for two weeks. I was in a grocery store and a lady comes up to me and says I hear the Coast

Guard is looking for your husband and your husband's missing at sea. I said, "What are you talking about?" And then I got more frightened as it went on, and I called the cannery right away and they tried to reassure me that he was fine that he's just held up somewhere and he's fine and that they'd been trying to get a hold of him and not to worry. Well of course, that makes you worry more. Anyway I knew I wasn't hearing him on there and I thought I just couldn't get him. What it was, in the end he was held up. He had to throw all his shrimp overboard, because they rotted, and he was held up between two very tall mountains somewhere down the island and his radio wouldn't reach out. It was a very bad storm, high winds--100 mph winds all the time then--but he did make it home, he lost everything he had but he made it home safe and fine and everything was fine after that.

We had the Pacific Pearl boat for a few years before the fishery started changing. That's before really Fish and Game came into the picture and things started changing then quite a bit. When I was able to go out with him, he took me out in the summer and he thought oh, he didn't want me to get seasick--usually men don't like a woman on board, but he conned the crew into "hey look, we need an extra man on board you either pay for another crew, or she can go for free and help." And they kind of liked that free part where they didn't have to lose a little bit more money out of their pockets. I did work really hard. I could steer the boat and I could do whatever Dick wanted me to do as far as steering the boat and he could work the deck and I worked the deck and threw fish out and stuff like that. I remember when the whole crew jumped out of -we were the only boat in those days, by the way, that had a box, Dick built a box that he dumped all the shrimp in, then you didn't step on the shrimp as much as putting it down on the deck and you didn't squash your product. He had a real good product, but anyway I was pulling out the scrap fish and throwing it to the birds and the whole crew jumped out of the box once and you're just down in there with your hands flipping those fish out and

by golly they left me alone with a wolf eel. Then they told me what it was--brave crew that was! They said you could put a broom handle in that things mouth and it would snap it in half, and it was a big one, it was a big one, so they got me out of there and they got that thing out of the shrimp net of shrimp and anyway. I did odd things like that. I think the only time I got in a lot of trouble from the crew and they really, really were disgruntled, was when I thought the boat was a little too dirty. I decided well I am bored out of my gourd and I am just going to wash the walls and the cabinets and everything. I did get in a lot of trouble. I ran the water and let it go down the drain, I washed the walls, I cleaned everything, but I didn't realize we only had a 200 gallon water tank and it was always filled up at the dock. Well, when there was no coffee water for them and they drank coffee around the clock I couldn't tell you how much--I didn't--I never heard the end of it, it was just endless, and then they had this, they actually were so desperate, they put a little sea water and put some coffee grounds in. It really looked gross and it really was bad. Gosh, I've got some sea stories I could tell you about. When I put Pinesol in the stove instead of cooking oil to cook pancakes--the smell was atrocious! I could tell you about the time when they--well, maybe I better not, well I'll tell you anyway. Burt was always staying up at night chewing candy and stuff and he went to the bathroom and in those days it was a , the flushing system is by taking a bucket over the side and putting in the toilet. Our boat was the only boat that had a stateroom with a head inside. It was like a phone booth, but it was a little head you could never get a very large person in it. Anyway, it was up by the wheel-house and all the other heads were outside. This one was inside between the wheel-house and the stateroom and under the stateroom floors was the engine room and behind that was the galley. It was really quite a comfortable boat. None of the other boats looked like that. Anyway he went to the bathroom, used a lot of toilet paper and he smoked heavy. So he flicked his cigarette in there--he always read a lot of paperbacks

and he went back to reading and forgot to flush. Well, all of a sudden we're practically abandoning ship because all this smoke coming out of the head. I couldn't believe it. It just was terrible. We had our boots on ready to jump overboard--ole' Burt forgot to flush the toilet. It, besides stinky, it was a terrible, terrible thing. Anyway, there was a couple times we almost had to abandon ship--that was one of them thanks to Burt! So I wasn't the only one getting in trouble every once in a while. But I was a hard crew member--a hard working crew member and I did my part. I even hid the eggs, by the way, on Easter one time. They all thought I was a little nuts, but I put a stocking cap on because it was cold out there in the wind, and I had rabbit ears on and stuff. I did all kinds of funny little things like that. They all put up with it because I wasn't costing them anything.

In the summertime, the days are long and Dick needed some sleep every once in a while. He could sleep standing up, he could sleep anywhere and he still can, really. One or two minutes of sleep is a world of difference. His bunk was right behind the wheel-house and he let me steer and I would watch the fathometer and everything and I would watch how the nets were doing and if anything, if a pinnacle was coming up in sight I was to wake him up. Sometimes he wouldn't even be asleep 30 seconds and I'd have to wake him up, which was a shame, but he knew I would do what he wanted, he knew I wasn't going to try to do anything on my own. So he really trusted me and he could sleep really hard for just a minute or two. That's what I did, I did a lot of steering on my own, I didn't sleep well on the boat--never was comfortable with that. Anyway, he let me steer a lot of times he would let me bring in the Pacific Pearl to the oil dock. The oil dock would be the old Kodiak Oil Sales and that's where we'd fuel up and the ice dock was beside it. I would bring her in there. The ships wheel on top, on the top of the boat was humongous and I would just be turning one way and turning the other to bring her in real nice to the oil dock and I still remember seeing Pete Ramaglia closing his eyes

when I came in--I never hit a thing! I actually did a real good smooth landing several times. It was a lot of fun in those days.

Then when the fisheries changed it might have been the water temperature, or whatever, I don't know. The Fisheries went from 12 months down to 10. Dick would see the writing on the wall, way in advance more than other people, he still does, he can see things way in the future and you never think that's going to happen but it tends to go/hit the way he says. The fisheries went from 12 to 10 down to 6 months then it just disappeared. There was no shrimp fishing anymore. Before it got to the 6 month he had bowed out of his boat, it was a lot of maintenance, it was breaking down all the time, he was always working on it. He went over to a tug boat that had just come to town and this tug boat was going to stay. Actually, it was accidental how he got involved in that. The grocery store had delivered a couple of cases of milk to our boat by accident. I don't know how they could have made a mistake from a tug boat for a fishing boat. We saw the name of the boat and we returned all this milk to the tug boat and they really appreciated it. He said if you have any jobs on board let me know and eventually he did get hired on the tug boat. It was called the Foss tug, Duncan Foss. We ended up working on that boat two years I think, two or three years. It stayed in port and he did a lot of rescue missions and putting out fires and we did really a lot of rescue missions with that. A lot of times that boat was never paid for a lot of the things it did and I think a lot of people don't realize. That it got free parking, a free stall for being the fire boat and that's how they worked that out and it was on contract to Sealand to bring in Sealand ships and that's what my husband did. He worked himself up from deck-hand, all the way up to his Captains papers along with Bob Washburn who ran the tug, in fact, Bob and Dick both got their captains papers at the same time. Before that, you didn't need them. It was a new era for us, we saw the old fishing fleet fading away and it was time for us to make that

