How We Remember Woody Island

A Compilation of Interviews
With Former Woody Island Residents

Dorothy Bactad and her siblings

DOROTHY BACTAD interview
Interviewed 1/22/02

What are some things about the island that Dorothy knows that other people may not know?

"I know that island! I dream about it. I put myself to sleep thinking of it, and I remember where we used to walk, berry-picking, and I even climbed those cliffs to pick wildflowers; how I never fell and killed myself, I'll never know. I took them to the matron. I wanted to take something to her, you know, that the other kids didn't have."

Why does she think Woody Island left such an impression on her?

"I don't know. I've never regretted (living there). I think it was very good for me. We were taught how to work and obedience; we had three meals a day. We had good meals. You know, meat and vegetables and we had dessert. We may not have had everything like the kids in town, like candy and gum, but my gum came out of the trees!"

How long was she there?

"Eleven years. They have me down wrong on some of my paperwork. I wasn't quite 4 years old (when taken to the orphanage). I was born in '21. It was 1924 actually when I went there. Springtime. (I was there) until October '38."

Why did she leave at that time?

"It burned down. Judge Hallenthal came to see me and he asked me did I want to stay 'til they rebuilt it or did I want to go out to make my own living, and I think I made a poor choice by telling him I wanted to go out to make my own living because we didn't have jobs like kids do nowadays working in restaurants and fast-food places. I went up to Anchorage and worked for rich people. They had maids who taught me their work and then she let them go and I did it all.

"Judge Hallenthal came up to court and he came by to see me. And when I opened the door he said 'Hello, Dorothy. How are you?' and I said 'All right.' And he said, 'Where's your rosy cheeks?' and I said, 'I don't know.' He wanted to sit down so he could talk to me and I told him I couldn't sit down, she didn't allow me to sit on her furniture. He said, 'Where are you supposed to sit if you need to sit?' I said, 'In the kitchen.'"

What is her clearest memory of her time on the island?

"All of it. I liked it. When we did what we were supposed to and were obedient and did our work, we got to go out all afternoon to do what we wanted to. Like early in May the violets were out and I liked picking violets. Then later on all the wildflowers were out.

The island was covered with wildflowers. Oh, it was beautiful! Even the sand banks there, over by where the Russian graves are, all golden yellow with dandelions. Just beautiful! Then I didn't appreciate the dandelions; didn't think nothing of it because there were so many of them. Anyway, even those dandelions mean a lot to me now."

Did she make some close friends on the island?

"Oh, no. No. A few Indian families lived in the houses that were on the island, but they could not come to the orphanage and play around with us. We played with the Indians (who were in the orphanage) at recess time, but those in the houses, we couldn't go around them during school time.

"I didn't know I was Indian; I'm one quarter. You had to be at least a quarter to get in that orphanage. Not only that, I wrote to Washington, D.C., to the bureau of vital statistical records, and she sent me my history from way back to when Russia owned Alaska. One daughter borrowed it to make copies of it and she never gave it back to me. I don't know if she lost it. She claims she had it somewhere and can't find it."

Who was Native in the family? Was it her mother's side or her father's side?

"My mother was Russian Indian; half and half: Elizabeth Metrokin."

Did she (Dorothy) ever get to know her family?

"A little bit. When I left the orphanage and went up to Anchorage in October and when Judge came by in February he took me away from there because he said she was overworking me. He got me a job in Cordova, but he let me stay with an aunt I happen to have in Anchorage until he found the other job for me. Judge Hallenthal was a very, very nice judge and he was fatherly to me."

What were some of the recreational things they did while in the orphanage on the island?

"Anything children would do. We didn't have the equipment that you could buy; I mean we had... What did we do? Well, we played basketball, baseball; we had hoops from a barrel, you know that you would take a stick and roll them; we played hopscotch, marbles, everything."

Were they allowed to leave the orphanage?

"No. No. Where are you going to go? When I'd get upset, I'd think I was going to run away, then I'd say now where am I going to live? I'd say I'll go clean across the island where there was a cabin; and there was a barn behind it where they kept hay. I'd think 'I'm going to run away and live in that barn, up in that hayloft.' But that was all child nonsense."

How did she know about the barn?

"How did I know? When I'd get to go somewhere for the whole afternoon, I went there many times."

Oh, so they were allowed to go...

"Yeah, but we had to be back for dinnertime or when our work time was. We didn't have watches, but we always got home on time. I don't know how we did that, you know."

When they had afternoons when they could do that, where did they go?

"Oh, I've been all around. I've been 'round the whole island, even. Didn't stop to pick flowers or pick berries. There wasn't time for that when we went around the whole island. We walked along the beach on the whole island."

Did she go across the island or around?

"No, we went completely around. It took all afternoon, the whole time that we were allowed to be away. That was without playing around or fooling around, another girl and I. Sometimes the tide would be in and we'd hang on to those rocks and the waves would be coming in, but we still took a chance. They never knew it, if they'd know it we would've got the strap. Which would've been good for us, of course; we had no business doing that. We could've drowned. It could've washed us out to sea. Those waves are huge."

With whom did she go?

"Sometimes with another girl. Her name was Dorothy Brockman, but they had to change her name because they couldn't have two with the same name. I saw her in Cordova in 1977. She was my size, if not bigger and she was strong as an ox. My sister and I went into town in Cordova in 1977 and she said, 'There's Dorothy, in the drug store.' And I said. 'Where?' and she took me over to her. She used to be bigger than me, and when I seen her she was so tiny! She grabbed me and hugged me and hugged me and didn't want to let loose.

"Had two sisters and a brother (in the orphanage with me); Charles Frederick was the oldest; we called him Charlie. The next oldest was Emma Edith Nelson and Ida Louise Nelson and then me, Dorothy Elizabeth. I was named after my mother."

All four were put into the orphanage? Why?

"Because our parents were drinking too much and fighting."

Where are her siblings now?

"Well, my brother, Charlie, is dead; my sister Emma is dead; and Ida and I are still alive. But you don't know my other family. Mom remarried, but we don't need to go into that. It doesn't concern the orphanage (or Woody Island) at all. Ida is in Cordova, but her memory is not good. She's a year and a half older than I am. I was the youngest."

Did family visit her in the orphanage?

"No, they were too far away and they had no means of getting there. They didn't have the Alaska steamships; they had the Admiral lines. We went from Valdez to Kodiak on the Admiral Evans." (Her parents were in Valdez.)

Did she visit them in the summers?

"Oh, no, we couldn't leave there."

So you were in the orphanage 11 years, all year round?

"Uh huh, all 11 years; only place we went was Kodiak on the Fourth of July.

"I was happy when I was leaving, but I cried like a baby, too. It was my home and I was scared of the world! I was scared up in Anchorage, too."

Who were some of the people she remembers either from the orphanage or the families on the island?

"I remember the Fadeoffs, which used to be Chabitnoy; no, I think it's just the other way around (meaning Fadeoff, then Chabitnoy). Mike Chabitnoy used to be the carpenter for the orphanage; he was a good carpenter. Then I remember the Millers and they had a daughter named Barbara Miller. Their house was not too far from the orphanage. The Fadeoff house was not too far either. The Fadeoff house was built on that sand bank I told you about, where all the dandelions were. Near the graveyard.

"We used to sneak to their house because we weren't allowed to go to their places. But I could smell bread baking. I picked a little bouquet of flowers – I was bashful – I would hold my head down and hold up my hand with the bouquet of flowers and she'd tell me to come in and have some bread with butter and sugar on it. Then I'd sneak out again because I didn't want any of the kids to see me. (Laughs.) She knew I was coming for that bread because I'd done it quite a few times.

"There was another family that lived in the other direction, not towards Kodiak but going to the left. I don't remember the name of the family, but their daughter's name was

Elaine. Just the only daughter, like Barbara. If I remember right, Barbara Miller's mother was Indian and her father was a big white man."

Were the girls the same age as Dorothy?

"Just about. I used to want to play with Elaine at recess – they had to come to the same school -- and she wouldn't play with me. I suppose she was too timid, worse than I was. I never liked her after that, 'cause she wouldn't play with me. Poor thing, she had a safety pin in her hair to hold her hair; you know, like a bobby pin; the hair parted on the side and a bobby pin to hold it; she had a safety pin. I guess you do with what you can when that's all you've got.

"At the time there were a couple of places where houses had been, but they were vacant; I don't know who (had) lived in them. They were vacant and ready to fall down. I was in one that had a sod roof, but I was scared because it was dark and had a damp feeling in there. I never went in again and I forgot who they were that lived there. I just don't know 'cause it seems they weren't there that long, but somebody lived there."

Who does she remember working at the orphanage?

"Well, when I went there the first matron we had was Miss DeMarr, and our cook was Mrs. Krauss; and the superintendent and his wife, the best we ever had, was Mr. and Mrs. William Goudie; they had two boys. They were the best superintendent that we ever had in the 11 years I was there."

What made them so good?

"They just were completely different and they weren't mean. They were just good for us; good for the children. They were understanding. They were there quite a few years."

Who was the worst superintendent?

"Mr. Riley was a bad one and Mr. Brosend first. They had a daughter named Kathleen and I forgot the son's name. I used to get to do things with Kathleen. She used to make things and let me go to their apartment and to the office and make things with her cards and work with sea shells and paint on them. And she taught me how to play croquet."

But her father was bad?

"Well, yeah. He's the one that started the strapping so bad; he'd do it while we were in the dining room eating. Whoever was going to be punished, he'd use that horrible strap on them right there in front of us. If you'd cry, you'd get it too, so we couldn't cry. We had to hold it."

For what sorts of things did they get hit with the strap?

"Oh, like the boys may be late bringing the cows home, or couldn't find a cow or two. That other Dorothy that was there used to talk back, so she got it quite a bit. They sent her away; that's how come she left. They sent her down to Seattle to some place; to some kind of tough school. She's the one I saw in Cordova in 1977. She's married and her husband is a fisherman and they had their own boat. Hard-working, fishing along with her husband."

What about Mr. Riley? What sorts of things did he do?

"Oh, he was another bad one; I mean he threatened me so many times because I wouldn't smile. I had nothing to smile for. He made me so unhappy I didn't want to smile. I was in the kitchen cooking. Just before Judge took me away from there, he (Riley) told me the next morning when I come in if I didn't have a smile on my face he was going to use the strap on me."

Did he?

"Well, it just so happened Judge Hallenthal come to see me. I cried so hard and I wouldn't stop crying and so he knew something was wrong. He made Mr. Riley get out of the room. He had his secretary with him, Peggy Johnson. Anyway, after he made Mr. Riley get out, then I told. He said, 'You're not going to be here much longer; as soon as I find you a job, I'm going to have you removed from here. Unless you want to stay and wait for the orphanage to rebuild.' I sad no, I didn't want to."

What sorts of things were they taught in the orphanage?

"They tried to teach us sewing, although I never was good at it. We'd make our own patterns out of newspaper and we got to pick our own material, the type we wanted, you know. Sometimes I'd pick the wrong material, but didn't realize it because I wasn't a seamstress. It just didn't turn out good and I wasn't good at measuring and making my own pattern out of newspaper. Some people were gifted for things like that, but I wasn't."

SIDE TWO OF TAPE

Did they go to school in the morning and work in the afternoon?

"No, we went to school, then after school we always had to change clothes and do a few little things; like in the wintertime we'd get to go do a little ice skating. I learned to ice skate when I was 5. On Lower Lake, but it's gone now. The earthquake took it. It's ocean now. But there's a lake up above it. Upper Lake. Now they're named different lakes. They give them different names. I remember Upper Lake and Lower Lake, Elephant

Lake... hmm, some of the lakes I forgot; we didn't get to go near them either, because they were afraid we'd drown or something.

"Then (after ice skating or other recreation) we'd go back in and do our work. In the kitchen, dishwashing, or... cleaning the dining room table. Probably while I was ice skating there was somebody appointed to the kitchen for cooking where they had to be in early. Like I told you, every month our work would change. Did whatever you were told to do.

"Then we'd have supper and we always had dessert. And all our berries were in quart jars that we picked on the island. And we had our meat that they'd get after we killed a cow or a pig or whatever, chickens, and we'd have to prepare it and season it, and they'd tell us how and put it in the sterilized jars. We had to kill the chickens, too. Then we had to dip it in the boiling water to get the feathers out, and we had to take them in the kitchen and learn to gut them, clean them, then cut them up, season them, flour them, fry them and put them in the jars and can them."

What time did they get up in the morning and what time did they go to bed?

"Dormitory lights out at 9 o'clock and in the morning I think it was 7 o'clock when we got up.

"I liked it when the Goudies were there. I really did. Our girls' matron was always good. Even when Miss DeMarr left. We had a matron called Miss Pearl Wooten; she was excellent. If we got hurt or something, she'd put her arms around us and bandage our toes or knees or whatever we banged up. She put a Christmas tree up in her apartment and let us come in at night and sit on the rug and look at the Christmas tree. She was loving. We didn't actually get to sit in her lap and get love like you would from a parent... When I had my children I didn't know how to tell them I loved them. I loved them, but I didn't know how to tell them. It's hard to tell you why I couldn't. If you don't get love, you don't know how to give it." (She says her children understand and "they know to this day, even" that she loves them. "They knew from the care I gave them, also.")

Asked her to describe school.

"There were several buildings; three different buildings that we had school in. If the building was getting deteriorated or something, they'd move into another one. The very first one was right on the beach as we got off the little boat; the next one was up on the hill there up by Upper Lake; and the third one was at the Navy base or something when you first land there on the beach, coming from Kodiak. (CAA/FAA?) They had to use that when the orphanage burned down. That's where I was when we got the telegram that the Judge had a job for me.

"There had been an old dock there, but all that was left was the piling."

What was the school like?

"What was it like? We went there to learn!"

Were they strict?

"No, they were very nice."

Did they get along with the people who ran the orphanage?

"Yes. The schoolteacher and his wife were Mr. and Mrs. Boettcher. Penmanship was a very important thing. You had to pass penmanship like you had to pass reading, writing and arithmetic. To this day, people ask me where did I get my handwriting from. It's the Palmer method; you roll your arm.

(When the orphanage burned down and Dorothy quit school she was 15 – she turned 15 that June; she left there in October.)

"We learned anything you were supposed to learn at the grade you were in, just like the normal kids would learn. They were very understanding and good. We had Christmas plays that we had to practice a couple months ahead of time and we really liked that. Oh, we thought that was something! We didn't have much of an audience because there were only those three Indian houses. But hey came with their kids to see the play and, in fact, the kids were in the play with us.

"We had a good Christmas, too; they let us write a letter to Santa Claus – you know how that goes. We wrote down five things that we wanted and they tried to give us what we put down that we wanted and if they didn't have it they'd have something that they thought we'd enjoy. We were always happy. We had a Christmas stocking in the morning with an orange and an apple and mixed candy and nuts."

Would she talk about some of the mischievous things they did?

"Noooo. Not today. Well, like stealing from the garden. I can tell you, you can get a stomachache from eating too many turnips. We had a beautiful garden. Beautiful. The Indians, maybe the Fadeoffs or maybe it was Barbara Miller, showed me what wild plants to eat so my stomach wouldn't hurt. If we went and told them (at the orphanage) our stomach hurt, then they'd know we were into something. But our first superintendent and matron weren't mean to us. If someone would tell me to do something that we weren't supposed to do I would do it. Guess I was just too weak to say no."

What plants was she told to eat to avoid a stomachache?

"I don't know because some of them were Russian some were Aleut names; like the one that we ate for stomachache was *marushka*; it looks like chamomile. Then we had *poochkie*, wild celery. You take just the middle one; you can't eat nothing but that

middle one. And you don't eat it facing the sunshine because you break out in sores. You don't let the juice touch your lips.

"Then we had, do you know what *hoomluks* are? Well, you know the salmonberries? That is the young salmonberry shoot coming up; very tender. There's actually not much taste to it, but very tender. And of course when you're on an island you get three meals a day, but kids like treats, you know. Those were little treats to us. Then our gum came out of the trees. I learned to climb the trees and knew what pitch to take for gum. I could either take the tan colored pitch or the pink one. The kids would say, 'Where did you find the pink pitch and I wouldn't tell them which tree I got it from."

The pink one was better?

"No, no. (Just different.)

"We'd take tar, too. They told us not to eat the tar, it was no good, but when they weren't looking we'd snitch tar. You know how kids are. We didn't eat it, we chewed it; didn't taste very nice, but we wanted to chew. Then we'd chew paraffin 'cause we used paraffin for our jellies and jams; we stole the wax. We used to make ice cream out of snow. Whoever worked in the pantry would take the sugar and the vanilla and if Ida, my sister, was working with the creamer, she'd get the cream and we'd go out and fill one of those empty lard pails with snow and cream and sugar and vanilla and have our snow ice cream. Sometimes there wasn't vanilla, but we didn't care."

Did the Mission have a church?

"Yes they did, but it was by Lower Lake. I don't think it's still standing. We didn't go there too many years; I don't know why, but I think it was deteriorating. So we had church in the orphanage in a big room."

Did she ever go to the Russian Orthodox Church?

"We weren't allowed to go there, but we peeked into the window all the time. We were tempted to try and get in through the door, but we knew it was a house of God so we were scared. I know they had some nice things in it because we could see through the window. You know those Russian Churches are beautiful. And that church by the lake, our church, had beautiful glass in the windows, too. I don't know what happened to it. I wonder if when that earthquake took that little lake if it took the church, too."

How often did they have church?

"Every Sunday, but we always went to chapel to say a prayer before breakfast. Every Sunday was church day and then in the afternoon we'd have an hour or two to rest in our bed. We didn't have to go to sleep, but they wanted us to lie down and rest.

"When we went to Kodiak on the Fourth of July, we went in the scow; you know the scow that they put the cattle in? They'd have to clean that out and we'd all pile in and a fishing boat would tow us into Kodiak. We didn't care, we were so happy to go."

How many kids fit in there?

"All of us. A hundred some kids. We'd practice on the island and when we got to town..."

What did they practice?

"Practiced all the races. Those town kids could not beat us. All kinds of races: the gunny sack race, the egg race, the running race, the jump race.... They even had me boxing one Fourth of July. I didn't want to, I was so bashful.

"I don't know (how it happened) finally, but there were three big destroyers in, so it was full of sailors and they were all hollering. Finally I went in; and they gave us crazy wild names and we shook hands. First punch I took was a pretty hard one. We used to fight because the big kids would make us fight. And then if you were pretty strong, they put you with somebody stronger. Anyway, first punch I gave her was pretty hard. So she said to me, 'Lets not hit so hard,' but I said to myself, 'Unh-huh. Now I know I got her.' Every time I hit, I'd hit harder, so she started swearing at me. We never swore and I didn't like her swearing at me, so then I hit harder. I knocked her down and gave her bullets, boxing gloves in the face, so they pulled me away from her. They put both our hands up as winners. The sailors were just hollering! I had a white suit on, a skirt and a top, you know, and my nose was bleeding. They said I had no business pudging and doing that; it was against the rules. And I said, 'But she was calling me dirty, filthy names and swearing.' Still it was no excuse."

Did the people who ran the orphanage try to stop the kids from fighting?

No, because the older kids never let them see it. They'd take us down in the basement."

No one told on them?

"No. Everybody was too scared to tell because you're like a stool pigeon then they'll get you when you go out for your walk, berry picking or flower picking or whatever; they'd get you. When I got older I did the same things. Somebody told on me, I'd say, 'I'm gonna get you.' And they knew I would."

Did they stay on Kodiak all day on the Fourth of July?

"Stayed all day and went back at dark; they let us have a nice day there. And what money we won – and we won all the money because the town kids couldn't beat us -- we'd go to the grocery store, the candy store, the cigar store, whatever you call it, and buy all kinds

of candy bars and pop and we'd have great big sacks of stuff to take back. Then eat it up like pigs in a few days."

How old was Dorothy when she got married?

"I wasn't quite 18." (The marriage did not last.)

Did she then get married again?

"I got divorced first. I went down to Seattle and I got married in 1946. Then had two more children, three girls, all together.

"I just lost my husband about 10 years ago and I still miss him; we were married 46 and a half years."

Is there anything else that really stands out in her mind about the island, the school, the orphanage, the people?

"I put myself to sleep at night thinking about it; I think about walking around on the island and ice skating, picking flowers and berries.... Even though we had a couple of mean superintendents, outside of that it was OK."

Was Dorothy Brockman her closest friend?

"She was a leader, and I was a follower. She'd say let's go do this, or let's go break into the storage room. There was one old building that they stored things in, where churches from all over the world used to send things to the orphanage. She'd say, 'Let's go break in there and get some coloring books and a doll,' and I'd say, 'OK.' And we'd get the coloring books and the crayons and the doll and we'd climb a tree and go onto the smokehouse roof. And we'd lay there and color and play with the dolls and then we'd have to leave it there. But the rain would get it and that would be the end of that."

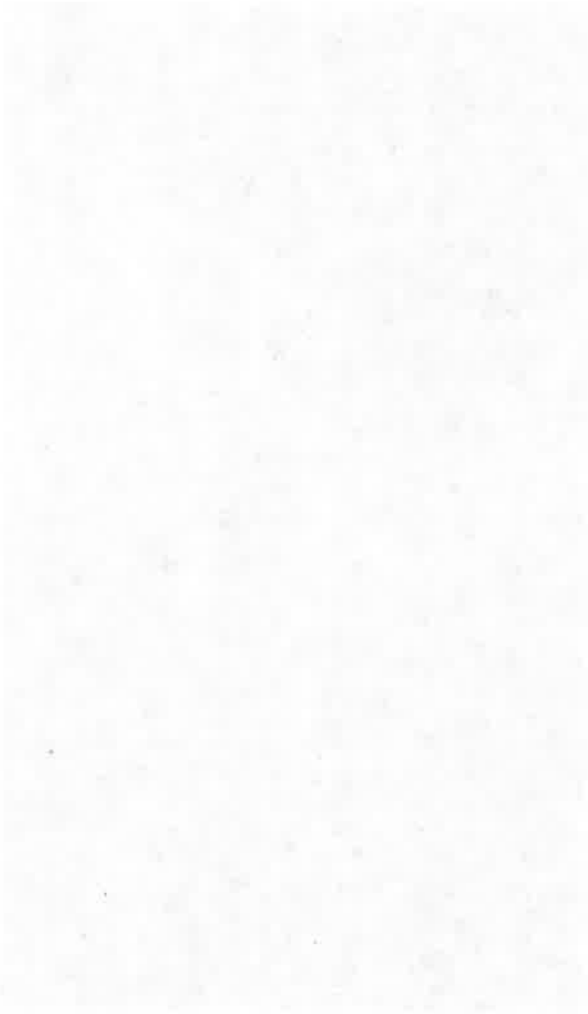
Did her older sisters and brother protect her?

"No. My brother would sharpen my skates, but only if I pressed his pants. I still hate pressing to this day. They didn't want to be bothered with me; I used to boss my other sister.

"My most valuable lesson from the orphanage: Let's have nice memories. I erased all the bad memories. It's a beautiful island, just beautiful; lots of devil's club and elderberry; we made syrup from it. Beautiful Woody Island! God's country.

"After we talked (the last time), darned if I didn't dream about being back on the island."

Jimmy Hartle (left), Anastasia (middle), Leanna Castillo (right)



LEANNA CASTILLO interview
Interviewed 2/12/02

What are Leanna's most vivid memories?

"I was very little. I was 8 or 9 when we moved into town. Maybe even earlier. I remember going to school on the FAA side and I remember playing with Maryann and Harold (Frump). We lived on a hill overlooking the water; we had a view of the water and had the jumping hill.

"There was a place where we went to pick violets for mother. It was behind the Chaffins' barn. Apparently there was another old, old cemetery up there, too. We'd go through the woods into an area that was hedged off, and we called it Cherry Goring for some reason. I don't know why. It was all hedged off and it was in the middle of the woods. And there were thousands of violets there and that's where we would pick violets for Mom. We went with my brothers and sister and other kids who lived on the island. We all knew where it was, but it had kind of a secret entrance. It all had a big hedge around it, so if you didn't know it was there you wouldn't be able to find it. So we had to crawl through a little space in the hedge and then it was a field, this big field in the middle of the woods, and all the violets grew in there. It was really pretty. If you didn't know the island you wouldn't know it was there. It was within walking distance if you went up the back, up the upper road. You could walk from my house through the wooded trail, and then onto the upper road. It was maybe about half a mile from our house. In fact, we walked all over the island; nothing was like, you know, taboo except that we were supposed to stay off the cliff. But we did that anyway because the nicest wildflowers were on the cliff. So we went up the cliff to pick the wildflowers there.

"We went seagull egg hunting. They were big eggs. They were about four times as big as a regular egg, with a real bright shell. My brothers would take us over to where the sea gulls laid their eggs. The boys would climb up the cliff to get it and my mother would make a cake from one egg, the eggs were so rich. The other thing I remember is our dessert after dinner sometime. In the summertime we'd take buckets down to the beach when the tide was low. My brother Jim and I were the youngest and we'd get to sit by the buckets while the other kids would take knives and scrape *uhiducks* off the reef. They would put it into the bucket and bring it home and that was our dessert.

"The other thing we did, my brothers had a workshop in the back of our house and they built a car called the Road Apple. This car was basically a frame with seats; a car that you could see through; you could see the ground. And we all would pile on it and they would take us to this lake for picnics. It was a lake in the middle of the island. The boys will remember because they used to have raft races. I think it was Maurice (who built the Road Apple), but it could have been Mitch. I didn't pay much attention.

"I remember the first time I met my brother Ronnie was when he came home from the service. The first time I met my brother Lexie was when he came home from school – I

think he was at Mt. Edgecumbe. He came home with a wife. He and Ron were a lot older. They were grown up.

"Oh, there were these plants – what are they called? – they grew down in the field right below our house. They were big bushy plants with purple flowers and you could shoot them off. We could put our hands right below the blossoms because they had a long stalk, and just glide our hands up and the flowers would just pop off. I still grow them in my garden. Lupines! They're lupines. Anyway, they grew so prolifically down below on the other side of our house that we would make trails underneath and we would have, like, hide and go seek under the plants. They grew so high.

"In the wintertime we had a pond below our house where we went ice-skating. We would take our sleds and put our skates on at the house and sled down to the pond. And then there was a creek that went from our pond to Lower Lake. So we could skate all the way from our pond clear down to Lower Lake and back again if we wanted to. That was maybe a half-mile. Usually there'd be a bunch of people down there with a big bon fire and hot chocolate. We would have big skating parties all together.

"We made a lot of dirt cakes. And we ate them, too. I liked the gritty taste. We decorated them with dandelions and all kinds of things. There was a little area down below our house, down below our hill, and there were two ways to go down and one way had a big sandy area. We would go down there and make huge villages out of sand.

"The boys -- my brothers -- built a fishing boat, a commercial fishing boat, and went fishing."

How long did they have that boat?

"I don't know, maybe a couple of seasons. I'm not sure; you'll have to ask them. I just don't remember all that. I was too busy playing. I didn't pay attention to everything going on around me.

"There were a lot of times we were very hungry. It was just mom and us kids. We lived on welfare part of the time and she worked at the laundry in town, and sometimes she would stay the whole week in Kodiak and we would have to make do with whatever food we had. My sister Rayna was kind of like the mother in the family. She would do all the cooking and everything and make our lunches for school. She was six years older than me. But I thought she was a lot older because she was in charge of everything. She took care of me a lot when I was little, during the weeks when my mother was gone. She would make pancakes and sometimes we would have pancakes for our school lunch.

"We had a wood stove. I remember my mother making loads of bread in the wood stove. And we had an outhouse and a well. No electricity for a while. They eventually put in electricity and an indoor toilet and we had running water. That wasn't for a while. For a long time we lived without it. It was a three-room shack. First it was a two-room shack, then the boys added on another room and that was their bedroom. So, basically, we had

one big room with a kitchen, and it was cold in the wintertime. I remember being cold all the time. We didn't have refrigeration, but we had a cooler. They kept things cold in that.

"A lot of our entertainment was neighbors dropping by. My mother always had the kettle on the stove so that they could have a cup of chai. She would put out whatever she had made that day. And then someone would take out -- usually Johnny Pavloff (Maliknak) -- an accordion and he'd play. He was one of Angeline's boys. No one ever made an appointment, or anything like that; we just visited back and forth. And the kids were always welcome at any house. We went from house to house whenever we got hungry. Whichever house we were closest to, we went to that house.

"Oh, there was the Zenith radio. The old Zenith radio was the only entertainment we had. I remember listening to "Inner Sanctum" and a lot of the (other) old radio shows. I remember that my grandmother was the first one that I had ever seen with a TV. I remember going there and watching just a pattern on the screen; I watched that for a long time.

"My Uncle Edson married a woman named Mary and they built a house by the water, across from the graveyard. My brothers and my sister used to somehow convince me to take a flashlight and go down there and get comic books from them in the middle of the night. Well, it may not have been the middle of the night, but it was late for me to be out. I had to go through the graveyard. I don't know how they convinced me to do that because I was scared all the way. They promised me everything but the sun to do it. So I would get comic books and run all the way back home. They said they would watch me from the house, but they weren't (watching). They'd be inside reading.

"I remember one time, in the wintertime, the pond down below our house didn't quite freeze over. So we used our sleds to slide down the hill by our house to get onto the frozen part of the lake, which was the middle of the lake. If you slid fast enough down the hill, you'd slide right over the slushy part. So we got out on the hard part of the pond and we were all skating around, but there were so many of us they forgot I was still out there. I was left out there for the longest time and it was getting dark and nobody missed me. It was a long, long time. I swear it was hours. At least to me it felt like hours. I was sitting out there on the pond yelling my head off, trying to get them to bring me back in. I couldn't cross over the slushy part by myself. I wasn't big enough to push my sled; I'd just land in the slush. Eventually they came and got me.

"We used to have a school picnic every year. The FAA side and our side went to school together and every summer we had a big, big picnic. I don't know if it was a Fourth of July picnic or not, but it might have been. But the FAA side put it on and it was really a big deal for all of us. There was a lot of food and a lot of games for the kids and actual homemade ice cream. I remember I had to miss several of those because I'd get mosquito bites and my eye would swell shut and I wouldn't be able to see.

"We'd go swimming in Lower Lake in the summertime. We had to watch out for the leeches. You'd have to stay right in a certain area; otherwise you'd have leeches all over you and you'd have to have them burned off or cut off. My brothers took delight in that.

"That's about it. There was a lot of playing and stuff that went on when I was there because I was very young. We had a lot of security there; we never felt any danger there at all. Everybody knew everybody on the island, so we kids felt we could go anywhere, which we did.

"We took a bike trip with my sister and one of my brothers over to the FAA side one time and there was this big long hill on the other side where the FAA station was. Coming down the hill I got caught in the gravel and chipped my tooth. Apparently I also rubbed my face in the gravel so I looked like a monster by the time we got there. It looked a lot worse than it was. We caught a lot of stuff from Mom for that one, especially my sister. For some reason she was always held responsible."

Do they get along today?

"Oh, we're very close. I'm closer to her than any of the family. Except my little brother, Jim. Jim and I are very close. We don't see each other very often at all, but we e-mail each other all the time. He's with my brothers, up there; with my brother Maurice and Paul. He has not gotten married."

How old is he?

"He would be 49; he was born on Christmas Day."

How old is Leanna?

"I'm 52. There were three of us at the younger end of the family. Jim was the youngest. First there was Danny, then three years later it was me, then three years later was Jim. The three of us hung out together. We were closer in age.

"It's just a child's memories that I have of the island.

"We moved back and lived in Aunt Mary's and Uncle Edson's house, the one on the water. We moved back there when I was a teen-ager and I went to high school in Kodiak. I would take the Fedair boat over every day and back every night."

How long did they live there that time?

"For about a year; maybe not even a year."

Why did they move back?

"I don't have a clue why we moved back. My mother had married my stepfather (Ernie Hartle) by that time. He managed to convince her to move back there. I think it was a no-rent situation."

Did she say she had a garden?

"That's my big thing; I love to garden. That's like my main hobby. I had my whole yard redone so I could plant all these old-fashioned flowers I remember from my childhood. I had my whole yard re-sculpted and everything. I'm working on it constantly. Every summer I add something to it."

Did they have a garden on Woody Island?

"We had a vegetable garden."

What did they grow?

"Everything. Huge vegetables, like carrots, radishes, a lot of root vegetables, potatoes. The Chaffins had an even bigger garden. Their garden was famous. We'd go down there and their vegetables were mamothly huge; especially their cabbages. I spent a lot of time in the Chaffins' garden, too, because I was friends with their daughter."

Is she still friends with Patricia?

"Yes, I am still. In fact I just recently got back in touch with her because we had lost touch. Now we e-mail each other back and forth. She goes back to Woody Island every summer. She'll probably be there when you're there. She lives in Northern California. She'll probably be up there because I know she was planning to go in early summer to do repairs and they spend every summer up there. She likes to be called Tricia now. She and Yule go every summer; they were there most of the summer last summer. Yule is not in good health right now."

Where does Leanna live?

"I live in Bothell, Washington; towards the north end of Lake Washington."

Does she remember noticing changes on the island between the time she lived there as a kid and when she went back as a teen-ager?

"A lot fewer people were living there by the time we went back when I was in high school. None of the relatives (were there anymore); my grandmother wasn't there anymore; my aunt and uncle weren't there; Angeline had died so she wasn't there. Johnny Pavloff (Maliknak), her son, was still living there. On the FAA side, people were still there, but they had changed. There was a new set of people. I didn't know the families any more. I knew the Chaffins still, but by that time Patty and I had grown apart; she matured much faster than I did. I was left in the dust. I was still playing with dolls

and they were into boys, that kind of thing. Patty and I just recently caught up with one another, through e-mail and talking. I still haven't talked to Maryanne (Frump) in a long time. She was my other childhood friend."

SIDE TWO of tape

"I haven't talked to her since she was 14 or 15."

What were the interactions like among the local families and with the FAA people?

"Well, on our side of the island it was mostly relatives, so, of course, it was very social. And it had to be because we depended on each other in order to survive. Everybody helped each other when there was a need. We didn't have to ask; people knew what you needed and they volunteered. If you needed something, firewood or whatever, somebody would show up at your door with whatever you needed. With whatever help you needed. If you needed to be dug out of the snow or whatever, they were there to do it. People just helped.

"I was very involved with the FAA side because of the Chaffins. I spent a lot of time there; it was practically my second home. I spent part of Christmas. Of course, I also went to school over there and Mrs. Chaffin was my teacher early on. I knew all the kids over there. I spent a lot of time with Patty over there and sometimes I spent the night. They had a boat and I used to go out on their boat and went fishing with them. For me the interaction was good; I don't know how it was for the older kids. I know that Patty's older brother, Jerry, was a friend of my brother Maurice's and I know that my brother Paul and my brother Maurice had girlfriends on the FAA side."

What about the adults?

"No, I don't think they spent much time together. They would stop by, but that was mostly the Chaffins. The Chaffins were more interactive than anyone else. I do remember that at Christmas time they would bring a box of food for us, gathered by the whole FAA side.
They would bring over a turkey with all the trimmings. Mostly just for us because we didn't have a father; also for Maryann's family because they didn't have a father.

But I always thought my mom was a little bitter about taking charity. She took it because she had to feed the family.

"I don't know how the adults interacted, but I do know the Chaffins were friends."

Were you raised Russian Orthodox?

"Oh, yeah, very Russian Orthodox. We celebrated American holidays and Russian Orthodox holidays and our whole routine was around the Russian Orthodox Church. When we got new clothes it was for Russian Easter; we would go over and spend a week

in Kodiak. You know, to do all the church activities before Christmas, for the Russian Christmas. So all of our holidays were around the church.

"My friend Patty was Catholic and her church was across the street from mine. So one Sunday we'd go to my church and next Sunday we would go to her church. We took catechism together. She would go to my church which was Russian Orthodox and they'd have like Sunday school for us, and then we would go to her church the next Sunday and we'd take catechism. There was actually a school in there at one time, too.

"We would go into town for a whole week during Christmas so we could celebrate; we stayed with somebody for a whole week. So we did do all the church activities, you know carrying the cross and everything. The whole family. Our lives were just inundated with the church. In fact, everything was around the church. We went to church a lot; so much so that I don't go to church today. I had my daughter baptized; but not my son. My daughter married a Mennonite boy. She goes to the Mennonite Church in Kansas. She had always wanted to go to church, so I would take her. My son is with a church in Bellingham, where he volunteers.

"Daughter was baptized in a Russian Orthodox Church -- the one in Kodiak, in fact." (Leanna was still living in Kodiak at that time.)

Does she remember what she thought when she first started hearing about ANCSA?

"By that time I was already married. I had discussions with my husband. I tried to get as much information as I could, but, in part, I didn't think it would ever be something that would do me any good; especially when they first started up and started spending money right and left and the attorneys got it. I just kind of knew. And I was right. So I haven't had much to do with it."

Does she have any hopes or dreams for Woody Island?

"Well, it would be nice to have a summer place back there. That would be really nice. You know, I could see spending summers there, you know, to have a cabin or something. That would be really nice. My brothers are talking about something like that. I've got very good memories of Woody Island. It was like a vast playground for us little kids. Even in the wintertime. Winters were harsh, but it was a lot of fun for us. I think it would be nice to go back there for a visit."

But not necessarily to live there?

No, I wouldn't want to live back in Alaska. The winters are too harsh; I'm living in Washington and I may go further south where it's warm. I love warm weather. Actually I love Seattle; geographically it's a nice place to be – near the water. It's a lot like Alaska, without the really harsh winters.

"Ironically, I never skied in Alaska, but once we came down here, that was our winter entertainment. We do a lot of our winter vacations in Canada, taking the kids with us."

One more question going back to Woody Island. Does she recall anybody talking Aleut or Alutiiq?

"Not the Native language. They spoke Russian. They might have had a combination. Angeline's family might have. As far as I'm concerned, my mother and grandmother, when they didn't want me to understand, they spoke in Russian. My mother apparently didn't even speak English until she was around 7 years old. (She spoke Russian.) My uncles spoke some and my older brothers spoke some, and all of us kids picked up a smattering, too. I listened to them long enough until I could understand them, but they didn't know it. You know they used to sit kids on a chair right next to them and told them to keep quiet, so we couldn't talk or anything. If you sit there long enough you pick it up, by osmosis or something!

Jimmy Hartle, Danny Harmon, Maurice Harmon, Leanna Harmon.

Maryanne Frump (left top), Harold Frump and Brenda Frump
Taken on Woody Island about 1960

HAROLD FRUMP KING interview
Interviewed 1/25/02 or 2/4/02

(From notes taken during two interviews. It is not an exact transcription of the recorded interview because the tape was difficult to hear.)

What are some of Harold's most vivid memories from the island?

Just basically, living with my grandparents on the island, with my mother and uncles, going fishing, going to school on the other side of the island.

Can he describe the house he lived in?

My mom's house was a three-room with living room. Angeline was grandma, Mom was Agnes; Uncle Nick Pavloff, Wilford and Johnny. Supposedly my dad was Mike Bejerken. He was there off and on; but I usually stayed with my grandmother or aunts and uncles; Mike used to beat my mom up all the time; I swore that I would beat him up when I got big enough, but he died, 1963. Died in a boating accident. He and my mother and a guy named Lucky were in the boat. Lucky pulled Mom to shore, but she died of hypothermia; Lucky made it back to Kodiak, but died a week later in another boat accident. His luck ran out.

They were drunk, going from Kodiak to Raspberry Island and got into a drunken feud. (Harold was 13.)

I was in the Mission at that time. In 1961 went into the Mission. I believe it was around that time. Myself and Maryann; Brenda was there for a while, but was fostered out to Seward. Must have been 11 when I entered the Mission. Maryann was a year older.

Left Mission when I was 15. Moved to Seward and lived with Brenda's family for a couple of years; then I got adopted by the Kings in Seward. Maryann was the same way. She was adopted by the Kings, also. That was not Brenda's family. (The family that had Brenda) never did adopt her. I think they just wanted state money. Kings wanted to adopt Brenda, too, but Millers wouldn't release Brenda. I think that's why she went over the hill. She has a lot of mental problems and substance abuse. I tried to call her about a year ago, but I never got a hold of her.

Alcohol treatment people brainwashed her, really bad. They tell her to stay away from family; Harold talks to Maryann; just called her. Did a music show for them, a DJ show. Harold performs; does Elvis, and sings new and old country. Also does karaoke.

Can he do entertainment at the retreat?

Says he wouldn't be able to get his equipment up. But he said he will attend reunion. "I definitely want to go."

Went to high school in Seward. Last time he lived in Kodiak was when he was 15; has been back to visit several times, last time was about three years ago

Also have a sister named Virginia and a brother named Rob. They're half sister and half brother. Virginia and Rob also got adopted out: Rob Stretcher, Virginia Griffin. Their dad was Frump. I'd rather go by Pavloff, but Mom put Frump name on birth certificate. Virginia and Rob got adopted out when they were babies; both are older.

Does Harold remember who else lived on the island?

Panamaroffs, Harmons, a lot of government people on the other side, Chaffins, Chichinoffs, there were quite a few houses. Uncle Nick Pavloff and Uncle Martin Pavloff, who passed away about six months ago in Arizona, had a cabin on Woody Island next to Uncle Johnny. He owed some taxes; uncle Martin Pavloff's grandson – not sure which one it was -- paid taxes so the title went to him; but uncles had a feud and Johnny chased Martin off the island; Martin never came back.

Harold saw cabin about three years ago, during his last visit.

What kind of employment opportunities does he remember on Woody Island?

Uncle Nick was doing some logging; not sure for whom. Other than that, there wasn't much. There was an FAA station there. That was basically it. Uncle Nick was logging by himself.

Went to grade school; only went up to fifth grade, FAA bus (or truck or whatever) picked us up in the morning and took us to that side of the island to get on the Fedair 4. (Fedair took them to Kodiak to go to high school.)

Does he remember adventures or misadventures from those days on the island?

Just remember doing a lot of fishing with my uncles; duck hunting, clamming, collecting mussels, rabbit hunting, ice fishing, boating, just stuff like that. Not much to do other than that, really. Good life for kid growing up, everything natural. We had radio, we had gas lamps; you know, kerosene, no running water; we hauled water and we hauled firewood.

Hauled water mainly from the lake, we also had barrels; no well; not sure if other people had wells; I know there's a well now on the island. There were generators; we didn't have a big generator, we couldn't afford one.

When we went to Kodiak and got ice cream and candy, it was a big treat; we just didn't have it on the island, no refrigeration.

Ironic there was no refrigeration considering it was a major ice export business there for years.

If I were living there now, I'd have that. I'd have a generator. That's what my goal is, to build a cabin and spend summers. Not a lot of land left to do anything with. Uncle Nick had seven acres; supposed to be still in possession. I don't know it there's taxes owed on it. Got to find out. Judge Madsen owns uncle Nick's house. I don't know how he got that.

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW 2/4/02

What were some of the changes he noticed on the island during the years he was there?

When FAA pulled out most everyone else pulled out, Uncle Nick, Uncle Johnny, Harmons. Had to have been after I went to the Mission, must have been in early 60.

Kind of went downhill after FAA pulled out; don't remember a lot after that.

Did the families who lived on the island get along?

People got along unless it was at the end of the fishing season when they drank a lot; then they had continual fights.

Which families does he remember living on Woody Island?

Simmeonoffs, Pestrokofs; Chaffins (Pat Chaffin played with Maryanne); saw her about 6 or 7 years ago in Anchorage; Pat may still live in Anchorage; was going with a guy who played in a band. Her mom and dad had a cabin on Woody Island and her dad passed away a few years ago. Yule Chaffin used to go back every summer and spent whole summers on the island; I don't know if she still does; she's getting pretty old. She said one time she wouldn't be making very many trips back there. She knows a lot.

They had a lot of influence on my going into the Mission; they didn't think I was being taken care of properly. But it was harder in the Mission; I think I got beat up at the Mission as much as I did at home! They'd work you to death and then beat you up afterwards.

When it was first suggested, did Harold think going to the Mission would be a good idea?

I never thought it was a good idea; but in some respects, you know, we had three healthy meals a day and we went to school. Chaffins were close friends with the Pavloffs; I think they were doing what they thought was best.

If you have a chance to go through the Kodiak Mirror and go back to the early 1960s, (you'd find articles about the time) we ran away from the Mission for five days. We took a boat. They had the National Guard looking for us.

We went after midnight; we took a boat from the boat harbor. We got extra gas; there were five of us. We were going to take a big old speedboat, you know, a huge boat, but we couldn't get it started. Anyway, we took the boat to Woody Island at midnight; it was dark.

We stayed on Woody Island for two days. We went to Long Island for a while, but came back to Woody Island, then headed to Ouzinkie. But it got pretty rough, so I turned the boat back. Didn't know whose boat it was. We had to pay restitution on the gas after the caper. During the escapade we came back to Kodiak and refueled under cover of night. We went to the Mission, looked around, played games, you know how kids are. Luckily we didn't drown; I'm sure they had something in the paper about it back then. They had all the law enforcement involved, the Navy and the Air Guard there.

Does he remember the year and the time of the year this all happened?

It was just before I left the Mission; I think I left in 1965. We had the earthquake in 1964... must have been in 1962 or 1963. It was in the summertime.

The reason we ran away was because one of the house parents was going to beat us with a leather belt and put salt in our cuts.

Why? What had they done?

We didn't do anything. You know, nothing terribly bad or anything. One time I got accused.... When I was in the Mission my cousin was there, too, at the dining room table and a house parents' daughter was there. My cousin threw a spitball right down her blouse; I don't know if he meant to throw it down her blouse, but, anyway, the house parent thought I was the one who did it! The house parent just started beating me with his fist until I admitted that I did it. I was just a little kid. But I didn't do it. He apologized to me a week later. Anyway, right after that we ran away from the Mission. Mr. Stone was the superintendent at that time; there was a police chief who said, 'If you ever have this problem again, let me know and I'll take care of it.'

The police chief said that to them after they were found?

Well, we kind of let them find us, but he said that afterwards. We weren't supposed to get a beating after that, after we ran away, but that same house parent beat us after we got back.

Where and why did they let themselves be caught?

Two of the guys were younger and we split up. Donnie Robinson (Harold's cousin) and another guy found the two younger kids, so the three older ones just decided, what the heck, let's go back. Anyway they (cousin and friend) were smart; they found us.

Anyway, it was just... you know, I was familiar with boats and the island and I could get away from the rocks in the dark. We didn't have any trouble, but we should've. I mean we didn't have any life preservers. We had plenty of food; but we had no life preservers.

Who were the five boys?

Nick and Mike Rastophoff, Michael Peterson, and one other kid. I can't remember his name.

Where were they when they were found?

We were on Woody Island, hiding in trees and under boats. I think for the sake of the younger ones we let ourselves be found. They were probably 10 or 11. (Laughs) Anyway, it was one big adventure.

Where did they get the food? Did they take it from the Mission?

We did take some with us when we left, and we found food on Woody Island. There was a cabin a guy had locked, but we broke in ands slept there the first and second night. We went to Long Island and found food in the lodge there. We found .22 shells and we found a shotgun. We played with it. I don't know, it was really just an adventure. The surprising this is that we survived.

Did they fish or hunt while they were gone?

Yeah, we tried fishing off Long Island. We caught a few salmon and we had an open fire. I know they had planes looking for us. We really went under the cover of darkness. We went back to Kodiak only at night; they had floodlights in that narrow channel down between Kodiak and Near Island, so everyone just lay down, so it looked like there was just one person in the boat. So they couldn't tell. They were looking for five. We were heading to Ouzinkie and got all the way out to the point and, of course, the whales were there, too, and they came real close to the boat. Then the weather started changing. It started to get real cloudy and water was coming in the boat, so I turned it around. Everyone was scared.