change. I got to go a lot of times with Dick it was sort of like, a lot of people called me his shadow basically. I got to go with him on the tug had I been down in the states now, I would not have been allowed on board the Foss tug, but I was so far away from the Mother Company that it really didn't make any difference and I was the cook and bottle washer on that too and Dick was on call twenty-four hours a day so that was the only way I was going to see him and we got to go on a lot of missions. We had to take a doctor out one night, for another sea story, we had to go out in the middle of the night and rescue someone that was in diabetic shock. We had to take a doctor out and we specifically asked for a doctor who that would not get sea sick. Well I believe he wasn't liked, because he was sick before he even left the boat harbor, puking sick, really, really sick, and I unfortunately was the one who had to take care of him. And this is the doctor this is not even getting out to the super tanker that we have to get this man off aboard and we hadn't even gotten past the breakwater before he was even throwing up. It was terrible, just terrible so we're supplying him with towels so he can throw up in the towels and the man we were to rescue he was to get on board the tug and come back to town and so we were bringing out just enough medicine to get him into town. Now this is a humongous super tanker we've been going after. We were going out towards Chiniak in the tug and we ended up being in 40 foot seas. We could see the hull of the ship to 3rd or 4th story up, it was unreal. Of course, me, I never got seasick, that sure proved it, but actually I got quite hungry! I was sitting up in the wheel-house with the Captain, my husband wasn't captain at that time, he was always the mate or the engineer because the engineer always got the highest pay. They had a relief skipper then, a bald guy, Dave Edwards, a really good guy. I loaned him my stocking hat, my knit hat, so he wouldn't be cold when he was out on the deck and Dick of course was on the dick and they were radioing back and forth and this man on the super-tanker said "I'd rather die than jump overboard," Well, personally looking out

there I would too. Its in the middle of the night. They asked if there was any doctors on board that boat, that ship, and of course there wasn't. Our doctor was finally in the wheel-house with a towel wrapped around his face trying to talk into the mike. They were conversing back and forth and we ended up with the--I think maybe one of the mates on board the super tanker getting directions from the doctor. Well, since the man wouldn't jump overboard and come onto the tug, we had to send over the medicine. I believe we shot it with some kind of gun and a line and Dick had wrapped it up in a humongous plastic garbage bag to put a lot of air into it. He was very unique in getting things done in odd situations. It got onto the deck and the mate had to inoculate this guy so he could be okay. The doctor would talk him all the way through it. And the doctor asked him, what is your next port and he said, because they only, remember, had enough medicine to go from the ship to town which was only Chiniak to Kodiak Harbor. This guys next port was San Francisco. From Kodiak, and that was unreal. The whole time we are still having a hard time keeping up with the ship because they said they would be still, but they were never still, they were always underway a little bit and it was very hard for the tug to keep up. They took the medicine, they inoculated the guy. I'm sure he was fired after that, because you never go on board without medicine and stuff like that. Anyway, then we took our puking doctor back to the dock. Actually, I think he was passed out in the Captain quarters, and I unfortunately had to clean up after him. I never felt sorry for anybody that got sick. I just had absolutely no sympathy. Actually I was very cold-hearted about someone being wimpy enough to puke all over the boat. But I could go on with sea stories. I don't know if I should stick with sea stories."

Jennifer: "Tell me about the housing when you first got to Kodiak."

Esther: "Housing was extremely limited. Where we live here right now, on Madsen Street, didn't exist then. This would be considered way outside of town. We lived in an apartment, first of all that

was one of the reasons I didn't come up sooner--there was no housing. There weren't the apartments. There was very little you could do and the renters really could charge you whatever they wanted to, (they still do). But anyway, it wasn't very reasonable in those days, and it was very hard and you had to watch your P's and Q's in those days we did get an apartment, a small apartment, in fact, when we were first married, Mr. Cessna had a lot, he was the landlord and he had a lot of apartments in those days and that's all his job was, was maintaining his own apartments! They had a fine living because they had quite a few, they had very nice apartments too, and little houses and all kinds of units. And we had one, in fact when we were at the shipyard during those just few months of our marriage, we were always going to the shipyard, we spent all day at the shipyard.

We found a seal on the dock and I have a picture to show that I had a baby seal. I think she was only a couple of days old. It was just wallering in the dirt out there. Its mother had been shot and there was a bullet fragment in this baby. It was just left on the dock for anybody to poke at and stuff. I brought it home and I put it in my bathtub. Oh, it was just like having a baby in the house. It slept beside us, it slept real well. I cleaned it, but it really didn't eat very much and it was very hard to feed because I didn't know how to feed it very well. They don't eat, you know, drink from a bottle or anything. Anyway, it followed me all over my kitchen and it was really kind of cute to have, but the Fish and Game took it. I believe it ended up in the zoo down in Tacoma, Washington. I always want to think that. I don't know if it lived. But it definitely was going to die on the dock. So I feel like I did it good. It was certainly cleaner when it left then when I saw it, you couldn't even hardly tell and it was just attached to me, it would just follow me everywhere. I mean, how many people have a baby seal crawling around their apartments.

When Mrs. Cessna had her own home built, she had a very nice house across from us and we

moved into her house and we lived there for about six or seven years. It was a furnished apartment, I call it an apartment, but it was actually a house, with one common furnace for about four houses and a washroom. It was a real nice two bedroom house and the only thing is in the winter time everybody would complain there was no heat and we would always call her up and we found out that there used to be a cat that goes in the furnace room and just turns out the little switch, and we didn't know that or we would have gone and turned the switch back on. We were always cold in the winter time! They ended up building a cage around the switch because these cats would get in there and turn off the switch. When we realized all four neighbors were out of heat then we knew it was the furnace room. Those days it was very hard to find houses. The town has changed so much. Of course its been over a quarter-of-a-century. That sounds so much! When I just came here the roads were not paved, the town is certainly changed. It was just the mall area, and of course City Market. I can't tell you how many times bigger it is now than it was then. It was just a little bitty store. Krafts of course was there, and that was built after the tidal wave. Things like that.

These houses did not exist then. This was the end of town. These came way later, these came in the 70's, these houses here, and then town built out towards, going out towards Ft. Abercrombie and out towards Monashka Bay. That's where all the houses started being built up, where the Borough let some land loose and we could buy some land. But it took years to build out there because they didn't survey it right. They surveyed it by air and didn't allow for the contour of the land. And that really make it a pain. You had your cliffs and your drops and all kinds of things. That really was a mistake on the Borough's part. But they never did correct it.

So we bought this house I believe come June of about 21 years ago and in those days when this house was for sale, there was another house right down town that was for sale also and they were both

the same price. One was very old and one was brand-new, and I chose the new one. In those days we were still on the tugs, still on call 24 hours a day and we kind of thought 'well this will be a nice place to get away' just to be away from the boat and basically that's what we bought it for. It's a small house, but we really like it.

Okay, looking back when I came to Kodiak, looking, back now, we came in on the upper road that doesn't exist anymore. Where the landslide is now, that landslide only happened in the 70's, early 70's. I don't remember which year right now. That wasn't like that and there was an upper road, I believe I came in on that road. Then later on through the years they made a real low road. It was a really nice road. When I came here, nothing was paved, like I said, except this upper road from the base, from the airport a little bit and then it stopped. That was because they were redoing the whole town after the earthquake. I came, as I think, a couple years after the earthquake. My husband was here way before the earthquake, it just seems like yesterday.

I remember in town, the Mall was basically very new. Sutliff's was not as big as it is. Lets see, a lot of the stores on Shelikof weren't there, the old welding shop, the original welding shop was across from the boat harbor and it turned into a store and its back to the welding shop again, under different owners. Anyway, where the public bathroom is and taxi cab office, that was a wooden building, was there, it was a long wooden building with a board walk in the front, a big long sidewalk. It was the bakery that just smelled absolutely heavenly, and the bank. The bank and the bakery. You go in one and you'd certainly want something to eat when you went by, oh the fragrance was heavenly!

The boat harbor of course was just the original boat harbor right down there, behind that, it was not the Near Island or anything that exists now.

City Market was very small and it was the only place to buy flowers. Dick used to buy me

flowers all the time to the point where I had to say 'Don't buy me any more' because they would die the next day. They never would last. I was always a frugal person, it must be my heritage. I just couldn't see something dying. I didn't want to squelch something, he was so generous, and he always bought me flowers and did things for me but I was so cheap I didn't want him to spend the money on something that was going to be dead the next day. I mean, here you have all these beautiful roses and they were absolutely turned into U-shape and aiming downward every time by the next morning. It was kind of sad. That flower store was in a corner of City Market, and it was such a small store. And that was when it was open on holidays, still in the same place it is now, course the parking lot and everything is totally different, and that's across from the police station.

We never had the Dairy Queen, and the McDonalds or any of that stuff. I never even thought I'd see the day when we ever would. When I came here the Cherrier and Kings Apartments didn't even exist. That was a field and it had beautiful cottonwood trees there, it was just gorgeous. Above where, I think, there was a hill not to far from the Orpheum, and the old school building was there. My husband got to show me the old school building before that disappeared. The old school building and it was the library too. The library downtown is new, to me, of course the fire department has really gotten bigger, and that was all volunteer in those days. Now-a-days we have the sirens that go off and that's for a tsunami, but in those days when the siren went off it was like volunteer fire department and everybody raced down there to get together to get on the trucks and then go out and put out the fire. So that's what the siren was for in those days.

Mostly it was a bar town, a lot of bars were very active in those days, very sociable and, I don't recall the drug situation being--any drugs in those days, it was just a lot of drinking. I didn't drink and my husband didn't drink, but you did go in for meals and have a beer or something, and meet

somebody, and have a good time, a lot of dancing, and things like that.

For my honeymoon, since there wasn't anyplace to stay, I stayed at what they call the Westmark now. But it was called the Kodiak Inn in those days. We always called it the "K. I." and I still do, and if you talk to any oldtimer and call it the "K.I." they know exactly what you're talking about, the Kodiak Inn. I think the Kodiak Inn, once it was sold, it ended up the Sheffield then the Westmark. But to a lot of us, and I can't even consider myself an oldtimer, not that I'm not aging, but I think before earthquake people and after earthquake people are the dividing line. The Kodiak Inn was the main spot in town for best dinners and things like that. It certainly has expanded. That's where my honeymoon was, that's where I stayed. It was a really nice friendly place.

You know, one thing I did forget was the old Post Office. We have the new library and the new Post Office, but I think a lot of the oldtimers remember the old post office and that's right by the ferry dock in the Kana Building. Is that the name of it, the Kana Building? That was the old Post Office. Oh, man, that was really neat. You could get your little yellow card if you were getting a package and the tellers knew who you were way before you got there and they were bringing the packages up before you even got all the way up to the line, and gave you your packages and stuff. It was a comfortable way of life in those days. I should say that, you know, town is really changed a lot. In those days we never had to lock our cars, we never had to lock our house or anything. We never even thought about it. Dick and I didn't have a truck, we had an El Camino, which is like a car with a truck back, and we could leave our groceries back there, our dog, whatever, our tires, anything you wanted to in this open vehicle, and you could leave it out and you never had to worry about anybody stealing and things like that.

But, back to the Post Office. They were really a friendly group of people and they always

knew your name, first name basis. It was just a cozier town then. A real comfortable town to be in.

I remember the Post Office was there and, lets see, the Elks was there, and of course they're remodeled a little bit on the outside. Wodlingers was there, but Wodlingers wasn't two-story in those days. It was just one-story and they added the top story and boy, did they forget the ventilation! It is so hot up there. Before I came up here, I didn't even realize it, I already had a job, wait. First of all, I worked in a drugstore before I came up here as a journeyman druggist-clerk. I worked in a drugstore down there, and I had a job waiting for me up here and not realizing that they had done this for me. Mr. and Mrs. Wodlinger still ran that drugstore, they still owned it and they still ran it, but Mr. Wodlinger was getting senile and stuff. But I did have a job waiting for me, it was just that my husband didn't want his wife to work and that's okay. I got to be with him quite a bit in those days. I enjoyed the drugstore, I knew everybody in there. It was just kind of cozy. The way I got a job was through one of the salesmen on the West Coast that sold to that store plus our store. It was because I was buying some of the merchandise I knew about it.

There's so many new little things now. You have all your, under the Cherrier and King, all those stores and that whole building didn't even exist. What did exist though was the museum. It was very, it certainly wasn't as nice as it is now. The museum was a quaint little place. The yard behind it wasn't even a park in those days, it was just a bunch of old grass. Not being used for anything, after the earthquake.