Anyway, we made it back and got another beating.

Does he recall any other stories?

I used to go fishing on commercial fishing boats. I started when I was 9 years old. I was actually running a 44-foot seiner myself when I was 11. My uncle Nick Pavloff rented a seiner from the cannery every year. They'd give him a percentage or whatever, you

know. We were gone all summer; we'd go to Afognak, Dutch Harbor, Karluk. We would fish during the week and on the weekends headed back to the cannery. It was five days fishing, then...

Which cannery was it?

We were out in Bristol Bay a lot. We were in Karluk a lot. I had some relatives in Karluk, too. All my uncles were on the boat. The three of them, plus myself. Uncle Nick was the skipper. Uncle Johnny was on there, Uncle Wilford. Uncle Martin was in California. A cousin went with us one time. Junior Sundberg went with us one summer; he was the cook.

When I first started fishing with them they'd each give me $100. Then the last year they gave me a lot more. Didn't get quite a quarter of the share, but I got several thousand.

How old was he at that time?

I was already at the Mission, but they let me go on the boat. I was 13 or 14. That's how I paid for all that stuff (restitution) after we ran away – for the fuel, the shotgun, the food, everything. I had the money in the bank. Restitution was close to $500.

Does he have any hopes and visions for Woody Island?

Well, I hope that everybody who either has descendants from the island or who wants to live there has an opportunity to live there. My vision is to go there every summer to fish for salmon. Don't know how this will turn out.

What was his understanding of ANCSA?

I thought the government would pay us something or there would be a land distribution, especially to shareholders. But millions were paid to attorneys' fees. I went to testify a few years ago; I had a lot of expenses beyond the airline ticket, which was (the only part) paid for.

What specific place names does he recall?

There was Upper Lake and Lower Lake. Right by the Mission is Upper Lake. Big Lake is also called Elephant Lake. I think Una Lake has fuselage in it from an old airplane.

Best friends: Joe, Edson, Danny Harmon (older), cousin Richard Sundberg (Jenny and Rudy's son. Jenny was Agnes' sister). We visited in their house a lot. It was east of us; a lot of houses burned down. It was interesting to live there. We went fishing, field hunting. I spent a lot of time with my uncle Johhnny.

The Chaffins were well-respected by others on the island. Once I remember a fish hook went through my finger. Chaffin took Harold to Kodiak; he helped a lot of the Natives.

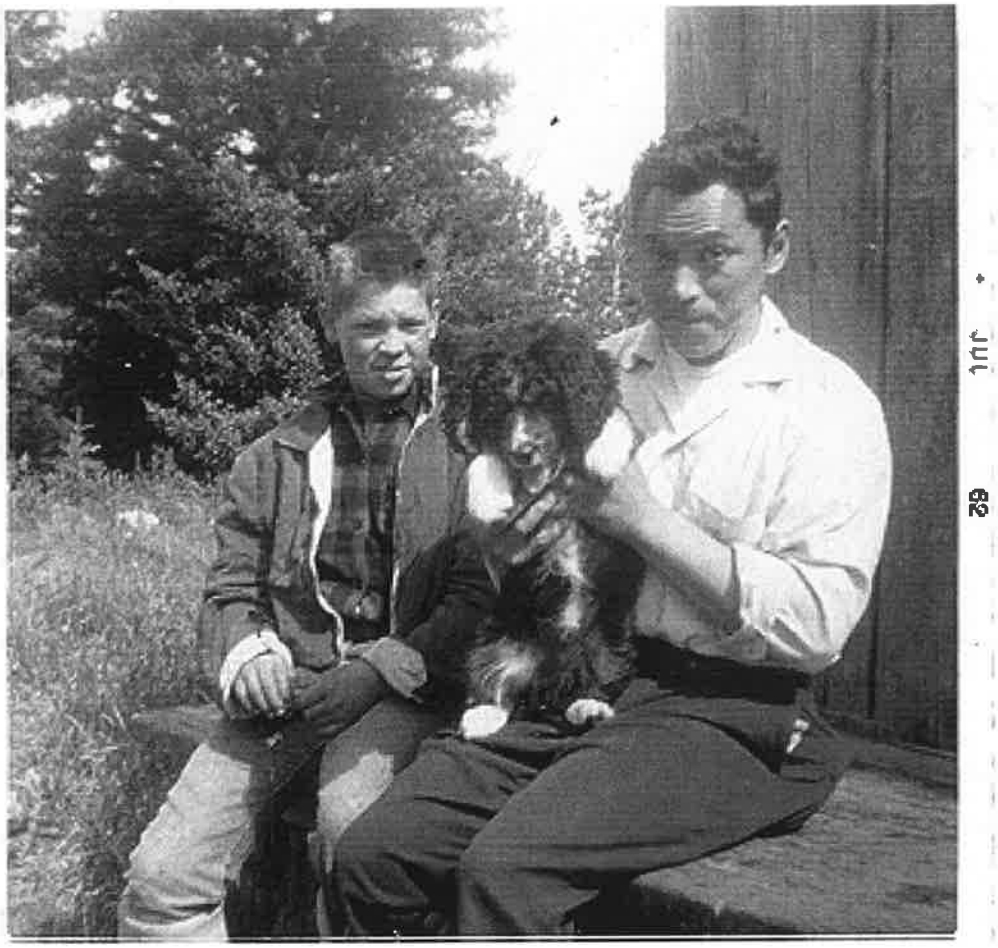
Went to Russian Orthodox Church, then to Baptist Church when in the Mission. Stayed with my grandmother a lot, and also with Angeline, Uncles Wilford and Johnny. That house has burned down; a lot of memories -- good and bad.

Most fond memories: relationship with family, going fishing, ice boating with a sail on the lakes; ice skating, clamming;

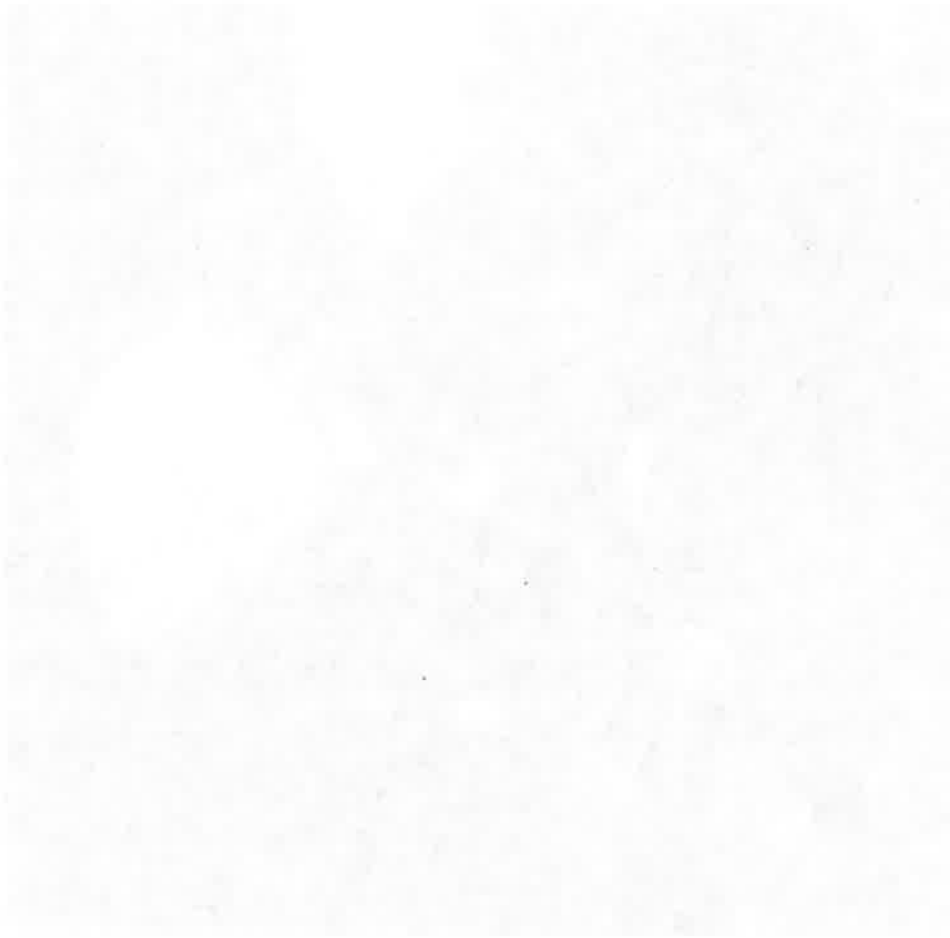
Fell through the ice three or four times. My sister pulled me out and we went home. Fell out of a fishing boat once in hip boots. Caught a hydraulic rope, went down, came up, and Uncle Nick and Uncle Johnny grabbed the rope and pulled me up.

I got chewed out. I shouldn't have been hanging on to the edge of the boat.

Once I shot off a rifle and almost hit the fuel tank. Got the .22 taken away. Still have a rifle I got from Uncle Johnny; a single shot .22.



Harold Frump King (left) and John Maliknak
Woody Island – July 1962



Michael Mitch Gregoroff

Mitch Gregoroff with his Grandmother, Ella, in Ella's Kodiak house

MITCH GREGOROFF interview
Interviewed at the Woody Island Tribal Council office 2/15/2002

"First of all, I was born on Woody Island in 1937. I was born in the North Village, my family lived in the South Village. I don't know why, I was born in the Pavloff house up there."

The Pavloffs lived in the North Village?

"Right. In the North Village. And I believe my cousin Ellen Mae Simeonoff, Cecil Chabitnoy and I were the last three actually born on Woody Island. It was 1937."

Who was the midwife?

"My grandmother."

That was Ella?

"Ella Chabitnoy."

Everyone else on Woody, born after 1937, was born on Kodiak?

"To the best of my knowledge, I believe they were. Of course, Cecil passed on a few years ago on Woody. They were on a trip and he keeled over. That was right around 1997 or '98. Ellen Mae (Pagano) lives in Anchorage. I believe she's not doing too well; she's had health problems the last I heard. Whether she's got them cured or not, I don't know.

"OK, let's, see, vivid memories.... OK. I can remember as a little boy, before we moved off the island, I remember being with my grandmother, at my grandmother's house. That was before we moved."

Did Mitch live with his grandmother?

"Yeah, my mom lived there, too."

Weren't Ronnie and Lexie living there, too?

"No, they had been placed in the Mission (Orphanage). That was before my time. Ron told me they were placed in the Mission in about 1936."

Right around the time the Mission was moved to Kodiak?

"Right. According to what I've read, the Mission was built in Kodiak around 1936 or 1937. I really don't know when they (Ron and Lexie) were put in the Mission. The dates there are a little confusing."

Something Ronnie had said left the impression that Ronnie and Lexie lived for some period with their grandparents.

"They might have, I don't know. To my knowledge they didn't. I don't remember how old I was when we lived with my grandmother. Cecil was the same age as me, and one time we got done with dinner and we went running outside. It was banya day, but the banya was on fire. So we went running back into the house. We told them the banya was on fire and it caused a major uproar. Everybody got disrupted from dinner to put the fire out!"

What day was banya day?

"Friday or Saturday. I couldn't stand the banya when I was a kid. It was too hot. I couldn't stand the heat. I'd go in there and it would gag me and I couldn't breathe."

Did he learn to appreciate it as he got older?

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was the thing to do and it becomes a habit. But there's work with a banya. Haul in the wood, heat the water... (laughs). We didn't have running water back then. The water was from a well. We got a bucket (ran back and forth with the water) and that was our 'running water.'"

Does Mitch have a banya down south now?(He lives in Washington State.)

"No, no. No I haven't had a banya since... I think the last banya I took was on Woody Island. Coincidentally, the last trip we were up here, we made a trip to Woody Island and I took the Council on a tour of Woody. It was last June. We come across that old banya. It was sitting way back in the woods; before it used to sit out in the open."

Does Mitch think it's still usable?

"No, no. It was part of the Pavloff homestead up there. The old house I was born in has long since burned down as have all of the buildings. There is nothing over there now. Even the old one that used to be a landmark with the white side and orange roof is gone now, too."

Whose house was that?

"It wasn't a house. It was a machine shop and power plant. That was on the West Side."

How long did he stay at his grandmother's?

"I believe I was about 3 years old when we moved to Uyak Bay, to an island. It was Amok Island."

How long was he there?

"I have memories of that. There was a lagoon there. I remember the birds singing. There was a sparrow everybody talks about. I remember the tall grasses and the bears rubbing up against the house."

Why did they move there?

"Well, when Mom married Paul and Maurice's dad, Ray Harmon, they moved over there. It was our homestead. I remember it for about a year, then I got hurt on Ray's boat. I fell. Fell down the companionway, watching a big boat turn around. It knocked me off the bunk and down I went. I was 3 years old. Between 3 and 4.

"I have a blank memory from that point on until living with my aunt and uncle, Judy and Earl Komm, here in Kodiak. There's a blank space in there. Knocked myself pretty silly, I guess. Anyway, I broke my hip. Fractured it, and drove a spike in my head. I think that's why I have no recollection for a period of time back then."

How old was he when he went to live with Judy?

"I have no idea, because that was after the accident, I lost a few... I don't know if it was years, or what there. They lived right next door to the Old Baptist Church."

When did he start having memories again?

"When I was living with them. It seems like, well, now it seems like I just happen to be with them. I don't know how I got to be with them. But I know I couldn't walk. I had to crawl because TB had set in on that fracture on my hip. It's fused now. They had to cut the joint out and it's been broken several times since. But anyway, after that, I wound up going to the children's orthopedic hospital in Seattle. I believe it was Ballard at that time. I remember the trip because I had to fly there, and I remember telling the pilot not to go too fast because I didn't like speed. That was during the war years. Of course, once we got in the air, I could look down and see military trucks; you know, they were building the base then."

Is that the first time he was in a plane?

"Yeah. I thought they were toys. I always wanted to grab one of them. I went to Anchorage. In Anchorage, they put me on a train to Seward and in Seward they put me on the old Alaskan and sent me on down to Seattle." (Alaskan was a steamer; part of the Alaska Steamship Line.)

Does he remember how old he was when he took that trip?

"I was 4, or 4 and a half.

"I can remember Earl packing me from the hill to Griffin Memorial Hospital, which is just below the hill. I remember him packing me on his shoulders to get the x-rays that determined I needed to get help right away.

"Of course, once I got into the hospital it was a three and a half year stint in the hospital."

Did anybody from here go to visit him down there?

"No. A soldier traveled with me from Kodiak on the boat going down. (A soldier in the Army.) I don't remember his name or anything, but he came to see me about a year later."

Was he someone who had been stationed in Kodiak?

"Yeah. It was Ft. Greeley back then. (They moved it to Anchorage later.) I remember he bought me a whole carton of Wrigley's Doublemint Gum, and I couldn't cram enough in my mouth. Couldn't get rid of the flavor fast enough so I could get some more. It was mine, all mine!

"I used to crawl down the hall in that big ship... It had a center hallway down the center of the ship on the main deck and it was kind of sloped. It was carpeted. I remember I had a little rubber car that had rubber wheels that turned. I'd give it a shove and it would run all the length of that hall and I would go scampering after it. I'd bring it back and do it again."

Was the soldier with him all the way on the boat?

"Yeah, all the way to Seattle. It would be interesting to know who he was. But I don't think there is anybody alive who could tell me."

Did he make any lasting friends in the hospital, or does he have memories from there?

"Oh, not really. The only thing I can remember from the hospital is laying flat on my back in traction years on end. That was during the war. One thing I can remember were air raids. You know, the practices, the air raid sirens, big search lights. I remember the morning I had to go in and have my operation they had an air raid warning. All the lights in town had to go out. I was in the elevator going up. I remember that. They went through with the operation anyhow. I spent about a year and a half more in the hospital after that.

"I don't have too many fond memories of the hospital. I can remember some of the nurses, but I don't remember their names. I have a faint memory of their features."

Does he remember feeling lonely in the hospital?

"After a while you adjust. You're a kid and, you know, a kid will adjust a lot quicker. I found that out later in life. It just became a part of my life; one day and then the next. And then one day they decided I could get out of the hospital and go live with a family. What did they call it? A convalescent home type thing with a family. I lived with them for about another year. All total, it was about four and a half years down in Seattle. I stayed with that family for about a year, a year and a half. I can remember two Christmases with them. I lived with them until I could get out of my walking cast. Then they put me in a brace -- a walking brace. When I finally got out of that, I got to go home.

"I came home to Judy and Earl's (Komm) and their family had grown considerably. There were four more in the family. I kind of felt out of place there. My mom came to see me one night. I was asleep and she came and I felt somebody kiss me on the cheek. She said, 'I'm your mom.' (Laughs.) I said, 'Yeah?' and she said, 'I'm going to work on trying to get you to come back home with me.'

"Of course, I didn't have it too good there at the Komms. I'd rather not even talk about that."

Was it that he just felt out of place there, or were they unkind to him?

"They weren't very kind. I don't know... it was.... I don't know, there were things that happened while I was away, I think, between her and the family there; to this day I don't know. Mom was kind of an outsider to the rest of the family, her family. Judy was her sister."

How long after she introduced herself as his mom was she able to take him home?

"Well, Judy and them wouldn't let me go for a while there. I don't know what... See, there were things going on there that I didn't know about. I was 9 years old when I finally got back up here and whatever it was, to this day I don't know. I just know there was a conflict there between my mom, Judy and the rest of the family. But Judy and them finally let me go, after about a year and a half. I turned 12 with Mom. I turned 13 on Woody Island."

When he turned 12 with his mom, was she in Kodiak?

"Yeah, we lived here in Kodiak up on Spruce Street. I don't know if it still is Spruce Street. In fact we lived just down the hill from Judy and Earl.

"It was kind of strange. Once I got back with Mom, Ray had just gotten lost. I believe it was 1947. He got lost at sea. Mom was living by herself with Paul, Maurice, Rayna and Danny at the time. And just before we moved to Woody Island, Leanna was born and we moved back to the island.

"After Mom got me back home, needless to say I never went back to visit the Komms again. Even to this day, it's hard for me to even talk to them."

Are they still alive?

"Oh yeah, there are quite a few of them down there. Judy and Earl have passed away, but their kids are still there."

Are they still here in Kodiak?

"No, they're down in Washington. I don't think there are any Komms left up here. Closest relative to them would be the Simeonoff family here in town.

"Anyway, in 1950 we packed up from here and moved to Woody. My grandfather at the time, he wasn't my true grandfather, he was my step-grandfather, Mike Chabitnoy, he helped us move over. We got over there, and it was kind of strange, we moved into the house that I was born in, the Pavloff house."

What had happened to the Pavloffs?

"Most of them... there weren't very many left. There was Wilford, Nicholas, Martin, Michael, but they didn't all live there. Wilford lived with his mom, Angeline, in a house further up the hill. They called it the smaller house. Used to be the Sundberg house.

Slightly off the subject, but this is for clarification's sake. A couple of people have referred to Johnny Pavloff, who played the accordion. Who is Johnny Pavloff?

"Johnny Maliknak. They confuse him with a Pavloff, because he was half brother to the Pavloffs. Angeline was his mom. He lived with Angeline. I don't think he ever left home. Once he made a trip to Texas, but other than that he's been in the same spot all his life.

"We get along pretty good. I believe he's kind of a distant relative. His uncle Nikolai... that kind of gets down into another story that was handed down to me... but his Uncle Nikolai was a full-blooded Aleut by the name of Maliknak. He lived by himself. His brother was Johnny's dad. I can't remember his first name. Anyway, he died just before we moved to Woody. Nikolai used to dance and play the drum and do the story dance thing with the drum and all. (A little different from the Alutiiq Dancers.) He was the last of them. He died trying to get back to Woody Island in a skiff with another man, Paul Wolkoff. That was in 1957 or 1958. They never did find Wolkoff. They found Nikolai. The skiff had drifted ashore on Long Island. It was wintertime. I don't know what happened, but it was blowing pretty hard.

"I don't even know if there are any pictures of Nikolai. He was a loner. You've heard of Chief Yellow Pants, right? OK, he was related to Chief Yellow Pants. I don't know if he was a brother or what. Chief Yellow Pants was brought in to Woody Island from Eagle Harbor after the 1918 flu epidemic. It took its toll on the population of Woody and my

grandfather, Nick Fadaoff, tried to bring people back in and he brought them in from Eagle Harbor. Chief Nanjack was Nick Fadaoff's adopted father. Anyway, Nanjack adopted my grandfather. Nanjack died in the epidemic. He was buried in the mass grave. My grandfather had to bury him. Of course, then my grandfather inherited the house Nanjack had."

Did Chief Yellow Pants also go by another last name (perhaps Liknak or Reddick?)

"I have no idea. All I know is Yellow Pants. And I know he was a relative of Nikolai. I think Nikolai's hometown was Eagle Harbor, too. He was a transplant from there.

"We lived in the Pavloff house about a year. Angeline's daughter, Agnes, was living in the Miller house. Dora Miller was one of the midwives when I was born. Dora and Mom, I guess, were pretty good friends. Anyway, Angeline wanted Agnes closer to her. So we moved from the big house to the Dora Miller house. You see, the Miller house was in the South Village and her house (Angeline's) was in the North Village. What Angeline did was move from her little house, which was the Sundberg house, into the big house, where I was born. Agnes moved out of the Miller house and into the house Angeline moved out of, the Sundberg house.

(Big house was known as the Pavloff house. Sundberg house was also known as Angeline's little house. Sundber/Angeline's little house was on the hill above the Pavloff house.)

''Dora and Mom were pretty good friends. I believe Dora moved to California. That's what Mom told me. Before she left, she told Mom if she ever needed a place to stay, the house was hers. It's kind of ironic that's how it wound up, anyhow. The house itself was a log house, built like the museum over here (the Baranov Museum). It was built during the Russian era. When we lived there, it was a good 200 years old. It was a piece of history that somebody torched.

"That's when I really started enjoying my life again. On Woody Island. When we moved down there. Life was one big escapade, until we were too old to be kids anymore. That island – we knew every inch of it. I still know it like the back of my hand."

What are some of the escapades and stories?

"What are some of the stories you've already heard?"

Well, Paul had some stories about the brothers torturing Rayna.

"Oh, yes. She was a real tomboy. She asked for it. She was gullible. We sat her on a cow one time, actually a calf, told her it was just like a horse, something she could ride; so she got up there, and as soon as she got on there we slapped it on the butt and off she went. And there goes Rayna: Both legs straight out, both arms straight out, right into a bramble bush! The calf let out a big bawl and Rayna let one out, too!" (Laughs)

Does Rayna think of her brothers as those who tortured her, or does she have a sense of humor about it after all these years?

"I don't know, I really don't see Rayna that much, and when I do, she doesn't bring too much off that up. I don't know. I don't remember torturing her too much. I think mostly it was Paul and her brothers. I had other things to do besides torment my sisters."

Like what?

"Oh, I was always exploring the island. When we first got there, Mom said we could do anything we want. Be careful on the lake and stay off the cliffs. So the first thing we do, we make a beeline for the cliffs. We're all climbing.

"When I was a kid we used to... the family used to grab a picnic basket and go down to Una Lake, where Chaffins had their cabin, and there used to be a rock spire, like a needle rock. It stood there for, I guess, eons! When we went to that picnic, I said, 'I'm going to climb that thing.' You couldn't climb it hand to hand, but I happen to have a hunk of rope that drifted in on the beach. So I lassoed the top and climbed up. It was about 30 feet to the top. I didn't get any pictures of it, but I got up there and was waving at the family below. I climbed back down and didn't think anything of it. I left the rope; I couldn't get it off, anyhow.