One thing I do remember is they wanted to tear that museum down. I was a volunteer at the museum before I had children. A lot of us got together and we did stop it from being torn down. Urban Renewal. That's what it was. Okay, Urban Renewal had hit Kodiak, and that's what wanted to tear the museum down to put more apartment buildings up. Everybody fought that. That building,

the museum is in is the oldest building on the West Coast and we were really trying to save it. It wasn't much in those days, it was all volunteerism. We worked really hard in there to keep it going. But I couldn't see it being torn down. Marian Johnson is the head, Mrs. Hatcher, a lot of people, we all worked very hard to keep that going and fought Urban Renewal and that. I believe the lot behind it became a park. Where the Cherrier and King Apartments are, oh, ahhhh, they wanted the apartment buildings there and they promised that these cottonwoods would stay up, you had to see them, they were beautiful. But they said, oh, yes, they'll stay up, they'll stay up and they cut them down anyway, and planted them puny little trees that never did live. They never replaced them really. So those apartments we all thought were very ugly and they certainly were for those days.

I remember one person was making this where the Subway is, Subway Sandwiches and stuff, that little mini-mall like area there, that was the biggest, deepest hole someone was constructing, and I don't know if they ran out of money or what. It stayed the deepest hole, filling up with water every year for years. Then they made it into a fitness center underneath, and it had a track and everything, it was quite nice.

One thing about this town, the population can't really support a going concern with the rents and expenses here. You have to have a lot more people than what we will ever have to keep anything going. That thing is now a grocery store, but that whole thing wasn't there when I was here. I'm just trying to reflect back. First National Bank, that wasn't there. It was a lot smaller. The banks were even friendlier in those days. At least they were certainly more honest than they are now. If you went in for a loan you could smell like fish and they thought, well, fish is money. You didn't have to get dressed up. They would talk to you in a fair and honest manner. If you needed a loan, they said you can or can't and you accepted it. But now you really have to fight to even get anything out of a bank.

One thing we didn't even talk about is I've seen the airport change. My goodness, I can't even tell you--my husband, when he came here, the airport was way across the other side of the runway, a little tiny one room building. I can't even describe it. It's where the fish haul comes in. And that building doesn't even exist any more. That's the original airport over there, closer to the base. Then when I came, it was just a small building on the other side where Mark Air is now. But it certainly wasn't that size, it was really small. It was Wein Airline, Western and Wein. Western only came in the summertime, straight in from Seattle.

The pilots did not like the runway because you came in and you aimed right at a big steep mountain, and that's what they didn't like. Because Dick was a commercial airlines pilot before he became a fisherman, he knew a lot of the pilots and he told me stories and stuff of how they didn't like that mountain.

Anyway, Wein got twice as big and then they went out of business and then Mark Air came in and they actually kept business out. They kept the competition out and that was kind of hard for Kodiak. I came in when it was \$27, I think that was round trip, and I tell you, I really got mad when they jumped that up to \$35! Now I can't even, what is the price now? In the hundreds, close to \$300 to get off this Island and back if you wanted to really be that desperate! Anyway, I complained when it went up to \$35! I can't believe this. That was the price of an airplane ticket in 1968, no \$27 in 1968, 1970 I think it was \$35.

I didn't take the ferry very much. That was a long, long ride. But my husband, since he was a pilot, we owned our own airplane. We had a 150 in those days and we went to Seattle in a 150, and because he wasn't used to going over the water in a 150, believe me, you should see this plane! It was only two seats, and we had to have all the survival gear and we went to Seattle to oh, a school

reunion, that's what it was. I think it was his 20th school reunion. His 40th is coming up here come July. He got by the way, mentioned because he came the longest, the hardest way. I guarantee you when they said the hardest way, it was the hardest way! We followed the road system, we went up toward, Anchorage. We followed land because it was a small plane. We took a pistol. By the way, pistols are not allowed in Canada, you have to have a gun to be in Alaska, you can't have a pistol in Canada and you can't arrive in Seattle with a gun! So we had fun with that. We wouldn't have protected ourselves from a bear anyway, not with a .22 pistol. But the law says you have to have a gun on board for survival, and that's all we had.

We flew to Seattle on the 150 and looking down, I was the navigator and we looked down and we had followed the road, the Alcan, all the way, and the cars were going faster than us! I couldn't believe it! The cars! It was really bumpy, we were really bucking the headwinds all the way and it took us longer than those cars to get to Seattle.

At one point it was so bad that we had to take all our survival gear out at one airport. I can't remember what part of Canada this was in, and put it in an airline and ship it ahead. And this was all our survival gear mind you! All our survival gear--we're shipping that ahead, where we needed it the most, and putting a barrel of fuel on board. Now, first of all, you guys don't realize I'm a white knuckle flyer anyway. So this is not helping me any. So we put the fuel on board, and my husband says 'but I don't know if I can reach the wings if we have to stop and fuel.' And I said, 'hon, if we are going to a runway that is a survival strip I'm sure there is going to be something,' and rightfully so, there was logs that people stood on and the runways were covered with strawberries and I would eat strawberries while my husband was fueling.

We couldn't have made it without stopping at the strip along this river, and I just can't think of

the name of it now. But anyway, we did make it to Seattle and the longest part of the whole trip besides the bumpy ride down was, my husband always believes in landing at the beginning of the runway, but in a 150 when you're at Sea-Tac, its like you're traveling to another state all on the runway because Customs is on the other end, its just on the other end. We get there and the Customs agent wasn't there and a replacement person was there and he didn't know his job or what he was supposed to do and we arrived with this pistol. You have to declare everything. The Canadian government had sealed it in a bag and it has to be sealed. Well, like I said, we can't arrive with a gun either, but this is stuff we didn't know. I said, 'well, we will give you the gun.' They said, 'we can't accept the gun, but you can't have the gun.' And I said, 'well what are we going to do with the gun?' and we went round and round for hours! about this stupid gun that was sealed in a bag. He wouldn't take it, we couldn't even give it away, we couldn't throw it away, we couldn't keep it! So what are we going to do? Well anyway, we all compromised after being very worn out and very hungry and tired, and it ended up under our seat in the airplane. Remember, we are still not supposed to have this gun, and it stayed under the seat of our airplane the whole time. And then we went back and the Customs agent, an older man in Canada, he did give us some very friendly advice. He said get an over/under. It's a, you take it apart and you put it under your seat that way, you can have a rifle in Canada, you just can't have a pistol. So when we went back to Alaska we did get a rifle. We've never shot it, we've never used it. I don't even know how to put it together. But that's what we ended up with. That was one of our many little trips. Since then we bought a 310, that is a five-seater and we've been to Seattle and back and had some good times.