"My cousin Buster, (Kelly Simeonoff) always had to bring in the cow at night. It didn't matter. He had to bring that cow in and milk it whether he got it in at 4 o'clock or midnight. That poor boy. I felt sorry for him. It would be 10 o'clock at night, pitch black out, you'd hear that cow bell going by you'd know Buster was taking that cow back to the barn, after finally finding her somewhere on the island.

"Anyway, one time we decided to go out with him to find her – her name was Bossy, an old Jersey cow. You see, the Mission had free-roaming cattle on the island and Bossy used to roam with the Mission cows. You couldn't tell where you'd find that cow on the island. That night we were out there looking for that cow, we were going across the flats towards Una Hill. A cow will usually go into the wind, so you can tell by which way the wind is blowing just about where the herd would be. We went out there and it was pretty dark. We got about half way across the field and heard this rumble, rumble, rumble. We thought it was the cows running down the hill toward us; it sounded just like a stampede. So we tried to figure out where the heck we could run. We ran towards the beach onto the embankment that led down to the beach and looked up, but we didn't see any cows running. What's this? Not a cow in sight! (Laughs) So we went home and told Mom about it and she said, 'You guys are hearing things. Did you feel anything shaking?' No, we said we didn't feel anything. So we decided Buster could go look for his cow by himself.

" Next day we went walking along the beach there and what it was, was that big needle spire collapsed down on itself and that's what all the rumbling stuff was. It was just

rotten rock. It's a good thing it didn't come down while I was up there. Now there is no trace it ever was there.

"Of course, we used to walk around the island all the time. We'd take off and go down to the beach for no reason and just take off walking along the beach. Back then a lot of drift would come in – glass balls, stuff from the Orient and around there. Once you got walking, you always had to see what's on the next corner. You couldn't help yourself. We'd wind up walking all the way around the island. Up in our attic we had boxes and boxes of glass balls."

Someone else mentioned that and said they probably were in the house when the house was burned down.

"There was a lot of stuff burned when they burned the house."

Who burned the house?

"Well, my Uncle James and Darrell Chaffin. He burned most of those buildings. He burned Longwood School and all that. Of course, when I worked for the FAA, part of my job was to help burn them down, much as I hated to do it."

How long did Mitch work for the FAA?

"It was the first job I ever had. I worked for them about a year and a half. I was about 18."

END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1

"We had to cut brush at the side of the road to keep the ditches clear. And we painted some of the old buildings on the CT site (communication tower site). There used to be three big communication towers on Woody Island that stood about 300-350 feet tall. They set them in a triangular formation. They had lights on them and we used to have to change the lights. I didn't care too much for that part of it. It had stages, but it was a long ways up there. They were taken down probably around the 1960s. Pat Cannon took them down. He was an old fisherman who used to live around here. Everyone knows Pat Cannon. They say that from them towers there were a bunch of orange and white trailers built out of the steel and were running around for years. There was a lot of steel there.

"We were always hunting over there. When we were growing up, they were pretty lean years. You know, Mom lost her husband and she was on welfare. We had seven or eight of us living in that little house there and she was getting 75 dollars a month on welfare. Hunting became the necessity. Of course for kids not knowing anything about hunting when we got to the island, it was a learning experience.

"One Christmas, I got a pistol for my birthday. But I couldn't hit anything with the damn thing. I was probably 14. Rabbits were plentiful, but it was just by luck if I ever hit one.

"My uncle Cecil had a little single-shot .22 rifle and I could hit with that, so I traded that Rugger pistol automatic for the single-shot .22 and I got my butt in a jam for that. But that put food on the table, so I thought it was a pretty good deal.

"We ate a lot of rabbits. First part of the month (when the check came in) we prospered, the last part of the month we starved. When you don't have any refrigeration or electricity, most of the food was canned meat type stuff. In the wintertime it wasn't so bad. It stayed frozen out in the cooler. We got to where we really enjoyed rabbit. You can starve to death eating rabbit. There's no nutritional value. Jack London said it best."

How about ducks?

"Oh, when we got them. It took a knack to shoot ducks. You had to get them when they were upwind, so the wind would blow them into you, because if you didn't they would drift out to sea and you'd watch your dinner heading out to sea! But yeah, we ate quite a few ducks. And when we got older, Ron finally got a shotgun, a long, tall Magnum 12-guage. And when Johnny had a boat we could finally go out hunt ducks that way. I didn't particularly care for the taste of ocean ducks. Mallards are good; goose is good. Despite what they say, there's not much meat on a goose either. Mallard was about the best.

"Of course, there were always the clams and other seafood, as long as the tide was out."

Did he fish before going to Woody Island, or is that where he learned to fish also?

"We made a trip to Larson Bay. We had relatives over there. In fact, my grandfather's, Nick Fadaoff's, sister lived there. We called her Fanny. Her husband Billy Hughes took me out fishing the first time in my life. Purse seining. They called it siwash seining, because it was all muscle power.

"Before we moved to the island, I met a man called Bernie Lindsey. I was about 11 and he took me out commercial fishing. He had a boat called the Gray Goose. We went aboard another big tender boat and took it to Cook Inlet and caught kings there. That was my second experience.

"Then when we got to Woody there, of course, I fished half share with the uncles whenever they needed crew, which helped out considerably at home. When I turned 17 or 18, I managed to buy a boat for a dollar that Paul and I rebuilt and made it into a purse seiner. Paul and Johnny and I fished that.

Who did they buy it from?

"I bought it from Al Anderson. We called it the Hawk Eye. Ironically, it used to belong to Ray Harmon. He had that before he bought the one he got lost in. Before Al Anderson bought it, Rudy Sundberg owned it. Rudy bought it from Ray Harmon.

"There was a bet going on that we were too young and we didn't have the experience.

Who was betting?

"Well, the FAA was, my brother Ron. (Laughs.) We got it over to Woody. After we got it floated we corked it. Back then on Long Island there was an abundant bunch of gun swabs. They used to swab the barrels of their guns on Long Island. We brought a bunch over and used it to cork the Hawk Eye to, at least, float it to Woody. That's what we used.

"We got it over there and one of the FAA men, Frank Johnson, pulled it up above the water with a Cat and we built it up to where it was sitting on four big 50-gallon drums. And then we proceeded to rebuild it. Took us two months. Didn't have anything on it. No wheelhouse or anything. Just a black hull. We built a wheelhouse in it. Put the engine in it. It had an old Model A engine in it. (That Model A engine is probably still on Woody.) We took that out. My uncle, Buddy Scholl here in town, gave me an engine to put in it that we ran the first year. It was a Gray Marine. They called it a Lugger (sp?) model. (Laughs.) It was slow. There was no other word for it. It was slow. But we put the first season in with that.

"We were a few days late getting out, but we did get it out there. A manager in one of the canneries down here, used to be Packers before the tidal wave, backed us with a seine and everything we needed to get ready, simply because the boat used to belong to Ray Harmon and he fished for him. They took a chance on us. We went out and didn't do so well that year. We went in the hole, as a matter of fact. Frankly I didn't really know that much about running a boat. After the season, around the island and over on Long Island, I was taking logs off the beach to cut up as firewood. I was towing a log raft back to Woody and the engine blew. So I sent a skiff to shore to my Uncle Buddy, who had the Ellen C., part of the fleet of boats on Woody, and he towed me back. He pulled the Hawk Eye back and we pulled it up on the beach, below the house this time, so the search was on for another engine. By spring, Buddy Scholl rounded up another engine for us. It was a little KrissCraft engine this time. It was his own; he sold it to us and he put it in for us.

"We got all the supplies and waited for the opening. The next day we were going to pull out. I had the boat anchored below the house. Woke up early the next morning, I had to make the run early to make it out to the bay at Kalsin. It was so foggy I couldn't see my hand in front of me. But I had to get out. So I told Mom I was going to head out anyhow. I was going stay on a right hand bearing and so I can't go anywhere but back inside the bay, so I headed out. We made it! Paul and Johnny were my crew.

"We did really good that year. We outfished my uncles, actually. That was the year we bought the oil stove for Mom. Yeah, we brought 20 drums of oil. Of course, fuel was a lot cheaper then.

"The temperament of my uncles varied when I outfished them. James, he was mad. He was ready to shoot me. Edson, he got a bang out of that. He said, "All right. Way to go.

Be happy." Buddy, he was kind of a grumpy guy, but he didn't have anything bad to say. (Laughs.) Of course, he didn't have anything good to say either."

What were his grandmother and step-grandfather, Ella and Mike Chabitnoy, like?

"When we were kids they didn't treat us like we were family. There was something there didn't quite jibe with my Mom. It was something that happened."

So it wasn't just some sort of bad feelings between his aunt and his mother, but with the rest of the family as well?

"Right. There was something. I've got my theories, but that's all they are. I've done some research. It stems, from what I've seen, to the Mike Chabitnoy side of the family. In fact I got some interesting e-mail from another source over in Hershey, Penssylvania, that I kind of just let drop because I didn't want to let the cat out of the barrel. I don't even like to mention it. They're skeletons in the closet. As far as I'm concerned they can stay there."

Perhaps he should record it sometime just for himself and his family members.

"Oh, I've got a pretty good file on it. I have a lot of history on that. I've got it in their own words. Well it was Mike Chabitnoy. He wasn't exactly who he claimed he was. He (may have) abandoned one family and .... It's too big of a story to tell." (Later research seems to indicate there may actually have been two Mike Chabitnoys – cousins who were born a few years apart.)

He already had another family by the time he met Mitch's grandmother?

"Yeah, (it seems) he let it be known that he drowned up here, to the family there. As far as they know..."

This sounds familiar. Is there some connection to somebody in Nome?

"No, that's Ray Harmon. (Laughs.) There is a lot of intrigue in our family! He's another one who's supposed to have been lost at sea. The one who had actually died was my grandfather, Nick Fadaoff."

It sounded like Mike Chabitnoy had done a lot for the kids, things like building sleds for them, teaching them things. Is that not true?

"Not Chabitnoy! Not for me, he didn't. He might have been for the other cousins and stuff, but not our family. Not until later, until we got to the age that we didn't have to take it from them anymore. The attitude kind of changed. He actually talked to us then!"

He was better to the cousins, the Simeonoff family?

"I don't know. It was kind of like a caste system. If you get down to it, the Chabitnoys weren't any better off. It was all a front. It was kind of fake. All the uncles still lived at home back then. After they left the service, Granny and Grandfather put a false front on like they were, I don't know, like they weren't Natives, or they were less Native than we were."

Did Mitch feel that they thought they were better than his family?

"Yeah."

Why does Mitch think that?

"I don't know. It all changed after the ANCSA stuff. Then everybody became full-blooded Natives in a hurry.

"But after we got past the age of being little kids anymore, of course, nobody took anymore BS off the uncles. Mostly James.

"Once they found out we weren't going to take any more, they kind of backed down. (Then it became) more like family. But the attitude toward Mom was still... I don't know what happened. Then after Mike Chabitnoy died, I think it was 1958, things changed a little. Mom and Granny got a little closer. So I think the problem was with Mike Chabitnoy.

"A lot of the documentary of the family that's been put out, they have Natalie down as the oldest sister. Actually, it was my mom who was the oldest one, the firstborn. There is a picture of her, well it's actually a picture of my grandmother onboard a boat here in the harbor during the Katmai eruption. It's my grandmother holding my mom and one of Mom's feet sticking out of the blanket. That's all you can see, but that was her. It was 1912, I believe.

When did Mitch's mom die?

1973. She was born in 1912. She seemed a lot older (than 61). She seemed awfully old to me. She'd had a hard life. Extremely hard, compared to the rest of the family. Things changed after we got old enough to help, but by then life had taken its toll on her. Ernie Hartle.

How long was she married to him?

"I would say somewhere between seven or eight years. What happened was they went to Eastern Washington, he picked fruit over there during the season, and I guess he had her up in a cherry tree or something and she fell off the cherry picker and broke her hip. Of course, he told us a different story. I got this from another source. Told us she tripped over a clump of grass and broke her hip, but that wasn't the case.

"Anyway, I talked to her in the hospital and I was just going to go over to see her there, then one morning I got a call from Ernie. All he had to do was say, "Mitch," and I knew right away what it was. She just gave up. She gave up on life. She was tired and out of her element, she was in a place she didn't know, in a hospital she didn't know and her life ended right there."

Sounds as though Mitch was very close to her, considering he didn't get to know her until halfway through his childhood.

"Yeah, she was a great mom. I did everything I could to help her. Ron and I added two rooms to the cabin, I actually piped water into the house with hot and cold running water. It all happened within about a year."

Was that when Mitch made all that money fishing?

"No we didn't need money for that. Most of the materials were there. My uncle helped us pull his old piping out of Lower Lake. My brother Maurice and I piped it from the water tower down to the house. We did that in one day. It was probably 1955 or 1956. Of course, once the water was in, we didn't stop there. We put a bathtub and a toilet, a sink. Made a pretty nice little home out of it."

How long did his mom stay there?

"Oh, seemed like everybody started getting itchy feet right around 1960. In 1960 I went in the service, I got back out and got married. I was working here in Kodiak. My job was here; it wasn't on Woody Island anymore. The island was loosing its population, growing up and dying off."

Was that the last time Mitch lived on Woody Island?

"Yeah, I never did go back to live. 1960, when I went into the service."

Why were so many people leaving at that time?

"Well, the FAA was thinning down. There was actually no work there. They weren't totally gone, but they were phasing out. The Native population, for the most part ... well, after my grandfather Chabitnoy died, my grandmother moved to town here. Cecil and James still lived over there. That's another sad story there... I'd go over, I'd stay off and on, but I wasn't permanently staying over there. If I needed to get out of town, I'd go batching home for a while."

What was the story with James? Was that his Uncle James?

"Yeah. He was living in my grandmother's house. I guess he got drunk and had a rage or something; he pushed his girlfriend and, I guess, she tripped and hit her head on the stove and it killed her. He went up on manslaughter. I don't know. James had a personality... I

don't know... there was something wrong there. He was getting ready to be discharged from McNeal Island to come back home. Rather than face the people here -- in his own mind, I guess, he thought that he couldn't handle it -- so he took his life at McNeal. So he's buried down there on McNeal Island.

"He was a social outcast. He didn't know how to deal with people. Kind of like me. I think we're all a little like that.

"Growing up on the island... That was our island! It didn't belong to anybody else. We didn't care what our grandparents thought of us or anything. Even if we were ragamuffins, it was our island and we did what we wanted!

Does "our island" mean the kids' island?

"Yup! There's just something about it, on that island even now. You can go on there and you can feel the past kind of come on you there. Mom used to tell me stories – I don't remember a heck of a lot about them – but hey would fascinate me and I'd wish that I could have been a part of the past instead of the time period that I was there. But I'd have dreams at night that I would pass through a portal and I'd be in old Woody Island."

What did he see in those dreams?

"Oh, just the old buildings. I remember them old buildings right there (pointing to pictures from just past the turn of the century). It was kind of neat, even though it was just a dream. And, of course, when you go to the island, you know right away that your roots are there. It's just a feeling that comes over you – memories.

"My brother Paul and I were out hunting rabbits one time and we got into the brush behind the old Mission barn. I don't know if it's still standing or not. We were going through the brush looking for rabbit, and down by my foot there happened to be a headstone lying there; well, not a headstone, but a board and it was carved round; it had the name of a kid on it from probably the 1890s. I got to looking around and there was a whole cemetery.

We went back and asked Mom about it, but she didn't know anything about it. We went and asked my grandmother and, of course, she didn't know anything about it either. Logically, it had to have been the Mission cemetery. The woods had encroached further towards the beach and overgrown it. Anyway, we found that and it's probably good that we did, because it will now be part of the archives."

Surprising his grandmother didn't know about it, as she was in the Mission as a child.

"Yeah, she was put in the Mission in 1906. Oh, no no, no. Wait a minute. Must have been 1896 or 1894." (According to Chaffin book she arrived to the Mission Orphanage in 1901.)

Where was she from originally?

"Perryville, Sand Point, out that neck of the woods."

So she grew up in the Mission and just stayed on the island?

(She stayed in the Mission) until she got married. I don't even know if my grandmother was Orthodox or Baptist. (Laughs.) I have a tendency to believe she was more Baptist than Orthodox because my grandfather, Nick, was a devout Orthodox, and when they got married they had both a Baptist wedding and an Orthodox wedding."

What about Mike Chabitnoy?

"I don't know too much about Mike. He was ornery. I know that much. He was ornery. Actually there was kind of a fear of him. I don't know where it stemmed from, his actions or what? I think it was fear. I don't think it was respect because he didn't actually do anything to respect him about. Then in later years he got kind of close to me. In fact, he helped me pull the engine out of the Hawk Eye and put it back in just before he died.

"He used to trap beaver on the island. There is a picture of him standing by the pelts. When I was younger over there, I got a hold of a car. They called it a FrameMobile. It was a Willy's. We pulled the cabin off and we were just riding on the frame with an engine and a seat."

Was that the Road Apple?

"Yes, that's what it became known as. It became part of the history over there. The old Road Apple. Everybody loved to ride in it, including my grandfather Chabitnoy. He liked to go check his traps and he liked to ride in the Road Apple to do it. I remember one time I didn't feel like going and running the trap lines, so I told James to go ahead and use the Road Apple. That was when... I was kind of glad it was James who took him, because that's when he had his heart attack and died. He died out on the trap line. Had some kind of premonition. I didn't want to be the one (out there with him). Premonitions run strong in our family."

Among all family members?

"Yeah, when something is wrong in the family, you can feel it, sense it."

Does Mitch still have those premonitions?

"Yeah. Oh, yeah. That happened when Lex died. I had the same feeling. There was trouble."

How did he die?

"He was an alcoholic. He died of complications due to that. In Seattle. That was a waste. The guy had a college education. He could have been anything from a doctor to a diesel mechanic. But he preferred the bottom of the bottle. He was a diesel mechanic, but he could have been anything. He has a son who is just as smart as he was. Alcohol plays a big part in our family, too."

In Mitch's generation, or in all the generations?

"I could say that it did at one time with all of us. I personally don't drink any more. I haven't in years. My brother Paul, it almost killed him, so he quit. He doesn't drink anymore. My brother Maurice has a drink or two a day. My sisters, I don't know."

TAPE #2

When did Mitch stop drinking? Did something happen to make him stop drinking?

"Several things made me stop drinking. I wasn't a real bad alcoholic, but being Native there's something about not being able to handle alcohol. When I met my wife we were both drinkers. We got along fine until we stuck our noses in the stupid beer bottle, and then anything would lead to an argument. When you get to the point when you can't stand yourself anymore then something's got to give. I quit just cold turkey back in '91. She quit just shortly after that. Now I don't even like the smell of it. The same with cigarettes. I can't stand the smell of cigarettes anymore. I used to smoke two packs a day.

"Strange thing about Woody Island, I don't know how anything with such a storybook background, that's actually documented, with so many firsts like the first road, the first ships and all that, that were built there, the first horses in Alaska... It's so strange that it has totally disappeared. I mean to go over there and look at the island, you wouldn't even know unless there was a documentary on it that all that was actually there. There is very little of where the icehouse was. There is a point out there with a few mounds that shows the sawdust that they used to line the icehouse with. At Icehouse Point. Very little remains of the old dock, the one where they delivered the ice. That was the concrete one."

Are there still some remains of the flume?

"Very little. What remains is a few concrete pilings that have since fallen over down on the beach, and the old earthen dam is still there, from when they raised the level of Upper Lake to make more ice. I guess when they rebuilt it, they didn't build it as high as it was before and that had an effect on Lower Lake. Now Lower Lake is lower, and there is less water flowing in that lake and it's drying out. Of course, the earthquake (and tidal wave) didn't help either. It still purges, but not very much."

It's dry now?

"Well it's shallow, and it's filled up with a lot of silt. It's not like it used to be. It was our old swimming hole."

What does Mitch miss most about the island?

"Living there! I miss the old times. I know they can't ever be again, but... Memories are priceless, do you know that?

"The Old Russian Church, I was baptized in that. That's gone. Back in 1950 when we moved back to the island, you could walk into the church. It still had, hanging down from the dome, a really huge crystal chandelier. That was there. In the vestibule was still the pot-belly heater. Behind the altar, there was a bowl that still had money in it! There used to be a big flag against the back wall. I don't know who put it there.

"The fall of that church was when Agnes' boyfriend, his name was Mike Bejerken, started cutting the unobvious side of it. He was cutting it down and hauling it off as firewood. When the Church here found out about it, they had it torn down and burned. They fenced in the altar area. Nicholas -- that was Nicholas Pavloff -- thought that was kind of holy ground because the only place that trees were growing was inside that fenced in area where the altar was. But my theory is it's the only place the cows couldn't eat the trees.

"There are still cows over there now. A few wild ones are still roaming around. I know there are on Long Island."

How did the families on the island get along? What were the interactions like?

"They came and went. I got along fine with most everybody there. I don't know why that was. Well everybody had their own group; everybody had their own clique they used to run with. I didn't have problems. Well, Cecil and them were kind of uppity. The Simeonoffs I got along fine with. Kelly Simeonoff, Buster's dad, was my godfather. He had his lighter sides; his more tender sides. I think they all did, actually."

How about people from the other side, the FAA side?

"Oh, they more or less considered us... I don't know. They called us Indians or Natives. We used to go to the movies and stuff, but other than that we didn't associate much except for going to school.

"I graduated from Woody. I graduated when it was a territory. My brothers graduated when it was a state. I graduated in 1952 or 1953. I won a scholarship. I won an art scholarship".

Does Mitch still create artwork?

"Off and on. I'm starting to pick it up again now that I have more time on my hands. I do paintings and drawings and I carve.

"Yeah, I went directly out of Woody Island when I got that scholarship to Sheldon Jackson. That was through the Lions Club, the Kodiak Lions Club. Of course, I had two years on that, but things were tough at home so I had to give that up. I went back home. That's when the roof and everything got put on the house."

Did he ever go back to school?

"No, I never did. I... because of my hip I got out of the draft. I dodged that. Then in 1960 I joined." (Laughs.)

Where did he end up?

"Fort Ord, California. Somehow the Sundbergs have a picture of me in uniform."

How long was he at Fort Ord?

"I got caught up with my bum hip. I was coming back off of bivouac and I tripped. The sergeant asked me, 'What's the matter with you, boy?' 'Well,' I said, 'my leg got tired. I had a broken leg.' He said, 'You what? How did you get through basic with a fused hip?' 'Well, they put me through!' He told the other guys, 'I want you to take note. This man here has only got one good leg and he's doing twice as good as all of you!' They tried to get me to stay in.

"Before I went in, I took a course in radio. That was my highest score when I went in. So they tried to get me to stay in and take up radio. Of course, that was during the time of the Korean War. I knew if I took up radio, I'd undoubtedly be a radio man with that big antenna sticking up there with a flag on it and a big red circle on my back. I said, 'No, thanks,' and I came back home.

"That's when I got married to my first wife, here in Kodiak, and I went to work for the marine repair shop down here, because of the models that I built. They hired me to work on boats. I did that until the place burned down. Something got into the ducts in there, the heat ducts; sawdust or something. I heard the sirens going off and I looked out and there was big red glow in the sky. There was the repair shop going up in smoke.

"We started to rebuild that. That was around January of 1964. We started putting up the new dock pilings, but it was 1964 and the big wham hit us there. (Good Friday earthquake and tidal wave.) It whacked everything out."

Sounds like that marine repair shop just wasn't meant to be there!

"Nothing was. This is nothing like it used to be (looking out the window at downtown Kodiak).

"My wife happened to be on vacation. I sent her outside to visit her folks, just days before the tidal wave. After the earthquake, within a week I was on my way down there. I've been there ever since. Of course, I went to work for a different company down there, and waited for my ship to come in. Well, it came in the form of a crabber. I started fishing king crab out of Seattle, out West and on the Chain, down in Dutch Harbor and Adak. I fished out there for several years. That was the downfall of my first marriage. Back then you fished nine months out of the year. You went home for a week at Christmas. It was a hard nine months. Of course, the boats back then were nothing like what they've got right now. We used to crab in matchboxes back then!" (Laughs.)

How long did he do that?

"I put in seven seasons. I made my last crab trip out of Kodiak here. I flew up to go salmon fishing that year. This is after my divorce. I was single, in 1968. Went salmon fishing and didn't do so good, so my brother Paul and I jumped onto a crabber called the Joe B. and we went fishing in the south end of Kodiak that year. We thought we had a skipper, but he wasn't."

He wasn't a good skipper, or he wasn't there?

"He was a fair-weather skipper, let's put it that way. We went out to try to pick up our gear and it was flat calm. There wasn't a wave out there – that we would consider a wave. Further down near Geesy Island, there was a crabber down there, bucking high winds, so he got scared and he turned around and went in. Well, the winds never did hit our area. That evening he decides to head for town. He makes a run from Old Harbor to Kodiak here and we ran into a problem off Cape Chiniak. We started taking water. Paul was on watch. He was just getting ready to take the wheel. He went down and looked out the back galley and the stern was underwater. He came running back to me and said, 'Mitch, you'd better get down here. We're sinking.' So right away the skipper grabs the wheel and freezes there and says, 'See what you can do.' Got down there and, sure enough, the stern is completely underwater. We were also taking water over the front. It knocked down our radar. We were running blind, but we could see the buoys. Of course, the nearest help was the mother ship, which was three hours behind us. Kodiak was still three hours ahead of us, so we didn't have much choice."

So they continued toward Kodiak?

"Well, what we did was, Paul and I went down to the engine room. What happened, somebody had shaved some kind of wood or something and left it in the bilge. I don't know when. Probably when they put a plank on or something. That plugged the pump line, so it couldn't pump out.

"Well, one day we were blown in there, in a bay down south, for want of something to do we got an air compressor that wasn't working, so we overhauled it. So because of overhauling that air compressor, we had air to blow back through the pump line to clear

the obstacles out of there. We were working underwater, trying to get this done. We got the pumps to work and in about an hour we were floating high again. Made it into Kodiak. Just one of the harrowing tales of being a crab fisherman. (Laughs.) That was our last trip.

"There are a lot interesting stories on Woody Island. I've got a list at home that I was going to bring, but I forgot it on my desk. I have hopes of kind of throwing a book together.

"When we first moved back over there and we moved into the Pavloff house, which, incidentally, burned down years ago. There's nothing left of that. I could look out my upstairs window and the first thing I could see out towards Upper Lake was this big, huge maple tree. I always wondered how it got there. Why just one? And why over there on the other side of the lake?

"When we were kids we used to have treasure hunts. We would put a treasure together. Those games would last for days. Drawing maps and drawing false hints. Cecil and I put one together. Granny had a glass menagerie of animals, hand-blown glass. We put it all in a tin box and took it up there and buried it at the base of that big maple tree. Of course, we drew this map with all sorts of pitfalls and everything else, false leads and all that to get to this (treasure). We put a bunch of old pennies in there, too, dated back to 1911. Well, that was fine. The game lasted until one day Cecil and I were walking up by Upper Lake and looked over by where the old maple tree (should have been) and it wasn't there! It was down! The beavers had singled that tree out. They gnawed it down and buried our treasure. It's there to this day. It's still buried.

"Then there's the Sol Joy, over by Crab Lagoon – we just called it Salt Lake, that's all I've ever known it. When we were kids it was more like two lakes. There was the north lake and it narrowed down and there was this other lake, Salt Lake. But over by the second lake, where it dumps into the bay, there's part of this old ship that had been washed up. I always called it the Ship at the Bottom of the Lake and nobody believes me, but it's there."

What kind of ship?

"A big schooner. It was called the Tilamook. It went down way back at the turn of the century on that north end of Woody Island and a big storm blew part of it into the lake. It's still there. It was there when I was a kid and pieces of it still drift around the island. They show up every now and then. There are archival pictures of the Tilamook on the rocks at the north end of Woody before it broke up. (One historical reference says the Tilamook wrecked in Lower Lake.) They were part of the evidence that Leisnoi had in their case. I believe (Frank) Feichtinger has it in his office.

"I talked to Frank just last week. I don't know, I heard somebody say that some of the archival stuff had disappeared and they didn't have it anymore. I don't know who would have it. It would have to be in the hands of somebody on the board or someone like that.

"I talked to Jack Fitzgerald who is still on the case, too. Talking to him, it didn't appear he had any of the evidence there. It wouldn't be his job to have it, anyhow. Anyway, I'd love to have some of those pictures." (The Tribal Council is trying to get as much of it together in one place as possible.)

Does Mitch speak Alutiiq?

"No. I don't think too many people do anymore. I believe they teach it. But my mom was fluent in – I don't know if you call it Alutiiq or it was a dialect of Aleut and Russian. But she could speak Russian too, which was probably a dialect of Russian and Alutiiq. I don't know. Johnny Maliknak used to talk a lot of what I believe is Aleut. And I know that what Nikolai spoke was Aleut. It was a very guttural language."

Did he pick up any words?

"Just the usual cuss words! Stuff like that. Nothing useful. (Laughs.) I don't even remember them anymore."

Did anybody keep a journal or diary?

"Yeah, my brother Dan did. He lived over there. He loved that island about as much as I do. He batched over there for a lot of years. In fact he found a lot of the sites after the earthquake and tidal wave. Over on the sawmill side it exposed an old Aleut settlement. He had a diary about his time on the island there. Whatever happened to it, I don't know. It might have been with Mom's stuff after she passed away, and then Ernie did away with all of that, so I believe it's lost. Or it might have been still in the house, and it was burned up, too."

Is there anything left at the site where the house was burned, or was it also bulldozed?

"No, they didn't bulldoze anything over there, that I know of. The old garage foundation is still there, for the Road Apple. There is an indent where the house used to be. For a lot of years the old outhouse was there. It was the last building to fall. There's no evidence of it there anymore. I was building a chicken coop just before we all moved off the island. The foundation for that was still there. It was there on one of my previous trips to the island. In fact they have mistaken it for a barabara foundation, but it was the old garden site."

Where was that in relation to the house?

"Well the house sat on the hill. It was just down towards the left, off the hill. A place that somebody's named it Harmon Pond is below the house. Where it narrows down is where the garden was on the hillside. I dug it before I went fishing and I seeded it and I thought Mom and the girls would take care of it. Well, with no running water and not enough rain to do much good that year... We did get some produce out of it, but not a bumper crop. I

don't have a green thumb. I think I tried it the next year, too, but I want to it all wrong. It was a bummer, because I watched the Chaffins grow their garden and get huge cabbages. When we were kids, we used to raid their garden. Eat their fresh carrots."

Did Mitch get along with the Chaffins?

"Yeah, I got along with Darrel. In fact, he was my boss when I went to work there. Yule is a little different. I don't know, what can I say? Yule is Yule."

What does he mean by that?

"Well she was one of Granny's best friends. Granny had her buffaloed. She was not pro-Native. She liked to think of that island as her own. She was kind of phony. It was a phony friendship. Granny... I don't know... you can't change the fact that you're Native. If you think you're white..."

Does Mitch have any idea why his grandmother wouldn't want to be Native?

"I don't know, I think she wanted to be like the FAA folks there. The impression with them was that they were wealthy, they had money. That might have been true, but grandmother, I think she tried to hide the fact that she was Native. She'd rather have been FAA or like that. What I meant by a sense of phoniness is they could be just as hungry as we were, but they didn't let on. They kept their empty cans and filled their cupboards with their empty cans in case someone from the FAA came around, they could open their cupboards and see all the cans and it would look full. I don't know what brought it on or why...

"Actually, that house that my grandmother and grandfather had over there, I call it the Fadaoff house. I don't call it the Chabitnoy house even though it's more known as the Chabitnoy house. During the epidemic, it was like a hospital. Most of the Natives who were sick came there. It had seen a lot of hard times and a whole lot of death, more than one house should have seen. Some of the stories I've heard about it, that it was haunted... I don't know. When I'd go in there, there was a strange feel about it.

"There was Nick Fadaoff and another man, I can't remember the name, that dug the mass grave. They were dying so fast they couldn't bury them in single graves, so they put them all in a mass grave, including (Chief) Nanjack."

There were about 26 people who were buried in the mass grave?

"I believe that's correct. There is a list of names of who is in there."

Is there a marker where the mass grave is?

"No."

Really? Nothing?

"Nope."

Does Mitch know where it is?

"I've got an idea. That's what I was talking to Chris (Wooley) about at our last meeting. If there was some kind of detector we can use to determine if the ground is disturbed or not."

Is there such a thing?

"He said, yes, there is. I'd like to work with him on that. I'd like to see that turn into a historical site."

What about employment on the island?

"Other than the FAA, there really wasn't that much employment there. That's one of the reasons the population dwindled. The work was here on Kodiak. The biggest employment there that we depended on was the seasonal fishing. One of the things about Woody Island is that there is no shelter, no harbor for the boats. That's not saying that there couldn't be, but back then there wasn't."

Where did Woody islanders keep their boats? Did they keep them in Kodiak?

"Well, I hauled the Hawk Eye out, and they brought the rest of them into town here."

Does Mitch have a vision for Woody Island?

"Kind of like my grandfather (Nick Fadaoff) I'd like to put people back on the island, like he did after the population was decimated by flue epidemic.

"It's a perfect place to raise a kid. Can't get in trouble there. I'd like to see whoever has a dream or desire to go back and live there be able to do that. Pete Resoff did a survey to see who would like to move back. Fifty-six said they wanted to return. Half said they wanted to live there and half said they wanted to have property there. I think it was in 1992 and it was sent to all the shareholders. The Tribal Council survey came back about the same.

"It's a dream. I don't know if it will ever happen. My family wouldn't hesitate to move back there. Leanna I think is too westernized to go back to that life. She's a professional and has got her job down there. For her it would be like a summer home or something like that.

"Me, I miss the land and if I had to do it over again I'd jump at it!

"Summertime on Woody Island is -- you couldn't believe it -- it's just a beautiful place to be. The lakes, with the exception of Salt Lake, they're all full of trout. Elephant Lake has land-locked silvers. I don't know what's in Una Lake."

Is it still possible to get to some of those lakes?

"There's a road over to Elephant Lake. You can walk to Tanignak Lake. "

Is that the same as Upper Lake?

"Yeah, that's Upper Lake."

Does Yule Chaffin still go back to the island every summer?

"She was there last summer. But she broke her hip. I don't know whether it was on the island or going home from the island. I think last year was her last trip. Her daughter still goes. Patricia still goes. In fact, she'll probably be there this year. She and Leanna were best friends. Probably still are. (They are the same age.)"

Would Mitch say he has mostly good memories, or some bitter memories?

"I don't know how there could be any bad memories. If there was, it was probably caused by people. It sure wasn't the land. I would say for the most part they are all good memories, or I wouldn't be wanting to go back. Times were very tough when we were kids, but if I had to do it over again, I'd do it again. Maybe change things so they're a little different."

What would he change?

"Well, I don't think we'd be as hungry! (Laughs.) Just so the little guys would have something to eat. Angeline always used to take care of us. She was a grandmother to us, more than our grandmother was."

Paul had said something similar.

"Yeah. You could always get a cup of tea and a slice of bread up there. The only thing I didn't eat up there was the duck soup. I didn't like to see them heads floating around in there. (Laughs.) I might be needy, but I draw the line!"

Was Angeline about the same age as Ella? Were they of the same generation?

"I think so."

Were Angeline and Ella friends?

"Yeah. Yeah. They had a name for them two. I think this is a phrase from Yule Chaffin from her book that my grandmother was the matriarch of the South Village and Angeline was the matriarch of the North Village. Now how they had come to be that, I don't know.

"The history of Woody Island goes beyond anything that I can say. Even what my grandmother could say. To me the history of Woody Island is even beyond the influence of Russian Europeans. I think that's where the true history of the island is. A lot of the people who claim to be Woody Islanders, I don't know if there really is that many true Woody Islanders. Even my grandmother wasn't an islander."

Does Mitch know anybody who can trace his or her roots way back?

"Boy, I don't know. I can trace it on my grandfather's side, on the Fafaoff side. And even then, there was no... I believe they were nomadic. You can trace a lot of the lineage from Woody Island down to Eagle Harbor, where I mentioned they brought people from. And Uganik was another one. My great-great-grandfather was from Uganik. Actually the name originated in Russia. You can trace the roots clear back there. Fadaoff. I can trace Gregorioff further."

Is there any aspect of living on the island that we have not touched on that we should make note of?

"Oh, there are a lot of legends and lore that kind of borders on superstition. That kind of stuff. Some of it is kind of far-fetched and I think a lot of it was due to the fact that when you are a kid you have a tendency to get in trouble and if adults told the stories of this and that, then it would keep you out of trouble. And some of it stemmed back from the time when the epidemics – and there has been more than one epidemic in the area around here; 1918 was just one – but there was a legend from the old Mission there that centered around a black dog that used to roam the halls of the Mission. They called him the Black Dormitory Dog. But there was no such thing. He was seen as a ghost-type thing. And it was said that he was seen just before somebody was about to die. I kind of believe that probably came from during the epidemic. That was told to me by my mom and also by my grandmother.

"And then there is kind of a legend of a little black man that was supposed to have been seen on the island. I've never seen it. Well, I've seen something, I don't know. (Laughs.) I was walking home one night. Paul and I, we both saw it. It was something black that just kind of faded into the shadows and then moved on. But it was four-legged and it was pretty big. There were no black dogs on the island. But this little black man that's something else. That's a story that my grandmother told, and my mom, and also Mike Chabitnoy. He's just a little guy and he wonders around at night and if you've seen him, ill will befalls you. There was a guy, in fact he was my brother Ron's friend, Marvin -- they grew up in the Mission together here in Kodiak. Anyway, they were over there and Marvin was walking from the Pavloff house down to the beach to come back to town. He had to go past the old church and this is where the guy was supposed to have been seen most of the time. He said he saw that thing there and ran. He wasn't watching where he

was running and he ran right off the bluff. There may be some truth to that, I don't know."

What about ghosts in the house, and hearing footsteps? (That was a story by one of Mitch's siblings.)"

"Well, my grandmother's house. Of course, there's a lot that's happened there. It was a spooky place. I don't know, I didn't especially care for it. I never spent a night there, except for when I was a kid."

Was that the house in the picture of Mitch and his grandmother in the kitchen?

"No, that wasn't even on Woody Island. That was here in town. That picture of me pouring tea, that was the day before I went into the service. The notation in the book is wrong."

So, then it wasn't the house she was given by Chief... .

"Nanjak."

Chief Nanjak? Not Chief Yellow Pants?

"No. Yellow Pants was on the Maliknak side."

Then that must be another wrong notation, because it says she got the house from Chief Yellow Pants.

"No. It was Nanjak. And it was my grandfather (Nick Fadaoff) who got the house, not my grandmother. It was my grandfather who inherited the house. You see, Nanjak adopted my grandfather."

Do Mitch's siblings know these stories?

"My brothers do. I haven't told the rest of the family. Of course, my wife knows."

What would their reactions be?

"Given the way we were treated, they'd probably think, yeah, it's true. I know it's true. I have written proof of it."

What are some of the other legends? Paul said all the brothers once heard unexplainable footsteps when they were in the addition part of their mother's house.

"Yeah. That happened. There are several instances that happened there, that could be questionable. Of course, you know Natives are a superstitious lot anyhow. (Laughs.) They can turn anything into a ghost story. But I used to spend time over there alone.

"Instead of living way off in one of the bedrooms, I moved everything into the kitchen area. I had the stove there, so I could keep warm there and I just blanketed off the rest of the house."

Was Mitch living there by himself?

"Yeah. Mom's old bread-making pan was still hanging there behind the stove. One night I woke up and that thing was rattling away and I could hear something that sounded like somebody breathing. Well, the surf on the beach, when it gets a low, murmuring surf, sounds like somebody breathing. So I can discard that sound. But the pan, why it would rattle every now and then, I don't know. And then, yeah, the footsteps would come. Through the house, and they would stop at the addition that my brothers and I built."

Even when Mitch was there alone?

"Yep. Another thing happened when I was staying there. My uncle James was still alive. He was living in my grandmother's house. He was batching it there. I was up at Johnny's playing cards and it was kind of late at night. James came up to the house to get something. He knocked on the door, but, of course, I was up at Johnny's. When he knocked, somebody knocked back from the other side. So he thought it was me, playing games and he opened the door, but there was nobody there. Then he heard another knock from the hatch. As you come through the front door, there was a hatchway up there. A lot of our stuff was stored there. He heard that knock coming from the hatchway, but he knew I wasn't up there. He kind of backed out and went home. But when I came home, I didn't hear anything. (Laughs)

"There was another time he was kind of living in the house. It was easier to heat that little house than my grandmother's big house, so he was living there. I had moved to town. So one day I went to visit him. He wanted to borrow my guitar. So I took it over to him. It would give him something to do. He said, 'Mitch, I'm moving back to the big house.' I said, 'Why? Isn't this easier to heat.' He said, 'Somebody tapped me on the shoulder last night while I was sleeping. I looked up and there was a young man standing there looking at me. It looked like you.' I said, 'James, I wasn't even here. I was in Kodiak.' He said, 'I know that.'

"I think Dora's son's name was Michael. Dora Miller, who owned the house. I'd heard that he had been killed in California. I don't know, maybe it was his spirit or something like that. Anyway, nobody ever got hurt. If they were spirits, they were friendly; they just scared the heck out of you! With the exception of the Little Black Man, I don't think there was anything to worry about. We heard a lot of stories, even from my grandmother and my grandfather. It was handed down to me through my grandmother.

"Out by Garden Beach, my grandfather went clam digging one night, he and one of his friends. Of course, you dig clams out on the reefs – butter clams. He was going out on the reef and he saw a light in front of him. He thought it was his friend, so he started going for the lantern and he kept following it. The lantern stayed in front of him. Suddenly he

realized there was water up to his neck and the lantern was still going. What the reasoning behind that one is, I don't know. But something tried to lure him out into deep water.

"Another time we boys came across to Kodiak here to the movies. There was a movie we wanted to see. We were rowing our boat across. After the movie it was foggy. It fogged in during the movies. We sat on the dock and debated whether to row across or not. We decided to do it. But Mom was worried about us. She knew us better than we thought. She knew that we would try to do it. She looked out there and said she could see a glow out there in the fog. But we didn't have any lights. It was just a rowboat!

"Then there were the stories about the shamans. Not about the shamans, but where they used to live. A lot of things happened when we were out rabbit hunting, maybe because we covered a lot of territory. We cut straight across the island. It was an area I'd never been before, out towards the center. I came to a hilly are and I started going up the hill and it got quiet, deadly quiet. No birds signing, there was nothing. It was just dead still. I thought that was strange. I looked around and the trees seemed dead. The moss was just hanging off of it. It gave me the willies and I backtracked and got out of there.

"James used to cut my hair and I used to go down to my grandmother's. That evening I went to see James and I told my grandmother about it. She told me that's where the old shaman used to live. It was way back there towards the center of the island. There were two places where two different shamans lived. One was at Una's Hill.

"Year's ago Danny was just a little guy and there was a family on the FAA side called the Lees. His name was Pappy Lee and Danny and them were inseparable, along with Freddy. One night they went on a camping trip and they camped up on Una's Hill. Everything was going fine and as far as we knew there was nothing that would bother them there. By 9 o'clock that night, in comes Danny, just white-faced, the Lee boys behind him, and he told us there was something back there screaming. He said it sounded like an old woman was screaming at him. They said they threw their water on the fire and left. We asked if the fire went out and they said yes. We didn't believe them so we went back up there and there was the fire just blazing away. (Laughs.) We didn't see anything else so we made sure the fire was put out and came home.

"Several things happened in that area. It seemed to be one of the more haunted areas of the island, or at least called haunted. During the Second World War, Cecil and Mickey were walking the beach looking for rations that used to drift up on the beach all the time. One day, toward Christmas, they found a 5-gallon can of Christmas candy. They picked it up and started walking toward home and there's a guy walking out of the water. They didn't think anything of it, and he got about halfway across the beach and they say he was walking about a foot off the beach. So the story goes, anyway. I wasn't there. In fact, that was before we moved back to the island.

"There is an old sunken ship there off Woody Island. It's a coal barge is what it is. Every once in a while some coal washes in there. It might have been part of that, I don't know. Yeah, that was pretty well known.

"As old as the island is... it goes back thousands of years... who knows what all is taking place on there.

"Another story that kind of comes to mind, in the same area, there was an old log cabin beyond Una's Lake. In fact, it was up on the next hill. We used to go camp there. About five of us guys. First we camped out below, we made a camp there but got rained out. So that became known as the Rainy Night Camp, RNC. Supposedly, right in the middle of shaman country. We spent the night in Page's Cabin. It actually belonged to Bruce Robertson's grandfather. OK, there were a bunch of us who went up there and another guy that was going to join up with us later on that evening, Charlie Johnson. Well, by the time he started over there to where we were it was almost dark. He was coming across the flats in front of Una Lake, to head up the hill towards the cabin and he saw a guy walking there. He thought it was one of us coming down to meet him, so he starts hollering and the guy walks into the woods and disappears. He came into the cabin and was all white-faced and said he'd seen something that he couldn't believe. Needless to say, that gave everybody the jitters. We packed up and left out of there. I don't know what it was. The power of suggestion or just fear of the unknown, but we weren't going to stick around to find out."

Have any of these stories been written down?

"I'm starting to now. I've got them categorized kind of like in chapters.

"Of course we had the jumping hill down there, too. That's always a good topic. I mean to this day remains come uncovered there. It proves that the graveyard is a lot bigger than what they said it measured out to be. In fact, there are graves outside the boundaries of that graveyard. One of them is from... there's an author that wrote "Son of the Smokey Sea"... Oliver, Simon Oliver. He was raised in the Jesse Lee home when he was in Unalaska and he went on to become a famous pianist. His sister was put in the Mission on Woody. She was kind of sickly and she died there. He went to see her and, of course, she had since died. He said she was buried on a knoll on the island. The knoll happens to be right below our house. There used to be a marble gravestone there that gave the name of the daughter of Simeon and Anna Oliver. That was still there. Chris Wooley wanted to know where it was, so I gave him the directions to the best of my knowledge. He said the dunes had covered it up, but he found it. Further up, coming off the beach, to the right of that was another grave. Now these graves are way out of the boundaries of the graveyard, so that graveyard is a lot bigger."

How close are they? Could they be the same graveyard?

"No. When we moved over there it still had remnants of the Orthodox cross on it. The other was down below that. Of course, remains come uncovered over there all the time."

What happens when they get uncovered? Does somebody go out and cover them up?

"Well, my uncle used to cover them. I used to bury them back up. That's about all you can do. The main reason they would become exposed like that was the cows used to walk along the edge of the Jumping Hill there and their hoof marks used to erode away the soil. The coffins were exposed and out would come the remains. Then they'd spill down the hill. All you can do is bury them on the spot there. It's kind of gruesome, but you'd find scalp with hair on it lying there. You'd find shoes.

"What's interesting there is the Mission kids on Woody Island. I guess they came across some remains one time and an old rusted Orthodox cross. I remember that cross being there when I was a kid, just lying down there. It was built out of files that somebody had welded together in the form of an orthodox cross."

What kind of files?

"Just regular steel files."

What was that cross marking?

"I don't know. It might have fallen out of a casket or something. There is a lot of spill that comes down off of that hill and kind of accumulates down on the bottom."

Ellen Pagano had mentioned a spot where military had buried a bunch of stuff before they left the island. Does Mitch know where that was?

"Who told you that?"

Ellen Pagano. Used to be Ellen Simeonoff.