I want to talk about the King Crab Festival. King Crab Festival is an annual fair and when I was just married, that's when those hot dogs were around the heaters, well, that church had a booth

in the King Crab Festival, that's where they sold them from. I'm so thankful they got those hot dogs out of the church for my wedding. I would have just died!

The King Crab Festival has bounced around, it's early May, late May, and early May. They're trying to dodge the snow but it doesn't matter, snow comes anytime. The kids, they don't care. These rides that come in, they'll ride them in the snow. I was going to say something about the King Crab Festival. In those days it was called the Kodiak King Crab Festival because they actually did have king crab there at the fair. It was, I should say festival. Downtown, where Alaska, , one of the canneries, where that big ship is now, they, I can still see it, they had a big flat board, by the ferry dock, that's where it was, they had a big flat board with 1, 2, 3, 4, maybe 5 on it and a line, it was a big white board and a line on it, and they--the guys would gamble--they's have these king crabs and they'd put it up at the top, the board would be slanted at an angle and lets see, it was about 45 degree angle or something like that. They'd put the king crabs on it and they'd see how far the king crabs would walk. They'd all gamble and see, make bets and see which crab went the furthest and got over the line. I remember that clearly.

And also, what I never did watch. I always turned away was quite popular in those days. A lot of the oldtimers, Jim Fisk was one of the seal-skinners. They had seal-skin, they would take a small seal and they would peel the skin off in front of everybody. They would be in their rustic, rustic garb, you know, their costumes of stuff and they would actually, the men would take these seals, a lot of them baby seals and they'd take their knives out and see who could take the hide off a seal the fastest. And I could never watch that, but I clearly, clearly remember it every year for several years. That's a thing of the past for sure. But it was like someone shearing sheep somewhere in Australia. You know, it would be, but they would see who could skin the seal the fastest. They don't do that any

more! A lot of things they don't do any more. That's one I'm kind of glad they don't.

That was getting toward summer, of course that was during my birthday and my anniversary they were all about the same time and stuff. That first year, I was here, when I came, being that I hadn't been out of Texas too long and only in Seattle for a short period of time, I really liked it warm and when I got up here it was about, it was in the 80's, it was really hot. Here the 80's is a lot hotter than the 80's any where else. Because, I don't know, the sun must be closer or something. It was really hot and my husband he would say, every day he would look at me and say 'Don't get used to this, just don't get used to this, this is not the way Alaska is, just don't get used to this.' And I loved it! It just seemed really great to me.

Anyway, also he says its very bad for Kodiak. And I never did understand him. When I was taking a shower once, some grass came out of the showerhead onto my arm. Just little pieces of brown grass, and the water, I wondered if I'm getting dirtier taking a bath or cleaner, because the water was brown, it was just absolutely brown. And little flecks of grass would come out of the showerhead, I'm surprised it didn't clog the whole thing up, it was pretty gross and everything. My husband, being that he's a fisherman and the canneries, the canneries are what took up the water. They used our water, the fresh water for their processing, and there was only a few canneries then, it wasn't a lot of canneries like they have now. And they all stayed in their own field like I was telling you before. Our annual trip would, I mean, not annual, but our frequent trip would be up to the reservoir when we would see mud coming out of the water faucets and stuff. We would go up to the reservoir and that is the reservoir right behind where the Nazarene Church is now. That was the main water supply. That would go right down to the bottom, right down to the mud. So there wouldn't be any drinking water for the town. It would be enough for the town what they'd have to do is close down the

canneries and when they closed down the canneries it hit the finances of the town which was pretty, pretty bad. We really relied on the snow and the rains which we did not have that year. And that was 1968, I believe. In '69, I think too. The canneries would close down.

They have since built new reservoirs, in fact, the main road going out towards Monashka past the dump, there's a curve in the road and that was the reservoir, the new reservoir, in those, that was considered the new reservoir which fed into this reservoir. That's the one just right over this mountain, you know that little spot? That was the end of the road, and in the winter time we would go out there and see the deep, thick, ice on top of it, because even in the winter time you would have water problems because it would turn into ice and the water table would go down underneath the ice because my dogs would walk under that ice and come out somewhere else. It was really something, it was really kind of spooky. The ice would be several feet thick. In fact, a lot of town people, that would be the meeting place, but you don't know it. You're just taking a drive you go out the road, you get out, look around at the ice, see the water is dropped, you just have conversations. The same way with this other reservoir. But that was the newer reservoir, and that still ran out of water. Since then we've gotten another reservoir after that. That's why they've extended that road, it's for the reservoir, it's for the water to feed the town.

Back to the canneries, they would have to cut the canneries off because they used the fresh water to clean their canneries.

When my husband still fished, we didn't have the ethnic groups that we have now, such a lot of different people, from a lot of different countries, a lot of Filipinos, Central and South Americans, and not too many Mexicans. In fact, I should say, when we were at that shipyard, the one person that helped us fix our boat was Tony Bravo. I'm backtracking a little bit. Tony Bravo should be mentioned

because he was a very special guy, very nice Mexican guy. A shipwright that could come up to your boat and draw a picture of what he wanted on a piece of paper by just looking at something and walk away and you wouldn't see him for days. Then come back and put a whole new keel in your boat and it would fit just like a glove. He was very talented. He was caught in that shipyard fire and there was a dog out there, called Poncho, that saved his life. It barked and he woke up and he jumped down on a bunch of scrap steel and he only got out with his underwear. Lost his VISA and money and had to be shipped back to Mexico. He did come back for a short while. Right now his descendants are here. They own the El Chicano, and a lot of his grandchildren are here, and he is living very well in Mexico, somewhere, very comfortable.

That and the Monmarte Inn that no longer exists, was a very fantastic place on the roadside. Had one Filipino cook called, oh, what was his name? Oh, I wish I could think of it, but he was really the best cook in town, he was the only, only a couple of Filipinos, maybe two or three, they came to Kodiak as cooks for the canneries and this one was at the Monmarte Inn and we used to bring our halibut off the boat.

My husband believes in the 'waste not-want not' lifestyle of those days. Shrimp fishermen were not allowed to have halibut on board, but it was dead anyway, so we gave our fish to the Baptist Mission children, when they were the big halibut, you're talking the six-footers and stuff, the Baptist Mission just, we asked them to come and get it and they just loved it. They showed the children how to, in those days it was more of a home for the children from the villages so they could go to school. They taught them how to butcher the fish and stuff like that. So they were real pleased with the halibut we gave them. We gave them fish all the time.