"Oh. Part of the "gruesome threesome." That's me and her and Cecil. That's just what I call us. We were all born in 1937 a few months apart. That was funny. Granny and two daughters were pregnant all at once! But, come to think of it, Mom did mention some area somewhere over by the old military bone yard. That's probably where she had it in mind; near the foundation of an old house or barn or something. Now, I had heard of that on Long Island. There's ordnance buried over there. Wooley was asking me about Long Island. I don't know too much about it. I know there used to be a ranch over there before the war."

Who owns Long Island?

"That's Leisnoi. Ever been over there? We used to go to the other islands and pick up sea gull eggs. It didn't hurt the population at all. You don't take them all. You find the nest and just take one egg. That used to be quite an experience, going sea gull egg picking. When we were kids we didn't get very many eggs and stuff like that. That kind of went to

the head of the house, which happened to be an old alcoholic that Mom was going with at the time. He got all the stuff like the bacon and the eggs. We got oatmeal."

How long was he with Mitch's mom?

"Until I ran him off. From the time before we moved to Woody and after we moved to Woody he came over there. I don't know, I'd say they were together five six years. Something like that. A totally useless guy. He couldn't pack water; he couldn't chop wood. He'd sit at the table and smoke roll-your-own cigarettes and bawl out orders. Mom would have to spend part of her check on whiskey for him. That drew the line. First year I got back from Sheldon Jackson and he started slapping Maurice, who was just 8 or 9... Maurice was sickly as a kid, but became muscle-bound as an adult. His nickname was 'Moose.'"

(Mitch was called Mishka as a kid. Then became Mitchell. For the longest time, he went by the last name of Komm and was registered under ANCSA as Komm. Didn't know until much later that he was a Gregoroff. He got a birth certificate that said Gregoroff.)

TAPE #3

(Asked Mitch about Karl Armstrong Jr.)

"He started the Kadiak Times and edited the Kodiak Daily Mirror for a while. He used to work in Aberdeen, Washington. He worked for the paper there, too. But I think it got too political so they ran him out of town. He started exposing too much. (Laughs.) He was an interesting guy."

Why did some people dislike him so much?

"Well, I don't know. I think Karl told it like it was. He wasn't afraid of anything. With the kind of work that he did, I can see how it was easy to rub people the wrong way. And then there's a lot of stories about the fact that he was homosexual. I think he was. I'm not going to deny that fact. I've heard too many stories about him.

"I knew Karl, but I really didn't know him all that well. I didn't have a problem with him. He treated me pretty good. I guess you'd have had to know Karl to know what kind of person he was. I just knew him a short time."

How did he die?

"I don't know. I wasn't here.

"I came up in 1978. I drove up to Kodiak. I was out at the airport doing something there and I ran into Karl. It was him and another guy and his wife. I guess it was his wife."

Karl was married?

"Yeah. He had gotten married. Maybe he changed his ways, I don't know. He looked healthy enough to me then. He looked like he weighed 200- 220, something like that. It was shortly after that I got word that he had died. Now I don't know if it was from that transmitted deal or not. That was before there was too much known about it. It could have been cancer, I don't know. They both resemble each other."

Who was his wife?

"I don't know. All I know is he was married. Whether it lasted or they got divorced or not, I don't know."

Anything else we haven't covered?

"A lot of hard times, but they were all good times, I guess."

I'm curious whether you did any art after going to Sheldon Jackson College?

"I didn't do any artwork in years. I'm doing it now. I'm doing a coastal scene right now and I'm building a sailing ship. My grandfather did that. When I went to Sheldon Jackson I stopped in Juneau and I had time to kill before my flight to Sitka, so I went to the museum there. Lo and behold, there was this sailing ship in the museum shelf and it was built by my grandfather, Nick Fadaoff. I was surprised because Mom told me that he built sailing ships. He also built candlesticks for the church, the church on Woody Island. He gilded them and stuff like that. He built this ship and it was just like Mom said that he used shoe holes for portholes in the boat, and, sure enough, there it was. Just like mom said he built them. Now you see it quite a bit with models, in assembly-line boat models, you see that a lot."

Paul said he does some model building, too.

"Yeah, I taught him. I also taught my uncle James. Yule Chaffin slammed me on that one."

How?

"I was getting quite a bit of recognition in the Daily Mirror, because of my models. Some were on the front page, some on the back. James, when I was teaching him, wanted to know how I detailed my wheelhouse and stuff and I showed him. He used my paint schemes, my wheelhouse schemes, and he built a model that he gave to Yule Chaffin.

"Yule Chaffin wrote an article in the paper, saying, Michael Gregoroff, or 'Michael Komm isn't the only one who can build ship models. We have James Fadaoff here who's just as good.' Well, that was his first model. It didn't look as good! Oh, he's pretty

detailed – he had the knobs on the cupboards, the sinks, the equipment in the wheelhouse and the captains bed had the blankets and pillows...

"There're some interesting spots on Woody Island. You probably heard of Gere Boone on the South End of Woody Island. Back then it was a kind of a sloping, rolling, grassy hillside. During the war there were trenches there to monitor the loop station that was sounding for submarines in the bay and there used to be a staircase that went down from the top of the cliff. It's long since gone. But out on Gere Boone there's a rock formation there that we called the Hole in the Wall because you could go in into the cliff here and slide sideways through it and come out, oh, maybe 30 feet down the beach. All it was was... the cliff had worn apart and fell over this way. I haven't been there since the earthquake, so I don't know, it might have closed up. But then further on down that same beach there is a natural bridge. It's a little island that kind of sits in a cove on the shores of Woody and at high tide you could run through there with a speed boat. What it is is an island with a hole in it. It's an island that sits away from the main island of Woody. It's cove-like. When the tide goes out, it dries up and you can walk through that archway to the island. It goes clear to that little island. When the tide's in, you can't. It turns into a little island and you can run a speedboat under the island and come out the other side.

"Some of pictures I'd like to see taken is some of the natural lay of the land. It has to be high tide."

Who were Mitch's closest friends on the island?

"All the kids on the island. Some of the FAA kids were kind of snobbish, especially the girls, with the likes of boys like us. We had a tree house. Probably over by where Ellen May mentioned the dumped being covered over there. We built a tree house up there. We could get up there, then pull the ladder up behind us. Nobody could get up there. We used to camp out up there."

How many of them could fit up there?

"Oh, we built the base out of a big palette. It worked like a son of a gun. For all I know it might still be there. It was pretty well-built. We knew how to go from one tree and cross a limb and back done. Not many people were accepted in the tree house."

Who was?

"Oh, most of the guys on the island. (Laughs.) Except for a few we didn't care for on the East side, the ones who were standoffish. Until we got to know them. Then everybody got along."

Did any of the girls go up there?

"No, never. If they did, we never knew about it. We used to raid Chaffins garden for vegetables, then go up there and eat them. (Laughs.) My favorite was carrots and rutabagas. Or was it turnips?"

Did they ever get caught?

"No, never did, but they knew what we were doing. Their garden was mostly root vegetable, cabbage and peas. They grew a lot of peas. And potatoes.

My grandfather and grandmother kept everything like that in a root cellar. Then it was always the chore of the smallest guy to go down in that dark hole with all the spiders and bugs, to gather up potatoes and carrots for dinner."

What were the meals like?

"That's easy. Oatmeal. Boiled, fried, dyed. Three times a day. I used to do all right, coming up with different combinations until one time I dyed it green. As hungry as they were, they couldn't stomach that oatmeal!"

What kind of dye?

"Food dye. It looked like something that came out of a baby's nose. That was the last time we ever tried that. I'm surprised they didn't tell you about that.

"But, like I said, at the first of the month we ate like normal people. We actually had meat on the table. Then it went to canned meat, to the beach, down to oatmeal."

Maybe that's how the menu should be planned for the reunion weekend -- beef on Thursday, canned meat on Friday, beach food Saturday and oatmeal on Sunday...

(Laughter.) "I don't think anybody else lived our lifestyle. They wouldn't relate."

Your cousins were doing slightly better, weren't they?

"Yeah, they had a dad. We had Mom, bless her heart. She did the best she could with a bunch of little kids that didn't know beans. Coming out of Kodiak we didn't know how to hunt or anything. Best thing we could do was play. We had that down to a science."

Did her parents help her at all?

"Very little. And when they did it was like trying to pull a tooth or something like that. Angeline, she didn't hesitate. She always helped us when things got tough at the end of the month. I don't know what my grandparents' problem was. Like I said, it eased up after we got old enough to fight back. I had my falling out with James right there in front of granny and grandpa. It was the first time I jumped on my uncle. For one thing they were bigger than us and they were older than us. Respect was the name of the game. Still

is. I still respect my elders. But I was having engine trouble on the Hawk Eye during the salmon season and was home for the weekend. James had come in, too, with his boat, the Maxine. He tied up next to the Hawk Eye. He went to town and got himself a gallon of wine and proceeded to get drunk. Paul was drinking with him. Paul went to the Maxine got the wine and took it to Johnny's. I said, "Paul, better not touch that. It belongs to James." Paul said, "Well, James is going to be up there anyhow." So he took it. Well James came out to the boat and started raising hell with me. He started to come at me, accusing me of drinking it and I told him to get his damn butt off the damn Hawk Eye before I threw him overboard. Grandma and grandpa were standing on the dock there and they just shook their head, turned sideways and walked away. That was the coming of age there!" (Laughs.)

Did James leave?

"Yes, he left. The next morning, Paul was hung over, Johnny was hung over and I had to run the Hawk Eye out to the fishing ground. They slept on the way out. The next morning I look out and there is James in the Maxine, anchored behind us. He pulled up alongside and apologized and offered a case of beer. But I draw the line at drinking on the boat.

"I went out headed down the bay. The others didn't help the situation any. I went out towards the end of Kalsin Bay and made a set. I pulled the seine in and James was waiting to set until I was done with mine. When I got the snag clear, I just kept on going and laid it out again. Well, that made James mad. He thought I should have hauled in so he could set his gear out. I loaded the Hawk Eye and he came alongside and told me to haul that thing over the side, to get that seine aboard. Paul was sitting there, going "Eh..." that really did it. James shook his fist. Took off and didn't wet his net that day at all. I got kind of low in the water. I had to wait for the incoming to get out of there. By then the fog had come in and by the time the Hawk Eye got free I went out to anchor up for the tender. I saw the Maxine sitting there and I was debating whether to tie up alongside. The better part of me said no! I went and anchored up a little further away, sitting nice and low in the water. It was nice to have that load of fish aboard.

"Yeah, for some reason every time he missed his fish, it was my fault. Might have been, I don't know." (Laughs.)

How much older was James?

"He was quite a bit older. I think he was born in 1931 or 32. It was funny. Sometimes he could be the nicest guy. The situation, the family life over there at my grandmother's was bad. We had to talk in a whisper. It was a bad situation. Like I said, I don't know why. I didn't live there."

Was it his grandparents or his Mom who said they had to be quiet?

"No, it was them. It was just the way it was in that house. I'm sure it was the Chabitnoy influence. Cecil was spoiled. He was the baby of the family."

Did they have to whisper, too?

"No. They could do anything they wanted. He and I had our go-around a time or two also. You know a person, I don't care who they are, can only take so much and there comes a time to fight back.

"Of all the family members on my grandparents' side, I guess the best one that everybody got along with was my Uncle Edson. He knew life; he had this thing about life. I think he understood it."

He's not alive anymore?

"No. He disappeared, too. Just about all my family disappeared at sea or.... Buddy, I don't know, I think he died of complications of a heart attack."

What does Mitch mean when he says Edson knew life?

"He understood it. I don't know. For example, he didn't downgrade people the way the rest of the family did. He and me and Ronnie one time went to salvage copper on Long Island and hunt geese, too. We were only going to be gone one day. We headed out, we went around Gere Boone and along Long Island Strait and a pinback whale, what they call a black fish, surfaced alongside the boat. Edson looked at it and said, "That's a bad sign." Ron said, "Why?" "That means it's gonna blow." We got to Long Island and pulled into Long Island Lagoon and hiked up to one of the lakes where we knew there were geese. But there weren't any geese, so on the way back we hiked to the old radar tower and stripped the roofing off of that because it was copper. We made kind of a sled-like thing and carried it down. Must have been 300 or 400 pounds of it. If anybody ever wondered what happened to that old radar building, it was us. I also found two old 75 mm shells. While we were there, the wind picked up. We got everything loaded; we headed out the lagoon. It was called the Slow Boat, but it was anything but slow. We were coming out of there and, boy, it was bad. It was rough!

"The people at the FAA site on the island could see us coming out of the lagoon, and the spray as we were coming out. They could see one big splash of spray and then nothing. They thought they saw the boat go down. What happened is we went down in a swell. We couldn't row. Ron and I each had an oar, but we just couldn't, it was too strong a wind. It blew us backwards, so all we could do is steer with the oar. There were waves breaking on a line of rocks behind us and we knew we couldn't get away from it. But right behind the boat, just wide enough for the boat to slide through was an opening in the rocks and we slid through that backwards. Once we got to the lee of those rocks we could pull for the shore. So we went to shore and there was an old cabin there that used to belong to Tommy Gallagher and we pulled up there. Tommy had an old oil stove in the cabin. Back then there was still oil from the war effort preserved on Long Island, so we went and scrounged up a couple of 5-gallon buckets of oil and got a drip fire going in the stove.

"We got it nice and warm and figured as soon as the wind dies out we'll go to Woody. But it didn't. It swung around to the Southeast and then it would come around to the Northeast. There was probably a 20-foot swell and we knew that they were probably worried at home. Turns out people from the FAA told my grandmother they saw us go down. We just kind of hung there and Edson asked if we knew how to read Morse Code. I told him all I know is SOS. We could use a pipe and a candle and flash SOS, but it was too foggy so they weren't going to see it. We scratched that idea. So we settled in for the night. The next morning, Edson looked out the window and said, 'Well, boys, here comes the Elk Jim.' The Alf Jim belongs to Al Anderson. He's the guy I bought the Hawk Eye hull from. He was a friend of the family. So Ron and I both jump up to take a look and he says, 'Fooled you both!' nobody was coming. It was too rough all day. Three days we were there. Tommy had left some dehydrated pea soup and some cake mix. So we had cake and pea soup to munch on. Underneath one of the mattresses there was an old shotgun and an old 30-30, but no shells, so we couldn't hunt a deer or a duck.

"Tommy Gallagher had a restaurant here in town called the Polar Bear Café. So he had ample supply of that cake mix over there, but three days of that gets you sick.

"The second day Ron jumps up and looks out the window and says, 'By gosh, here comes the Alf Jim!' Edson says, 'Nah.' So I look and, of course, it wasn't. Third day I was the first one up and I looked out there and it was the Alf Jim coming through! So I say, 'Here comes the Alf Jim.' Edson says, 'Nah.' But sure enough it was the Alf Jim coming through. She was rolling on her beams and coming through the entrance.

"Our skiff had swung sideways on the beach and looked like it had drifted in there, so when they got inside, in the calmer water, they blasted the horn to see if there was anybody there and, lo and behold, Ron and Edson and I showed our smiling faces there and they came in and got us. But when they were coming in, they were looking for our bodies. They didn't think that they would find us alive.

"My other uncle, Buddy, was with them. They came in and got us and we latched on the Slow Boat and towed it out. The swells were still a good twenty feet. The Alf Jim was a pretty good size boat and she was taking them. My Uncle Bud, he was white-faced, and this is a Navy boy. Al Anderson was running that thing as if it were nothing. He just kept on yakking and smiling. It was nothing to him. It could have been thirty feet higher and it wouldn't have made any difference to him." (Laughs.)

He wasn't just trying to make everyone else feel more confident?

"He might have been. I wasn't all that worried. You know, a boat can take a pretty hard beating to break. It is pretty hair-raising, but I figured Al Anderson knew his business; he was a fisherman all his life. They were good friends of the family. The reason it was called the Alf Jim was that was his two sons: Alfred and Jimmy."

Did he live on Woody Island?

"No, he lived in town. He might have lived at one time on the island. Jimmy Anderson only had one finger. They were chopping wood one time and he dared his brother, Al, to chop it off and Al chopped it off. Well, Al thought he'd have sense enough to pull his hand out of there. They were both at fault."

How old were they?

"I don't know. They were about our age. Al, Jr., was a little older than us. He joined the Air Force, probably in 1954 or sometime around there. He got out of the Air Force and got on a commercial flight home. Back then it was called the Pacific North Airline. Coming out of Juneau into Anchorage, they flew into a mountain and he's still there to this day. They never took them out of there. A whole plane full. So the only one left to carry on the family was Jimmy and I don't know whatever happened to him.

"You know back then, there weren't any trees on Near Island, either. None at all. Now it's all trees."

What caused the biggest change on the island?

"My own personal thoughts on that, I think it started before our generation. I think it started with the Russians' – for lack of a better word – occupation of Kodiak. I think it started then and slowly progressed. I think that all the epidemics that happened had a big, big impact. 1918 just about finished it off, right there. And once you get past a certain point of obliteration it just kind of falls. (In my generation), employment – I think that was the biggest factor. There was an old man, Pete Tunuhan, who lived on the island when we moved over there, and I don't know, he wasn't that old, but he wasn't young either, but he had something wrong with his leg. He couldn't walk and he finally died over there. He never married and died over there. A lot of the population, like the Pavloffs, a lot of them stayed single and never got married. Wilford, he died single. Johnny, well he's not a Pavloff, but he never married. James never married. Cecil never married. Micky never married.

"Edson and Buddy married. Buddy married a ready-made family. He didn't have any kids of his own. Edson was the only one who had kids out of that family. That was the beginning of the downfall of the Chabitnoys. Now there's nobody. Not here. There is up at Sand Point. There are relatives of Mike Chabitnoy up there.

"I believe that the earthquake probably did top it off. I think Tina Hoen, from what I read in the papers, expressed a desire to move back and she hit it right, that she'd like to walk in the footsteps of her ancestors.

"Another interesting thing she said was that trying to save our heritage on the island would be like taking a tablespoon and trying to bail out Upper Lake, or something like

that. And, of course, there's Dolly Reft. It's hard to quote her. She's got a distinct way of putting things.

"You know, the island has changed a lot, too. The encroachment of the trees to where we used to live... When I was there last June, I had a hard time fathoming that. Where I was born, up in there, that's all timber now. It was just by accident that I stumbled across it when I was leaving. It was all grown over. When I finally got to Johnny's, I said, 'You sure have been busy the last 40 years. You've rearranged all the trees, changed everything around!' He got a bang out of that."

Does he get visitors there?

"I don't know. He used to have someone staying there, at one of the cabins there. I don't know how often he gets visitors. I haven't really had a chance to talk to Johnny in many years."

I wonder if he still plays the accordion. Does Mitch remember him playing?

"Oh, do I! We used to have ice skating parties on the lake. That's one time everyone seemed to get along, during these ice skating parties. They were at night, with a spotlight out on the lake and a big 30-gallon kettle of chocolate steaming away on the shore, everybody would be out there ice skating. Johnny would be out there with his accordion, skating. And a pint of fortification in his back pocket!"

What kinds of things did he play?

"Oh, anything that was of the period. He could play polkas, he could play shadages (?), he could sing. Johnny was a hell of a singer. He could sing like Hank Snow. Of course, Hank Snow was a big item then. You couldn't tell it wasn't him. In fact a lot of Natives here... I grew up with some people here in town called the Kristoffersons and they were very musically talented and singers. I think they're related to me on the Gregoroff side."

Maybe Johnny will play for everyone at the retreat.

"I doubt it. I doubt it. I think Johnny's kind of grown into a recluse. You know he's the true Woody Islander right there -- Johnny. He hasn't moved more than probably 300-400 feet from the place he was born."

Has he ever lived off the island?

"He spent a stint of time down in Texas many years ago. Some FAA people took him down there. But it was too hot for him, and he's been back ever since."

Richard also lived there a long time.

"Not all his life. After he got out of the Navy, I think he came home for a short time. He married and then went off to a trade school. When he came back to the island, I don't exactly know when that was, but he didn't stay on the island all his life. He was born there. He is older than me. I think it was in the 70s he moved back there. He left just recently. He moved up by Johnny for a while. Then he moved clear over to the other side of the island. He was there in 1995 when the whole corporate board took a trip to Woody Island to check out their holdings. He drove us around in an old beat up truck that has seen a lot of salt air. No shocks, no nothing. Amazingly enough it was still over there, parked at the Mission, when I was over there last June.

"I don't think it would be too hard to get transportation over there. When we were kids we must have called a dozen cars over there – on log rafts. When the military had their clean-up over there in 1995 or 1996, I happen to go over there and all the stuff they had gathered up on the shoreline and hauling off, most of them were our cars. It wasn't remnants of the war effort there! (Laughs.) They forgot one. It's still sitting there. There were some the tidal wave buried over there. There is a Plymouth convertible that's still sitting there. Blue and black, the color we painted it."

Somebody mentioned an old airplane in one of the lakes.

"That's the first I've heard of that! One time we were hiking in the woods, down by Una Lake, and on the far side we cut up into the woods there, to come to Shorty Page's house from the backside, and we came across an airplane wing tank, a fuel tank."

In the water?

"No, in the brush. We thought it was a whole plane. They might have mistaken that as 'an airplane in the lake.'

"One year I was fishing with my Uncle Bud, we just got aboard the Ellen C, a boat that was built on Woody, and we were heading out and we heard this airplane flying overhead and it was a yellow Piper Cub, sputtering and then the engine finally died. The guy made a loop over Una's Hill and came down the beach there and made a perfect dead-engine landing. But then about half way down the beach there was a big cement block. So he veered from that and plowed into the water and the plane flipped upside down. They might have confused that with "an airplane in the lake," too. But I've never heard of an airplane in the lake, unless it's something that's happened since I moved off the island. That would be interesting to know.

(Short discussion about availability of birth and death records at Russian Orthodox Church, but would need Russian speaker to translate.)

"Even when I was a kid, everybody spoke Russian and Aleut. It's not so prolific any more. Yesterday, coming in on the plane there was a little boy with his mom sitting across the aisle and he was saying '*Ay-ya.*' (Laughs.) It reminded me of my mom and my

grandmother and them all used to say that, if you did something good or if you did something. It was just an expression, *'Ay-ya.'*

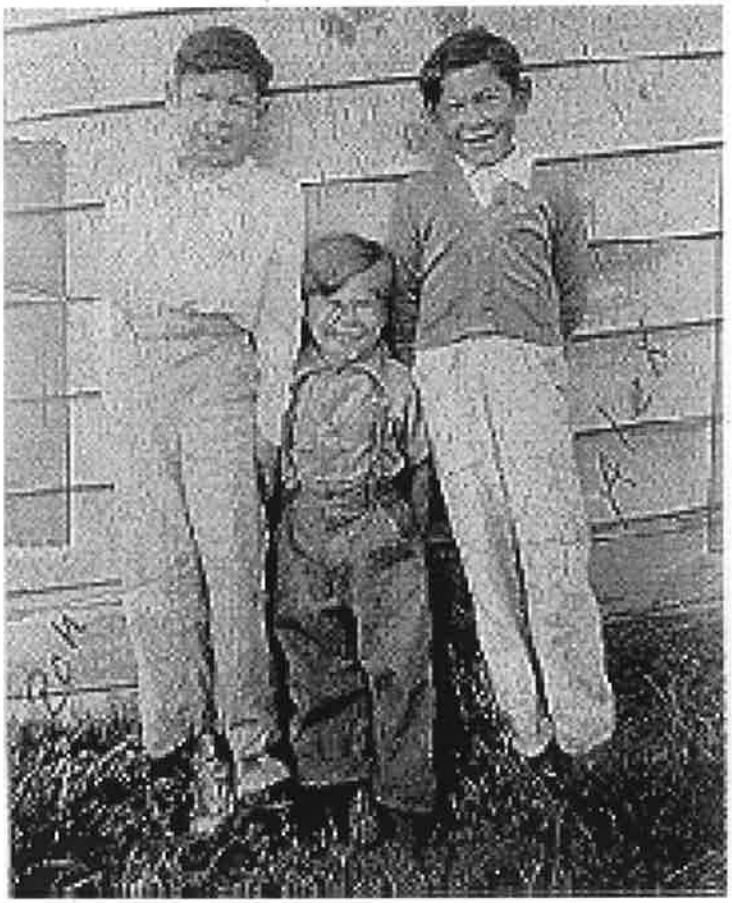
"Some of the little old ladies, my grandmother and mom, too, they had a saying – I even heard Ellen Mae say it. It was "*aynyuk.*" Usually they used it around little babies or kids. "*Aynyuk.*" (It means) "cute."