We gave this cook at the Monmarte Inn a fish too. You bring him in a fresh fish and then you

sit down and have dinner and you ask for a dinner and he would bring you out twice as much food! It was really great! It was really good too. He would cook it up and he would come out and he's so excited, this little tiny guy! If my husband was here he could tell you the name, I just, I wish I could remember. Those were the days when you're bringing food in and they would cook it for you.

When we had the Pacific Pearl fishing boat, when my husband was gone, since they didn't have all these different people, they had set ladies that came in and did the processing of the fish and stuff. But I got notified one time that if I didn't show up one day, that they weren't going to process my husband's fish. I took that as a threat, but this is the same guy that walked me down the aisle to get married. I didn't know how to take this. So I certainly didn't want to hinder my husband, so I worked in a cannery. Two places my husband never asked me to work was, he pacified me by the way, he said 'oh yeah, you can go get a job, but two places I don't want you to work, in a cannery or in a bar.' Well, neither one I wanted to work anyway! He said it was okay to get a job just to make me feel better, like I would go out and get one. He truly never wanted me to work. But anyway, I did work in a cannery to help him. I didn't like the way I had to go about it, it wasn't just myself. It was all the wives had to come in and help or basically or else. One funny thing is, through, they gave me a paycheck, that was great. But the bookkeeper had to come down. He was my husband's best man, he had to explain to me why I got a negative check! I have never seen a negative check before. And Jennifer I notice you're looking at me, but do you know what a negative check is? It's a check where you owe them after you worked a whole week! I have never, ever in my life understood that! And he did explain it to me. He said because here's your federal deduction, your state deduction, your this/that deduction and then there's the \$10 school tax--which they don't have anymore. But your first paycheck they have to take the \$10 school tax out, so I owed them four or five bucks! So I had to work

another week! I just couldn't believe that! I just shook my head. I didn't really, actually, really mind working in a cannery, it just doesn't take a real brain to work in one. You just had to make sure there was nothing in with the shrimp, and not get mesmerized by the belt moving.

But I had been in an accident so I was wearing one of those collars on my neck and I had gone up to the office to listen for the radio-call to my husband, and I was wearing one of those big collars on my neck and I had fallen. This cannery was a floating cannery, and it was a ship. So we were on ladders, and I went down the ladder all the way on my head and I swear the owner was down there before me and the cook. He was probably, 350 lbs., big, tall, six-foot black guy was the cook. I was, I tried to hold those tears back but I couldn't. I really hurt bad because those were metal, steel stairs and I hit my head. I went down forward, went down a whole flight, so I stayed in the wheelhouse, and didn't have to go back to work right away. I was very thankful for that. The cook was just a dear, sweet person and he just made me feel so much better. It was very hard to wipe those tears dry. Besides having a neck injury, now I had a head injury. I didn't feel good! But I went back to work and paid off my debt to the cannery. And my husband, he got his fish sold.

Now you see, so many people from different countries working in the canneries and its because they are cheaper labor. They are really cheaper labor, a lot of them don't even speak English. I've seen a lot of changes in Kodiak because of that.

One thing I've noticed in the boat harbor, the boat harbor has really grown. We also didn't have the Bio Dry then, either. The Bio-Dry chemicals, when we brought in our boat, when the tide was out, it really stunk because all the rotting shrimp underneath. It was a very strong ammonia smell, and you could really, really get a sniff and almost pass out. That's really changed. One thing that I notice now, that just wasn't here then and I believe its because just like the shrimp has changed for my

husband where he had to move on to another lifestyle, it has changed for the fish too. We have so many sea lions now that are all over our docks and walkways and they come up on the boats too and you wonder about walking on the docks. They weren't in town, they must have had a good food source, their rookery was Chiniak and you go by it, but they never, you never saw a sea lion in the boat harbor or in the channel or anything. You'd see some other sea life, but you never saw the sea lions.

The eagles were always here and I've just always been just thrilled with that. I've seen them sunning themselves, I've seen up to 40 at a time in a small area, just sitting on fences, on the grass, with their wing's spread out, the eagles have always amazed me, they are just beautiful. In fact, one sits in a tree right across our street, so frequently, I just wish they'd just put a nest up there, because she's there every day, almost every day.

When I was talking about giving the Baptist Mission, over on Rezanof, the halibut, that's how we started going to church out on the base. My husband shared his fish with everybody, he always, he's a very sharing person, he always has shared. He took some halibut out to the base.

The military base, in those days, was the navy base. It was a naval station. He took it out to the Chapel to see if the Chaplain would like to give it to anybody that could use a fish. I can still see him sitting on the porch, just talking. We met at the Chapel because it was an easy way of looking for somebody. Can still see the Chaplain sitting on the stair and Dick bringing out of his truck a big old, big halibut. we kind of started going there when it was military, the Navy, through this Chaplain. We have seen a lot of changes on the military base. We've been going there basically the 26, 27 years we've been here. We've seen the military base get really run-down. The Navy knew it was leaving, so they let it really run down, then the Coast Guard came. We've gone to church there, our whole married life. I wasn't a Christian then, but I am now through my husband.

I remember one Christmas Service when the Navy, basically all the people were being, were moving out, but there was no replacement people coming in at all. The Chaplain was one of the last few people to leave. For one of the Christmas Services we had, it was the Chaplain and his wife, Dick and I and one other person. We sat around a record-player in the back room, in the Fellowship Hall. That's where we had our Christmas services.

Then the Coast Guard had moved in and the base was really run down, and I remember when those Coast Guard people didn't ever get paid. They didn't know when they were ever going to get a paycheck. They didn't have any money. The base was so run down. It just, if you saw it then and saw it now, you couldn't believe the differences. It's beautiful. They've done so much work out there, a lot of new homes out there, hey, a lot of new buildings and everything. Now they are going to, here in the near future, I think in '96, I'm not sure even the Chapel is going to be renovated. They are going to have a whole new building on it so it's going to be really different out there, even for us. Hard for us to take the changes. I have a hard time, I think the curtains were put up just last year and my goodness, they're talking about 10 years ago! I've seen 3 set of curtains go by and I think, 'why are you taking them down, they were just put up!' New carpet and things like that. I'm a little slow on the change department here! I see that they truly do need another Fellowship Hall because the roof's leaking.

On the way to the base, and this is when my husband was on the tugs and stuff, earlier I was talking to you about, I came when it was an upper road and then I said there was a lower road, and now we have the road we have now going from town to base. Everybody thinks that landslide was there for always, and it wasn't. A lot of people think that, they don't know how the landslide was caused. Well, that landslide was caused by a person by the name of Red Mackie and he used too much

dynamite. They were pulling out some rock to make the new Sealand dock, where it is now, they were using rock from that hill to just go right over and put in the new Sealand dock. He put an overcharge. He put an overcharge in there and that mountain came down, and that mountain kept coming down and that mountain has come down, in fact it just, another rock just last week came down and popped over. But I have seen rock come down, it blocked the whole road by the way. Some of the rocks were big as hoods of cars, they were so big. We were on the tug in the harbor right there watching it, we filmed the whole thing! We sent our film in and we never saw that film again. We don't know what happened, but it was all on film! Whether the film was any good or whether we will ever see the film again, I don't know. We watched the landslide come, by standing on the deck of the tugboat, the Duncan Foss.

When that happened, it was around Christmas time because a lot of people were on the other side of the road going out and getting Christmas trees. In fact it was right before Christmas, I'm positive because so many people couldn't get back to town. That landslide just didn't go away. Those cars stayed over there. And that's where the State Airport is, on the other side, by the military base. And of course town, everybody lived in town. So, you know where Gibson Cove is, is also my mother was going to come visit. Her first flight, here she's nervous as can be, her first flight and she called me, I told her I would meet her at the airport. Well I hadn't had a chance to call her back and say I can't meet her at the airport, so I know it was pretty close to right before Christmas. She said somebody is trying to grab her to get her on a bus and she won't go. I said, 'Mom, go, Mom, go!' And she got on this little old bus, it wasn't like what we consider a bus now a days, but it was just a vehicle. They got them down to, they took everybody from the airport down to Gibson Cove and that is one steep road. That's enough to give my mother a heart attack right there, and here she's a little old

lady and they take her to the, Gibson Cove, and then she has to go down the steep, steep ladder. I feel sorry for all those old people, and get on a fishing boat. The fishing boat took everybody to the boat harbor and we met everybody at the docks at the--Here you're talking about this little old lady, on her first airplane ride being pulled by strangers onto this bus to God knows where, down to this cannery, and she has to go down this straight steel ladder on to a fishing boat into the galley there. I know the boat and I can't remember that name, it was Oral Birch's boat, who's a good friend who is now deceased. He's a character in himself. She got to the boat harbor and she's just totally petrified and it took her, I think, an hour and a half to get from the airport to town. You know its just 10 minutes away by regular car. It's because the road, and they tried to clear it and since then they've built a whole another road. They, at one time they used cars, old junk cars for business to prevent the rock from coming over. Those junk cars were there for years until they put these caged rocks in and still it looks like the sifting of the rock off that mountain is going to continue. It's even continuing, it's not going to ever stop. So this is the third new paved road, on that road. Its really a riot. The signs were always up, it said 'Pass at your own Risk' You know, 'Landslide area, pass at your own risk'. I can still see that sign as vivid as anything and rocks would always be coming down, you'd always get popped. Taxi cabs were the fastest, they'd zoom there, now the police want you to go 40 mph, a little slower so you can get hit a little bit better I think! But then right after that you go 55 mph up a hill. You know, but... Anyway, that's the story of how that landslide got there.

I was married 10 years before I ever had children. I always wanted children and it just wasn't meant to be. We never knew why, but we always wanted children. Dick, by that time, had been called to Valdez for the pipeline and he was one of the very few, I think there was only maybe two or three in the state, licensed captains of a tug boat. He was very good at what he did, so he went to Valdez

to work. The Duncan Foss had gone its way and Dick had been out of work and he was called over to Valdez, and very happy to get the job. He worked, oh, this is how we get the job. He worked, oh, this is how we got our airplane. He bought the Cessna 310 that we have now and he promised he would come home every weekend. Well, I've got to remember about these promises, they're questionable here, because I didn't see him for three months! But the plane was over here with me. I can't fly. The plane was over here, he was in Valdez and he promised he would come home every weekend. I said, 'Oh yeah-sure!' So, anyway, he worked there for two years and I'd visit him a few times and I'll tell you, that's rough. Even a married woman walking with her husband wasn't safe over in Valdez. I felt sorry for any woman that had a daughter over there, let alone the mother! It was a real rough lifestyle. My husband worked nights on the pipeline. He's the one that brought in everything and built the docks for the actual pipeline. He was one of the last to go, too. I got to visit him a couple of times and in fact, one of the planes I said I couldn't stand the high mountain over in Valdez, and I meant it, I couldn't stand the high-peaked sharp mountains. I always was a white-knuckle flyer, but I didn't mind flying. I just was scared looking out the window! Going over there I said I want to have a bigger airplane when I go home and I got to be with him on the tug and everything and of course that wasn't allowed there either, but that's the only time when they have to have a boarding party. Any other time my husband would be alone at night, but, and I was on board. They had the whole, all the dignitaries they could think of, and I'm in the wheelhouse with my husband and they're coming up to the wheelhouse to talk to him, and they say, 'who are you?' I said, 'I'm Dick's wife.' And they said okay and let it be but they had all the Japanese dignitaries and all the pipeline dignitaries. We're talking really top people here. We're escorting them from ship to shore and back and forth. They are all partying and they're having a good time. I was left alone to be with my husband. I had

to stay in the hotel room. I didn't dare go out of the hotel room. There was no radio, there was no T.V. And he slept days and I slept nights and it was, 'Why was I there?' you know. Anyway, I stayed for a little while and then I had to have a , I wanted, when I went home I wanted a big airplane. Well, they filled up and I really was very upset about taking a small airplane out. We're talking about only a few seats and stuff, but that's the only way I could get out.

I was told that the airplane before this one that I went out on was the airplane that lost its wheel on take off! And I'm thinking I wanted that airplane and here's the wheel. You'd think I would have a heart attack, that would do it. The tower said to the plane your wheel fell off on takeoff. Right there in Valdez! So when I got in the plane which was very shortly after the next, that plane, we landed in Anchorage all on all the foam, the whole runway was coated with foam. You should have seen my face, I'm just so glad to go home. So I waited it out, but during this time, I, not this time, but towards the end of the two years I was fortunate to become pregnant. I was really, really excited.