"Or if you did something bad or fell, all the little old ladies would say, "*Ay-wus-buddy.*" Don't ask me how to spell it. Ellen Mae might know what it means. That's the extent of my Aleut, or maybe it was Russian. I don't know. It might be a derivative of both of them.

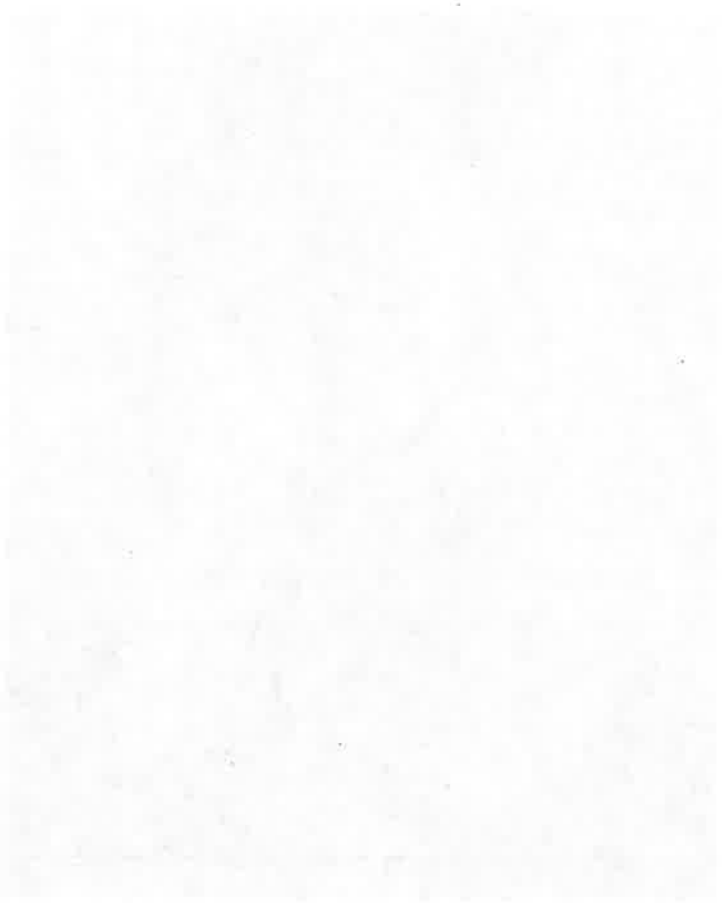
"You know, we used to play a lot of baseball on Woody Island. In fact the Elks used to hold their annual picnic on Woody or Long Island. But most of the time on Woody Island. They used to challenge the islanders to baseball. With a little strategy we'd beat them every time. We'd wait before the start of the ball game until they had consumed enough alcohol... (Laughs.) Then, of course, we played with the FAA guys, too. Baseball was the thing. I loved it.

"I guess back when the United States bought Alaska, they had church concerns and they divided Alaska into equal parts. They (the Baptists?) introduced baseball to the Aleut people here in Kodiak and I guess it really went over big. Baseball was the thing to do. And you see it in some old pictures – baseball games being played.

"I'm going to have to take a break."



Ronnie Fadaoff (left), Mitch Gregoroff (center), Alexie Fadaoff (right)



MAURICE HARMON interview
Interviewed 1/18/02

Strongest memories of the island are "the freedom of being able to move about without being told to get off, you're trespassing; around here you can't even step off the side of the road without being told you're trespassing. Up there we had the freedom of growing up; we had a good school, swimming holes all over the island; hunt rabbits, hunt ducks; at that time we had no deer on the island."

Are there deer now?

"That's what I've been told. I haven't been up there in about 37 years."

Will Maurice come to the reunion?

"If there's any way we can get the money together, we'll try.

"I even have a brother planted over there, Danny; Johnny Pavloff used to maintain his grave; and then my brother Ronnie, he's up there; but he had a bad heart attack so I don't know if he's been able to get over there or not; Johnny Pavloff Maliknak lives on the island and he and Nicholas Pavloff, when Nicholas was alive, used to take care of it. They were great friends of the family and some kind of distant relative."

Who were some of his closest and best friends when he was a child?

"Well I had one friend, Jerry Chaffin, Darrel and Yule Chaffin's son. He wound up committing suicide a few years after the tidal wave. I don't know what the problem was. I never did find out. We grew up together. Another one was Pete Simeonoff. He and I used to pal around together. We were about the same age. He also died shortly after I moved down here. Pete Simeonoff and I basically grew up together on the island. So did Jerry Chaffin.

"I moved over there when I was about 8 -- in 1950. I was born in Larson Bay -- in Doris Jaeger's (now Doris Aga) house; I was born in her house; in fact, she was the midwife."

What sorts of things did he and Jerry and Pete do when they were kids on the island?

"Well, we hunted rabbits, hunted ducks, played ... we did tons and tons of playing and swimming. We hiked around the island; it took all day. We'd get up in the morning and start hiking all the way around the island; we'd get done about dinner time. You know, you've got to play around a little and do some beachcombing; you know, the boys' thing ..."

Was the road maintained all the way around the island?

"Yeah, they were well-maintained by the FAA; it cut from the dock all the way across to the east side; it cut all the way across the middle. Then somewhere along the middle it branched out toward the old sawmill and what we used to call the CT site, the FAA towers out there at one time. That used to be our favorite rabbit-hunting spot."

Was that sawmill still operational when he was a kid?

"No, no, but it was still a good building, though at that time, the sawmill wasn't operational; nothing there but a building. It was a nice old mill at one time, I guess. We used to play in it; in fact, my brother got lumber off it (from the siding) and built a small garage behind their house. My brother Mitchell and Paul and our Uncle Mickey Chabitnoy."

What other things did they do when they were "playing around?"

"Beachcombing; we climbed trees and played like monkeys; when I turned 13 I started to go salmon fishing – commercial (fishing). My brother Paul and I and our other brother Ronnie, we fished with our uncle Edson on the F/V Prospector. We fished three or four years with uncle Edson; then with my uncle James one year; then my Uncle Chuck Harmon. He's deceased now. He slipped and fell at a party out in Cape Chiniak at a vacation cabin. That was about 30 years ago, too. It happened after I came down here."

"Uncle James leased a boat from the cannery, the Maxine. He rented it from King Crab, Inc. It was one of their boats.

"My Uncle Chuck's boat was the Widgeon. There were two boats alike there; one was the Mallard and one was the Widgeon. Tidal wave ate it. Uganik Fisheries owned the Mallard; that's who my uncle bought the Widgeon from."

What were some of the social interactions? Was there much visiting? Were there dinners? Dances? Anything along those lines?

"Oh, we used to have ... the schools used to have a bazaar every year. Everybody made stuff. Mothers would sew stuff together and take it down to the bazaar and they would auction it off. The money all went to the school. We did things like that and some of the teachers had square dances.

"There was crocheting, craft, shelves, small coffee tables – things kids made in school. There was a little craft shop there."

Asked if there were Native crafts, but it seems the question was misunderstood.

"No Native teaching classes. Only thing I learned were a few things I picked up when I heard the senior citizens talk. Mom would go visit and join them. There was this old-

timer, Nikolai, he lived out there on the island, too. You'd go down there and they'd start talking and we couldn't understand what they were saying. They talked Russian Aleut."

What about Native crafts? There weren't any that people in the community did?

"No. At that time nobody thought about preserving; that's a sad thing right there. You don't think you'll get to my age now. All that time wasted!

"I did repopulate! I had five daughters and sons from my first wife; one son died after only two months; crib death. All daughters survived; they have kids of their own now. I have about a dozen grandchildren. Three of them are in eastern Washington and one is over there in Germany; she's married to an Army sergeant. They're close to the action. Her and her boys and little girl like it over there. They're doing good."
(Daughter lives is Monroe, WA. Also had a son with second wife.)

Backing up a minute, did he say there were square dances?

"Teachers organized the square dances. One of the teachers was Mr. Carey. I don't remember his first name. He was a lieutenant in the National Guard at the time; I remember he immediately had to get into his uniform and go to town, and we gave him a ride in a row boat or outboard or something; then he'd have to get back after that and go to school the next day."

This teacher's the one who organized the dances?

"Yeah. I can't think of the names of the other ones. We used to have pretty good times over there."

When did Maurice leave the island?

"I went to town and started working in the canneries. Then I went back and stayed with my brother Danny, before he went over to Vietnam. I told them at the cannery I was 18, but I was only 16. I thought I was smarter than the teachers. I quit (school) early and started to work early. I worked in the winter because in the summertime I went fishing. I worked for quite a few years -- when old Bob Resoff had it. Then his brother Pete took it over and then they sold it, I guess.

"I repaired hoppers and canners and steamers and all that good stuff; canneries break down quite regular, seems like; especially when women wanted a break they just squeezed the can too hard and jammed the sealer and they'd get a half hour to an hour break. They used to do it all the time. We heard them laughing about it. Just another way to get a break. It was pretty monotonous work in the cannery.

"My brother Ronnie is the one who taught me how to work on all that stuff; he was foreman down there."

Does he remember when he went back to the island to live in his brother Danny's house?

"Well we were living in my Uncle Edson's house. Probably the only one standing now, I understand. Well, that was.... I was fishing with Marine Grier and Grier come in and he took off without me and I moved back over to the island. I figured he didn't need me that bad. He figured we were supposed to swim to the boat, I guess. That was in the early 1960s."

Did he attend the Russian Orthodox church or the Baptist Church"

"We went to Orthodox Church."

What does he remember about that?

"Long time standing when you're a little boy! They had pews for everybody but the old people. They had chairs for them. I think that's when my bad back started. Standing so long. When I was a kid (services) seemed about five hours long, but probably were only an hour, something like that."

Were there any special events through the church?

"Not that I know of back then. Then they started bingo or something in the basement, later. I can remember old Father Gerasim. When I was in second grade, school was down at the Center down there, across from the Orthodox Church, at the community center; that's where second grade was. It was the community center at one time. I think John Wade had it; the last name was Wade, anyway, I don't remember the first name.

"We'd be standing on the playground and Father Gerasim would call us over across the road and he'd tell us to be sure to tell our mothers there was church tonight or church next night or whatever. He was a good priest. They were all good priests. I can't think of a bad priest."

Does he remember the names of different places on the island?

"Oh, yeah. There was Garboon Point – that was the outmost point towards the Naval base near Cape Chiniak. I remember it snowed like heck. There is Salt Lake, Duck Lake and' then – forgot what it was called down there... there were big razor clams down there... near Whitehouse Point where old Nikolai used to live; down by Salt Lake and Duck Lake. I think they call it Crab Lake or something now. They are on the Kodiak side of the island."

Does Una Lake sound familiar?

"Yes, that's the Upper... No, that's the one below Yule and Darrel Chaffin's place; Darrel Chaffin has a house just above Una Lake. Darrel is now deceased, but she's still around, writing books."

Was Una Lake known by any other name?

"No, not that I know of, Icehouse Lake is the one they also called Lower Lake. That's not a lake anymore – its more like a lagoon since the tidal wave."

That's the one that used to be fresh water, but now is salt water?

"We used to swim in that all the time (before the tidal wave). The tide went out and it went out."

On the map there's another lake called Tanignak Lake. Does that sound familiar?

"No... Upper Lake is right next to Lower Lake and over from that, running the same way as that, would be Long Lake."

So Upper Lake is what they probably call Tanignak on the map because it is between Icehouse Lake and Long Lake.

"Some Natives might have called it that years ago. I'd never heard it called that. Upper Lake. Yeah, that's what we always called it. Everybody called it Upper Lake."

Did Long Lake have another name?

"No, not that I know of. What they call Crab Lagoon is what they called Crab Lake."

On the east side of the island, on the FAA side, there's a lake called Elephant Lake. Did he used to go to that one, too?

"We used to ice skate in the wintertime on that. We ice skated on just about all the lakes on the island. Elephant Lake... we used to go over there and build bon fires at nighttime on moonlit nights and roast wieners and hot dogs and have ice skating parties. It was fun in them old days. Sliding on the hills or on the roads on the glazed ice, we got to moving pretty fast down them ruts.

"We used to slide all the time on Woody Island; especially when the moon was out; daytime was one thing, but by moonlight it was really pretty.

"There was a village on the west side of the island; FAA was on the east side.The FAA maintained roads and water lines. There was a well next to the pond; later Mitch and I dug a water line out to the FAA water tower and tapped into it, with their permission.

"This was in the '50's. We already got an oil stove for mom; then we needed water." (Maurice lived with his mom, Nettie, although Ronnie – and Lexie? -- lived with their grandmother.)

"Granny and them were on the waterline from the FAA. When we were younger, there was a well. We had a bucket brigade; we used square buckets with wooden handles. They were 5-gallon kerosene containers. The well was a wooden barrel stuck down into the ground. We dropped the barrel down and scooped up the water; not too deep so we didn't get mud. We had a lot of rain, so there was usually clean water."

Did he remember the cemeteries on the island?

"Everyone knows the one behind Granny's house; then there was the one behind the old barn with wooden markers. The barn was on the hill; from the dock, straight up the road and up the hill. Uncle Kelly, for years, had a cow up at the barn -- Old Goldie. The cemetery was not maintained; it was just kind of forgotten.

"Danny is buried at Orthodox cemetery on the hill by Lower Lake, by the flume.

"Kids used to play near the flume and find arrowheads."

What happened to the arrowheads?

"Probably burned in the house when it burned, grandmother had the burned so she didn't have to pay taxes; half of the house was on her property and half was on Mission property."

Were there jobs on Woody Island?

"The only work on the island was if the FAA had labor work to be done. My Uncle Edson and my Uncle Buddy used to work for them; I worked for them once; I built a little shack. My uncles did construction. Off and on various people from the island worked for FAA."

(Maurice went to school first in Kodiak and then when he was 8 he moved to Woody Island and went to the Territorial School on Woody, starting in second grade.)

"I liked second grade so much, I went twice! Then I left school when I was 16, to work in the cannery.

"We had to go to Kodiak to go shopping and visiting; we took the FAA boat. We also took the FAA boat to high school on Kodiak; some people went back and forth every day, some once a week, some more - depending on needs. Most people went with the FAA boat. Others had dories; rowing or outboard;

"People from Kodiak also came (to Woody Island) to visit or to rabbit hunt.

"We used to have an old sand-pit garden. The Chaffins had good brown earth, Granny had her own garden; she grew potatoes, rhubarb and even tried corn. But no great success. We had a small vegetable garden by the chicken coop where we grew carrots and radishes. Don't know if she had a flower garden. We had wildflowers everywhere; we had just about every kind of wildflowers - bluebells were very common, shooting stars, violets."

(Maurice said wildlife on the island included: rabbits; ducks; spruce hens introduced by the game department; crows, magpies; eagles. "During the wintertime there were bald eagles all over the place; they were not rare in Alaska."

Were there cars or other vehicles on the island?

"FAA had cars. Some private individuals had cars. Then we got older and we got a car, too. There were about 30 cars on the island when I was a teen, including FAA cars. There may have been more: there were trucks, cars, dump trucks, graters, personal cars.

"A guy called Zaber (sp?) had a '44 convertible with leopard skin seats; it was a black Ford; he later sold it to someone in Kodiak; I don't know what happened to it after that. We had a car with no body; four wheels (road apple), a motor and no body, just a seat. We had it a couple years, then it wore out. Dennis Ericson had an old Willies and he took the body off; it was a car not a jeep; it didn't go fast but it was a lot of fun."

SECOND TAPE

What were some of the changes he observed over the years while he was on Woody?

"I don't know, everybody just kind of started moving off the island except the Pavloffs and us. Finally Mom had to go to work in the cannery, so that's when she moved over to Kodiak."

When was that?

"Oh, I couldn't tell you that. It was sometime back in history.

"People moving (off the island) to work; fishing was getting to where you wouldn't.... You know, you used to be able to fish in the summertime and live off of what you made all winter, but times changed and people couldn't do that any more; they had to go to town to work; got to be too many boats on the island

"When I first started fishing, there were only about 300 boats on the island. Now there are about three or four thousand. Not everybody had powerboats in them days either. My uncle had an old siwash seine, that you pulled in by hand. It wasn't a couple of sets a day either. It was about 20 sets a day. After that you went to bed and slept in late."

When he left Woody Island, did he move to the Lower 48 right away?

"I moved to Kodiak because I got married on Kodiak. Then I moved down here because I was supposed to go to welding school through the BIA. Then I got stuck down here. School was Renton Vocational Tech, near Seattle. It's a good school. After I got done there, I went to work at Pacific Car and Foundry for a couple of years, then, off and on, at shipyards. When we didn't have contracts, we'd work in shipyards. Then when they'd start up again we'd go back there. Moved out to the Peninsula here and started working in the woods, block cutting, and broke my back. Had several back operations and then everything stopped.

"My back is OK now. Considering I fell on my back, stepping out the door yesterday, it's OK; I can still walk. I told my wife, 'I'll go hunting if I have to crawl.' I don't even care if I get anything; I just like getting out. It's like being on Woody Island."

"This year I just about ate a bullet. I was standing there against a tree and heard a bullet fly past my head. I thought my gun had gone off, that's how close and loud it was. It didn't go whiz or zing, it went snap."

Did he always want to go back to Woody Island?

"Hell, yes! That's my dream, Mitchell's dream, Paul's dream, even Jim's. Jim was born on Kodiak, but raised on Woody Island since he was a tiny baby. I would like to go over there and homestead, live out the rest of my days there. And I'd like to be planted there, of course."

Where was he when ANCSA was created?

"We were already down here when they were starting to do all that. Karl Armstrong was coming down to Seattle to talk to us. That's how we ended up on that Woody Island corporation. There was some bad management on that corporation."

What was his understanding of what was going to happen as a result of ANCSA?

"I don't remember all that we talked about. Always talking about investing in this and that, how rich we were getting; but nobody ever seen any money from it hardly. Now they're broke."

Was he thinking about moving back at that time?

"I've always been thinking about moving back; just never been able to get things together to do it. Now we're working on trying to get some property over there.

"Dock was in good shape before the tidal wave, then they rebuilt it and it was in good shape then, too. I don't know what it's like now."

Which is home, Kodiak or Woody Island?

"Woody Island. Kodiak was kind of like a rat race compared to Woody Island - too many people."

Were there other churches on Woody, beside the Russian Orthodox Church?

"Baptist church had building in an old Navy building, one of the old FAA buildings; it was on the west side, near the village.

"The Old Orthodox Church is not there anymore, but Nikolai and Johnny built a fence around where the alter used to be. That's where there should be a fence; I don't know if there is or not anymore."

Describing home and the village: "Our house was up on the hill there, Granny's house was down below, Next to granny's was Kelly Simeonoff's house. Back behind Kelly's, toward the ocean, was Uncle Edsons. There used to be a bunch of FAA buildings in the flat areas along the shoreline. They were burned down or torn down or something. This was down by the dock. There were a few houses by the old power station; there were FAA families. Angeline was near the flume and Agnes. Nikolai was by Salt lake. Everything was within walking distance. There were no stores".

Asked about picture of grandfather, Mike Chabitnoy, with skins on Woody Island?

"He and Uncle James used to trap beavers. Granny's house was just below us and we could always see the beaver skins hanging out by the side of the house. He shipped them. Where, I don't know. In fact, that's where he had his fatal heart attack, when he and James checked traps."

Anything else he'd like to say about the island?

"No, other than I sure would like to get back there someday."

Top Row: Pricilla Burton, Ellen Mae Simeonoff, Mickey Chabitnoy, Cecil Chabitnoy, and Michael Gregoroff.

Second Row: Marilyn Manring, Kelly Simeonoff Jr., Judith Simeonoff, Paul Harmon, Maurice Harmon.

Third Row: Rayna Harmon, Mildred Manring, Virginia (Frump?), Christine Simeonoff, Robin Manring.

Picture taken on mound in front of school.

PAUL HARMON interview
Interviewed 2/11/02

(The very beginning of the interview did not record. Beginning is from notes taken during the interview. Actual transcription begins when Paul starts talking about the legend of "the little black man.")

What are Paul's most vivid memories of life on Woody Island?

The hunting and the fishing. We did a lot of that.

Lived on Woody Island from 1949 or 1950; went into Army in 1957; returned from the Army in 1958, In 1959 joined the Navy and was in the Navy for four years. After the Navy, moved to Lower 48 and just visits Woody Island.

Now lives in Amanda Park, Washington; near Aberdeen.

They fished mostly on Upper Lake and Long Lake. Hunted for rabbits in the middle of island and on the beaches for ducks. Also did a lot of clamming and catching octopus. "I'd find a hole and poke with a halibut hook on a stick, then it was a tug of war."

"Did anybody tell you about the little black man running around the island?"

No, no one has mentioned that.

"I was told about that when I was a young kid. My mother always told us, 'If you see him, never follow him.' We used to spot him at night. I've seen him, and took my mother's advice and didn't follow him."

How old was Paul when he saw the little black man?

"The first time, I was about 10 or 11. The second time there were three of us together and we saw him. I was about 16 then. I'd just be walking along and noticed him. Well, actually, you can't make out any feature or anything other than he's walking and he's just all black. Even before my time they used to see him around and they always just called him the little black man."

Is he sure that it was a person, not an animal?

"He was walking upright like a man. Probably about as tall as me, about 5 feet, 6 inches, I'm guessing. I never got that close. Not fat nor skinny, just kind of medium. He's been walking the island for years."

Any theories about who or what it was?

"I really don't know what the story is. Like I said, I was just a kid the first time I saw him. My mother always told us, 'Never follow him because if you do, you'll never come back."

"Do you know my brother Mitch? Next time you talk to him, ask him about the little black man on the island."

Who was with him when he saw the little black man the second time (when he was 16)?

"Johnny Maliknak and Marsella Johnson. She's not there any more, they were from Nome; they were with the FAA. She walked into the woods because she thought maybe it was her sister and somewhere along the line she blacked out and came to on other side of the island, at the bottom of the hill. She doesn't remember what happened, but when she came out of it – the trance, or whatever you want to call it - she was way down at the bottom of the hill coming out of the woods. She was gone probably about 15 minutes. The woods there are thick with vines.

"There's another story about Johnny Maliknak's dad. My mother told me the story that Johnny's dad went bobsledding over by Salt Lake. Pretty soon he saw two women waving to him. One was a redhead and one was a blonde. They kept waving for him to come out to them. When he came out of it, he was waist deep in water, still following them. But the two women were out there, standing on the water. He turned around, went back to the beach and went home."

"Mom also told me she remembers when her grandfather used to tell her about the whales, when they walked on land. Her grandfather told her the stories. I don't know if they ever did or not... She didn't say what kind, she just said the whales."

"One time me and my Uncle Cecil and Charlie Johnson were duck hunting, we were walking back and we were over by Shorty Page's beach by Una Lake, and we saw this little animal that kind of looked like a weasel; it was black and white, we'd never seen anything like that on the island before. We took off chasing it into the rocks, but it disappeared into the rocks. We walked around the rocks trying to find him, but we never did. All of a sudden we heard wings above us, you know like an eagle. We looked up, but there wasn't anything there. It was near a little spot by Una Lake; the old-timers called it Witch's Knoll. We'd never seen an animal like that on the island before and have never seen one since. It was black and white and kind of looked like a weasel, but there aren't any weasels on the island. It sounded like eagle wings above us, but there wasn't any kind of bird or anything above us."