There's where I think God got back at me. I really to this day believe that, because I started throwing-up from the time of conception to the time of giving actual birth. I was throwing up sick. Do you remember when I had no sympathy for anybody that gets sea-sick. God got back at me. I know he die. He showed me compassion for others right there! I threw up in my, I threw up standing up, I threw up laying down, sleeping, and you think by the way, being married 10 years, nothing to do because I was lonely they'd have me for court duty, but no they have to wait until I'm puking sick to have me for court duty! And then they lose the paper in the mail and say that they're going to have me arrested if I don't show up, so I called the doctor and got a copy of this form and hand it but I also had to throw up on my way down, open the car door, but these are little stories of me just getting pregnant here. I can't even look at the refrigerator without throwing up. It was very hard. I was losing a lot

of weight. In the end, I was sick a lot and Dick did quit his job towards the end, just to be with me. He was offered a job in Valdez as an expediter for the pipeline and because I was seven months pregnant at the time. I didn't want to make a big move. I wanted to stay here, it's just one of those mother things. He had the world on a plate to be offered to him and I kind of ruined it for him, but I wanted to be here. And in the end, it turned out okay because Richard should have been born around Christmas time maybe, I'm guessing and he was born December 4th. He was born premature, this is Richard Jr. He was born 2 lbs. and of all things. Here we're on an island and talk about transportation and everything. We have planes, we have the Coast Guard, we have a hospital here. But the hospital couldn't keep Richard here, they had no facilities for any preemie of any kind here. They had an incubator. I never even made it to the delivery room with Richard. He was breech and he was purple and he wasn't breathing very well and they all expected him to die. I thought I'd never see him again. The doctor and my husband. I asked my husband, run home, get his coat because we got to the hospital so quick he didn't even bring his coat. By the way, they said this was false labor too! I practically had it right here at the kitchen table. Richard was almost born right here in this chair at the kitchen table. I probably would have been happier right there, but, I had to sleep on my, with my head on the pillow right on the kitchen table. We did get him to the hospital. He was born at 3:30 in the afternoon, after arriving at 1:00 they told me to go home because I had false labor and two hours later I'm popping out a 2 lb. baby. Richard was almost full term, he wasn't preemie in age, he was preemie in size, and he would have always been small, and he was not doing too good so the doctor, Dr. Wasson, in those days, and my husband got on a C-130 with Richard. The Coast Guard came in with their incubator and took him away within an hour of him being born. They do have a Medic Jet that comes out of Providence Hospital but this is really the odd thing, we're always complaining about

our weather here, can't ever get off the island, and that's true, we can't. But the weather was bad in Anchorage, it was a 200 ft ceiling and the jet couldn't take off.

The Coast Guard ambulance came into the hospital down here in Kodiak and came and got Richard in this incubator and they latched it down into the C-130. The C-130 number was 1501, I can still remember. Richard Jr. had his first flight at one-hour old. The doctor and Dick went with him, and they got him over to Elmendorf and then they ambulanced him over to Providence to a special ward over there. And in those days the special ward was, the infant ward was just being remodeled. I remember, walking in, all the little babies. Oh, I wasn't in those days, I had to stay here and the doctor called and made sure. Pretty much the nurses told me he was going to die and I said I'm going to wait until I hear from them. A lot of people were praying for us and I believe prayer made a big difference in our case. I got a phone call and Richard was doing fine. He was off oxygen, he was off everything. He just needed to stay in Anchorage to grow. Richard wasn't immune to anything either. He was so small. He was just, I can't even describe how small he was, his foot, they wouldn't even footprint him here, they wouldn't footprint him in Anchorage and he was over 2 months old before they ever footprinted him. I was going to say, we stayed in Anchorage three weeks and they promised me he could come home for Christmas, and they said 'no, he wasn't big enough,' and so they waited until New Year's Eve and in those days stores weren't open. We didn't have anything in the house after being gone almost a month and the stores were closed by 6:00 and here he was in this ward over there for special, tiny little babies and any baby with problems and stuff. I should say that when I first walked in through the baby ward, I said, 'Oh, which baby is mine?' Because I had only seen him for a few minutes and he had been gone for a week already. They said oh wait a minute, you got to come through here and wash up more so we went through and there was a whole other room of babies and they were

about 1/4 the size of everybody else. And when I saw Richard, they said I almost fainted to the ground. Then I turned white as a sheet because I already thought all those other babies were real tiny and now I see mine as being super tiny. He could fit in a shoe box, he really could. You'd have to, you couldn't even imagine how small a 2 lb. baby is, and full-term. They never did find out why he was so small. He was a real, regular little miniature. But that's good his lungs were developed and everything, he was furry, but he was there to grow and he recognized us and we were there 18 hours a day every day for the rest of the weeks. On the way home we had him wrapped up and Oh, Wein Airlines announced him over the radio, and my husband held him up in the air and that was his second flight on the way home. He's been flying different kinds of planes ever since, or in airplanes ever since.

He was always really sick. When we got home he stayed sick so he was in and out of the hospital for years. One thing I was going to say about Valdez, Dick had this great job waiting for him, but they couldn't wait. Had he been born in Valdez he might not have gotten out, out of Valdez during the winter time. He really could have died. And they wouldn't have had the facilities any more than Kodiak would have had the facilities. In those days, Kodiak, was the hospital administration was Catholic at the time and they were in the process of changing hands to the Lutheran administration that their under now. And they didn't have very many workers. I said I'd come and feed my baby. He had to be fed every two hours and he was only there to grow. But they wouldn't accept him here in Kodiak, the doctors and nurses knew he was just here to grow, but they did send him home at four pounds and I got to come home with him at four pounds. The normal weight is 5 1/2 lbs., so they did let him come home. You know, to this very day I don't know how much Richard cost, but I know the deductible took 12 years at several hundred dollars a month. For 12 years my little kid wasn't, I

thought maybe they could keep him for 12 years and then give him back to me. But its fine, he's a good boy. He really is, he's a good young man.

Anyway, the hospital has grown and changed since then. Sarah, I had Sarah 3 1/2 years later. I had her breech also, I should have said Richard was breech, and I had Sarah breech too. This time I really did make it to the delivery room, it wasn't as easy, it was long labor and stuff and I guess you're not in long labor like I was. It was real quick labor, but she almost died too and she stopped breathing a few times and so we've chose not to have any more children, because one or the other of us was gonna go. One thing I noticed about Sarah, she always smiled. Richard never smiled because he was so sick all the time."

Jennifer: "Esther, I want to thank you very much for your time. This has been very interesting, and informative. I really appreciate your willingness to be interviewed."

Esther: "Well, I really don't think I have too much to contribute. I've seen a lot of changes, I liked it the way it was, but we have to grow with the times. I hope Kodiak will have a better future. I know it's in a slump right now but I hope it works out."

Jennifer: Well, thank you for sharing everything."

Esther: "Well, you're welcome Jennifer."

This file is part of the Kodiak History Project.

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