What sorts of fun things did he do as a kid, aside from fishing and hunting?

"In the summertime we went swimming in Lower Lake, we jumped in the lake south of the beach, then jumped in the ocean and swam around in there, then ran back up to the lake where it would be just like jumping into hot water. In the wintertime we went sledding and ice skating. We'd slide all the way across the island to go iceskating."

(Paul was born in 1941.)

Where did he go to school?

"I started third grade on the island and graduated from eighth grade on the island. Before that, the first couple of years were in Kodiak. I went to high school in Kodiak. I quit in ninth grade and went into the National Guard. I had six months active duty where I took my training and everything."

Can he describe the school on Woody Island?

"When I first started school on the island it was on the West side; it was straight across from Mission' barracks or whatever you call them, the Mission's dorm; it was in a long building they called the Rec Hall. The school was on one end of it -- eight grades in one room. Then they built a new school on the other side of the island, and that's where I graduated from."

What grade was he in when they built the new school?

"I was probably in.... maybe sixth."

Was it still one room?

"Yeah. It started out that way and then they put the first two grades down in the rec room, down in the FAA Rec Hall. When I got back from Fort Ord, they were just putting on the new addition to the school. That was for the lower grades. I got to help pour cement on that one."

That brings me to the question of jobs on the island?

"When I was there, the only kind of job you could get was if FAA came up with something, if they needed a contractor. Otherwise it was getting back and forth to Kodiak, and some days you couldn't get off the beach."

Did a lot of people go back and forth for jobs?

"Not too many."

What happened, did they just move over to Kodiak?

"They moved over or stayed on the island. Johnny's brother came up from California when they were building the Aleutian homes. He rowed back and forth every day. Mike Pavloff. I haven't seen him since about 1956. He just came home for that one summer and I never saw him again. He was staying with Johnny and Angeline and working on Kodiak."

"That was kind of my second home. If I ever got into trouble at home I could go to Angeline's; I knew I could always get something to eat there.

Did he get into trouble a lot?

"No, no. Only when we got into cow manure fights! I remember with my younger brother one time, I was dragging him and didn't see where I was dragging him and there was a big pile of cow manure. He started screaming and I knew what happened. I just dropped the rope and took off running. I think I was probably about 10 or 11."

Describe the immediate family, how he grew up.

"We were a pretty tight family. If one got into trouble, everyone got into trouble. We pretty much stuck together. Ronnie, Lexie, Mitch, me, Maurice, Rayna, Danny, Leanna and Jim. (Danny died in Vietnam and is buried on the island. Lexie also died.) Jimmy was the youngest, Ronnie was the oldest. I'm right in the middle." (Jim is 11 years younger.)

Did he live mostly with his parents or with his grandparents?

"I lived with my mother all the time. All of us did, except for Ronnie and Lexie. (Still pretty close to them also.)

"Nettie (Anastasia) Fadaoff was my Mom and my dad's name was Raymond Harmon."

Can he describe an average day?

"Everybody would lay in bed waiting for somebody to get up and light the fire in the wintertime. Usually Mitch got up first; I think he got tired of shivering in bed. Then everyone would eventually get up as it warmed up, probably around 7. We had to get ready for school. Maurice had a real good habit; he had to get water in the morning for mother, to have water during the day, and he'd sit there and watch for the bus to leave the dock, then he'd grab the bucket and run down and fall in the well just as the bus got there. So he'd miss school."

He did that just to miss school?

"Yeah. He'd fall in and get sopping wet."

How often did that happen?

"Quite often. He was probably about 8 or 9."

Did anybody else have any tricks like that?

"Oh yeah. After they put rabbits on the island, we'd tell my sister Rayna that rabbit droppings were smart pills. When she wasn't watching we'd load her coat pockets with rabbit droppings. She'd sit there on the bus on the way to school and she'd put her hands in her pocket and get a handful of it. She was probably about 6 or 7. Later on we'd sit there and watch her put finger polish on, and as soon as she was done we'd grab her hand and rub the fingernail polish all over. Rayna caught everything. Every trick we could pull we tried it on her. (But not on Leanna. She was too young. She wouldn't understand.)"

Getting back to an average day, what did you do after you all got up. What was for breakfast?

"Usually mush; a lot of oats. Oatmeal... with sugar, milk and canned cream. Once in a while it had raisins in it. Sometimes it was even dinner. Then later on after we got guns, we started hunting; that kind of helped out the menu. Ducks, rabbits and fish; lots and lots of fish. Trout out of the lake was always fried. In the summertime there would be salmon, fried or baked. Sometimes we ate the fish with boiled potatoes and onions. In the wintertime we had salt fish; you know, salt salmon. That went into hash or pirok (his favorite food)."

Could he describe pirok?

"It's a thick pie dough that lines your pan, put a layer of rice, a layer of sliced eggs, cabbage, more fish, more rice, eggs and, if you had it, rutabagas, then topped off with rice and then topped off with crust. It's done in one big pan; just put everything inside and cover it with crust. Then after slicing it, you smother it with mayonnaise. Don't ask me why the mayonnaise, but it tastes better.

"Mitch makes good pirok; ask him for the full recipe. I might have missed something. Sometimes I can talk him into making some. He lives about 70 miles from me."

(Recording ends here; the rest is taken from notes taken as the interview continued; not always direct quotes, so not all in first-person.)

The kids went to school everyday and after school the boys grabbed large bags to go to the beach to pick up firewood. "We'd walk along looking for light, dry stuff. They were 100-pound bags. We'd bring it into the house and stack it. We also had to make sure there was water. One year, Maurice and Ronnie and I fished with Uncle Edson; I think it was in '55, and we had a very good season, so we bought the oil stove with 20 drums of oil. Uncle Edson brought it all over for us on his fishing boat. Mom wasn't there that day,

she was in Kodiak, and she didn't know anything about it; we surprised her. She sat down and started crying."

Edson's boat was about a 40-foot boat; it was called the Prospector.

When they ran out of oil, they had to refill in Kodiak; if Uncle Edson and his boat were not available, they went by Fedair. (Before it was called Fedair, it was called Civair; before these names it was called P-6. Before it was the Federal Aviation Administration it was the Civil AA).

"Many years ago, I made a model of the Fedair and gave it to the museum; gave it to Anna Blinn (used to be Anna Mueler) at the Baranov Museum. I don't know what happened to it. Built quite a few models over the years; don't know where they are; working on three now; one is a model of a scallop boat. Two of the three models he's working on now are models of boats he used in Kodiak, including the scallop boat. They are about 18 inches and pretty fragile. They are too fragile to bring to Woody Island, but may bring photo.

"Last time I was on the island, there was nobody there; it was very quiet."

"The island changed a lot when the FAA moved from our side to the east side. That was around '56 or '57. We had to go to the other side after that if we wanted to visit and chase girls. We did that when there were any our age; that's why we went to other side. That's when we started skating on the other side. Used to skate on Lower Lake and Upper Lake, but started going to the other side to skate on Elephant Lake. We learned at that time that we shouldn't skate across the island. Tried to skate all the way across, but got to the hill, that first one on the west side, and on the way down it was very steep with a 90-degree corner. We didn't make the corner, but no one got hurt. There was too much snow to get hurt. We just fell into the snow. We took our skates off and slid and walked the rest of the way. We had lace-up skates."

Describing the well: "It was below the house and it was a hole dug in the ground with a wooden barrel in the hole to keep dirt out. The water seeped into the barrel from the hillside above. It was about a 50-gallon barrel. The boys had to carry a lot of water when Mom washed clothes once a week, usually on the weekend. Later on the boys got an old washing machine for Mom and hooked it up to a little gas engine. Mom didn't have to scrub any more. This was around '55, '56. Before the washer, she used a washboard.

Water in the well went low once in a while, but never went dry. One year when he was in Fort Ord, his brothers tapped into the waterline and brought running water into the house. From then on they had inside plumbing, including a toilet.

Granny, Aunt Natalie and Uncle Edson always had plumbing; Edson married to Mary Ponchene (their sons are Edson Jr. and Joseph).

"Our house was haunted; we heard stuff at nighttime, like pots and pans rattling." In the addition, where the boys slept, they heard footsteps come up to the door and then stop; the steps were coming from inside the house from another part of the house. "No, it wasn't another family member. All of us heard it at one time or another. Steps weren't heavy and weren't light. They were normal or medium footsteps. We didn't hear it every night, just once in a while.

"Granny's house had a mad ghost. I guess you'd call it a mad ghost because pots and pans would move around; and the rocker was moving on its own. My mom and my uncles told me; I never spent a night there.

Interactions in the community: "Everyone got along pretty good; everyone seemed to get along on our side. Everyone by the dock on the flats were all related, and up on the hill it was the Pavloffs and they were all related. The two families were friends. Johnny Maliknak is a cousin to the Harmons.

Raised Russian Orthodox; but there was no active church on Woody Island when he was a child. The church was still there and still in good shape at the time, but it was not used. It was not boarded up and the kids used to dry out in there when it was raining. "I remember there was a big American flag hanging back there with 18 stars! I don't know what happened to that flag. Last time I saw it was when I was 17 or 18. Then the priest from Kodiak had Nicholas and Johnny burn it down because it had become a hazard. They built a fence around where the alter used to be. My brother Danny is buried by it, and Lexie's ashes are buried by Danny. We got permission from the church to bury them there.

"There was another graveyard in the Flats by Auntie Natalie's, past Granny's, Uncle Edson's house was on the other side of it. It was a big graveyard.

"Mitch and I saw a kids' cemetery when we were walking through the woods one day. It was on the hillside by the Mission barracks, we saw it when we were rabbit hunting. I was about 12. We told Mom and Granny and they didn't know anything about it. Mitch and I saw all the boards with the names on them (wooden grave markers and Russian Orthodox crosses).

"Johnny's dad is buried by where Johnny lives; he's the only one there. Those are the only ones (cemeteries) I know of."

When they were looking for girls, they would go to the FAA side. They usually got to other side at nighttime and went to the FAA rec hall where they played music; they played records on a turntable. In the wintertime they would go sledding or skating.

First wife was Hawaiian; met her in Hawaii, lived there during his Navy days about 45 months. He had two cruises. He saw seven cities in Japan, saw Formosa, Hong Kong, Philippines and even Nam.

Doesn't remember the Navy base on the island. He was too young. But he does remember boardwalks between buildings that were left there by the Navy. The boardwalks lasted until FAA took them out around 1956.

"We had a garden, but it never did grow right; it didn't have enough care."

"Mom went to Kodiak once a week. Once in a while she would work there, so then she went every day. She did housecleaning. She would take Fedair to Kodiak."

When he started high school in Kodiak in ninth grade, he had to take Fedair back and forth from Woody Island.

Did not speak the Alutiiq language as a child. "I learned cuss words from Johnny and Wilford. Johnny speaks pretty well. Our parents didn't speak it very often around us. Dad died when I was about 4 years old. Mom spoke it, but I didn't know what she was saying; spoke it sometimes with her friends Agnes (Johnny's half sister), and Angeline, it was a combination Russian and Aleut.

"Aleut was never taught to the kids. Maurice picked it up and Mitch speaks a little bit."

What he'd like to do if he came to the retreat: "I would like to bring my fishing pole and go fishing. I would like to walk around and see the island. Used to take us eight hours to walk all the way around on the beach. We learned we needed to check out the tides, otherwise had to climb up on the rocks to pass during high tide. We did that a lot; at least once a month we went all the way around.

"We did a lot of beachcombing. We used to find a lot of Japanese float balls. The attic of our house was full of them; there must have been hundreds of them. I think they were still in the house when my brothers burned the house down."

"We also found a lot of C-rations; things like canned stew and canned biscuits. They were still edible. We found a lot of them. I think they came from Korea? The military must have dumped them out."

Paul was in Kodiak when they were talking about ANCSA and forming a corporation. He was at the first meeting when Koniag was forming. The meeting was in the KEA auditorium.

What was his understanding of ANCSA?

Well, I understood that it would make us rich. But I have yet to see that.

His vision and hope for Woody Island?

I'd like to see it come back. If there were work, I'd be there right now.

Ideas for possible industry on Woody?

"In the summertime they could put in small hand-pack cannery. I don't think anyone has ever tried it.

"It also would be a good place for building skiffs; everything you need is there if someone knew what they were doing."

Paul is a welder by trade.

Final thoughts: "You'd never starve to death if you went beachcombing. We used to find sea biscuits; geoducks (badarki); seaweed. We would eat the seaweed raw, right off the beach. It was a little salty, but it was OK. We would crack open the sea biskit and take out the orange part. It was milky and salty. The badarki we would peel off the rock and peel the tongue out and that's the part we ate. We didn't have to cook them, but can cook them. It's chewy cooked or uncooked. We'd peel off shells and the brown color came off. Mom would grind them and make hash with onions and potatoes and sometimes a can of peas. Had a lot of meals out of that; that and clams kept us alive; clams were boiled or made into chowder.

CHRISTINA HOEN interview
Interviewed 3/11/02 and 3/18/02

"Well, I remember moving over (to Woody Island) from Kodiak, before I started the first grade. This was not the first time that we lived over there, but it's the first time that I remember. It was in the summertime and I was 5 years old. I remember my father carrying everything up from the boat, either on his shoulder or by wheelbarrow, and it was pretty exciting. It was a big move.

"I remember the (Woody Island) house was smaller than our house in Kodiak. But because it was new, it was very exciting. You know how little kids are about new places, exploring and figuring out which part of it is yours.

"It was free over there. There was virtually no traffic to worry about; the beaches were clean; there was no garbage like there is nowadays on the road, or papers flying around. There just wasn't. Paper towels weren't in use back then. Cans had labels, but you didn't tear them off or anything. Everything was so much cleaner.

"We were pretty much allowed the run of the island once we got used to it. There were miles of beaches to play on – clean, sandy beaches – and we were on them whenever we were awake, basically. There was a lake in our front yard. We spent our summers swimming, in between weeding and working on the garden.

"I remember getting new shoes to start school. School was in a one-room classroom. My first teacher was Miss Smith. She was a very prim and proper city lady. She didn't do well over there. This was in the building that occupied the Civil Aeronautics Association's (a federal government agency) recreational center. One side was a classroom. In between was a workshop with their saws and tools and things. The other end was a big rec room with their library and their bar and where they would hold the potluck dinners and things like that. When I say 'they,' I mean the FAA, or actually the CAA at the time."

Was this on the FAA, or west side of the island?

"No, this was on this side of the island. The CAA occupied both sides of the island. What is now the Baptist Mission were some of the family homes of the people who worked for the CAA. Those buildings didn't always belong to the Baptist Mission. They were donated to the Mission.

"The Baptist Mission didn't actually have anything on Woody Island when we were there, except their cows. The cows were a pain in the neck. (The people from the Mission) would come over twice a year; once to castrate the young calves and in the fall they'd come over to butcher. It was interesting. They might shoot their damn cow in your front yard and butcher it right there, so you'd be stuck with piles of blood and gore. That

sounds very harsh. But it was very exciting all the same. We were horrified because we thought the young Mission boys were rather savage. It sounds really gross, but when they would skin the cow, they would skid back and forth in this wet hide in their bare feet! And we were just horrified. That was really, really gross. (Laughs.)

"Anyway, I started first grade and the school was pretty much made up of... let's see, there were four of us from my family who were in school, all my cousins in the Harmon family, and a couple of my uncles -- the Chabitnoys -- then some of the CAA children. Several years later, they built a school on the other side and we would be bussed over there in the morning to go to school. (The bus) was a big flatbed truck with a shell built on the back of it with bench seats along the side of it. It was painted yellow. Yellow is a construction color, too. These were government vehicles.

"When we moved back to Woody Island it was shortly after the end of WWII, and so I can remember having black-out practices, where we would have blankets tacked over all the windows and no light exposed. We would have evacuation routes and, again, this was very exciting for little kids. I remember what we called flying boxcars, these airplanes with the double fuselage flying overhead. I don't know why we called them flying boxcars. I mean that's what everybody called them. And then I remember planes flying over the island; small planes at various times dropping leaflets and pamphlets. I don't remember what those were about, but we always thought that was pretty neat – paper floating down from the airplane."

Were they in English?

"Oh, yeah. It wasn't any foreign airplanes or anything. It was American and I honestly don't remember what the leaflets were about. It was probably war propaganda or something. You know, American propaganda stuff. I really don't now; I was quite little."

Did someone gather up those papers?

"Oh, sure. They were in different colors. It was exciting running around trying to see who could get the biggest stack of papers. They wound up in the garbage or we'd use them for fires or made airplanes out of them.

"I remember the tall, tall beach rye, the grass that grew all over the island. It was over my head in spots. It's what they make baskets out of. In the fields in front of our house it was over my head and we used to play hide and seek in the grass. Until I discovered it was full of spiders. But then when the Mission's cattle herd became much larger, then the grass never got more than ankle-deep. The cows kept it chewed down like a big lawn.

"The lake, which is Lower Lake – well, it's a lagoon now, but before the tidal waves it was our swimming hole. It was where we spent most of our time – winter and summer. In the winter we went skating on it. In the summer, we'd be swimming in it. That's where I learned to swim. It's also where I learned to skate, I guess. Our school was just on the hill above the lake. During the wintertime, we would carry our skates to school and when we

had lunch breaks we'd carry our lunch down to the lake, and slap our skates on and spend our time skating. It was pretty nice.

"Lunch was an hour long. You know, you went to school from I think 8 o'clock in the morning until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. You had 15-minute recesses. You had an hour for lunch and then got out at 3 or 3:30, I think. I know we had an hour for lunch because otherwise we never would have had time to put our skates on, skate, and then get back.

"Going to a one-room school was kind of neat because you didn't just get your lessons, but all the older kids' lessons, too. We had some marvelous teachers. One that was very, very... well, our favorite, I think, over there was Mr. Gross. He recently passed away, but he was from Montana and he was a little redheaded man. He had us doing, during our Friday afternoon -- I guess you might call it an art class -- we would do paper mache bowls and we'd carve spoons. I mean he was very, very good with young kids, teaching them things that you know ordinarily they won't let kids do nowadays. I remember the boys got to use the band saws – with supervision, of course – but we made spoons and bowls and wooden decorations.

"But he also taught us how to square dance. He had a square dance class and we'd have square dances on Friday nights. Then after square-dancing we'd go down to his house, which was on the edge of the flats, three or four hundred feet from our house, and he'd show us slides of the places he'd traveled and each week it was one of the families' turn to provide cookies or juice or whatever. It was a little entertainment away from school, but, you know, something to do. It wasn't just school and nothing else. He just kept us very well rounded. We would go on nature hikes and he would describe what the flora and fauna was and how things are used and then the way life up here was different from the way it was in Montana. He was just really neat.

"He was there for two years and then transferred out. He was my second-grade teacher. It wasn't until years later that I found out he was teaching somewhere north of Anchorage. I think it was the next year, when we were in the third grade, that they had completed the school building on the other side of the island and we started going to school over there."

Was the new school run by the same folks, or was it run by different people?

"No, it was all government. You know, there was no Kodiak Island Borough School District. Schools, as far as I know, were pretty much funded by state and federal government."

Who were some of the other teachers?

"Let's see. Miss Smith was the first one. Mr. Gross was the second. Mr. Carey was... wait a minute! Mr. Gross was only there a year. Then there was Mr. Carey. Mr. Carey was recently out of the military and he was probably fulfilling a government contract to teach school, probably to get more schooling himself. But he was probably so fresh out of the military that he still wore his uniform. I believe he was a lieutenant. He didn't have

much of a sense of humor. He had a hard time with us, the poor man. I think he was too used to the military, and now he had a bunch of these wild Native kids..."

How long did he last?

"He lasted about a year. Maybe two. I think that he taught one year on this side of the island and when we all moved he was still the teacher on the other side. I distinctly remember him in both classrooms.

"And then the teacher we had after that was Mr. Calloway. And that's the year I was in the fifth grade. He taught us gymnastics. He was quite an athlete. He was a good teacher. He was perfect for the island there. It was later that year that we moved off Woody Island to Kodiak for a while.

"There was a freeze on vacations and hiring (at the FAA). A good portion of my father's income came from fishing, and he would go fishing during his vacation. President Eisenhower wasn't allowing any vacations that year, so my father basically quit. Told them to take the job and.... Anyway, we moved back to Kodiak. We had a home over here that we had been renting out. We spent an awful lot of time on Woody Island even after that because we would go over and stay with my grandmother or my aunt."

How often and how long?

"Oh, every chance. Wintertime it wasn't too often because traveling back and forth was rough and sometimes the weather would be bad so the boat couldn't get back and forth. We didn't take a chance on missing school, but in the summertime you could travel by boat every day, basically. It made three trips a day: 9 o'clock in the morning, at noon and then at 4 o'clock in the afternoon."

Was that the Fedair IV?

"Yes. It was a 15-minute run, so it didn't take that long. So you could hop on the boat and ride over and play all day and ride back. Or you could go over on Friday afternoon and stay until Sunday afternoon. That's pretty much what we would do.

"Like I said, Woody Island was very safe. You didn't have to worry about strangers or unsafe conditions. You knew what was over there and who was there, so it was very common during the summertime when we were growing up, or after, to say to Mom, "Can we go camping tonight?" And she would just let us take our sleeping bags and bed rolls down to the beach or to the point and we'd have a fire and we'd have hotdogs and marshmallows and we'd – usually my brothers and sisters and my cousins – camp on the beach and sleep out."

Was it just kids, or did it include adults?

"No, just kids. We were between 7 and 8, the youngest of us, to 12 and 13. We were within 10 minutes of home the whole time, so there was really no danger. We didn't go into the woods. It was always on the beach because that was sandy and the sand was comfortable to sleep on. We didn't go up in the fields because that's where the cows were, and there were a couple of mean bulls.

"But in the summertime, we spent just about every minute that we could outside. It was fun. We had a great big sandy hill to play on, and beaches, and trees to build swings in. It was just marvelous. I wish every kid would have an opportunity like that. It was so fun and we did have the run of the island.

"In the summertime, to give my mother a vacation, my father would put up this great big tent in the yard. It was an 8 by 10 tent, and we'd put our camp cots out there and the kids would basically sleep out in the tent all summer long. That way Mom would have the house to herself, with lots of peace and quiet. When you've got seven kids, having a few quiet moments to yourself is nice. That was grand because in the summertime the floor was grass and you could smell the grass. And the sun would be beating on the tent and it would be like an oven. We'd have the flaps open and our comic books and our kerosene lamp ... it was great.

"It sounds like Paradise, but we did a lot of work. In the summertime, I mean with seven kids you go through a lot of food. A lot of our time was spent in the garden. We had two huge gardens and I can remember Dad in the spring, starting to turn the garden with the shovel and build up the beds. While he was doing that, we'd be on the beach with the wheelbarrow and the big washtub getting kelp."

Was the kelp used for fertilizer?

"Fertilizer. And then we also would be gathering dried cow pies. I remember Mom putting those in the washtub and adding water and making a slurry that we would pour on the garden. In the beds where we were growing carrots and potatoes and turnips and stuff, again fertilizing it. Soil is a lot of sand and a lot of volcanic ash, so you have to add some materials to make it loamy. You know, you can't just have sand.

"Then we had cows. It was my brother's responsibility to milk the cow, which was a pain in the neck for him. We had this one cow that – I don't know how she got attached to this – but we started milking her tied to the corner of the house and we had just gotten a new phonograph and a little 45 player. One of the records we had was one of the popular songs of the day by Gordon McRae, called "Whispering Hope." This cow got to the point where she would only let down her milk if she heard that song. It's a lovely song! But after we got the barn, my brother would have to tie the cow up and sing "Whispering Hope" to her. It had to be that song. It couldn't be just any song. She was a prodigious milker.

"I remember we were so proud of this cow. We had so much milk that Mom started a small milk route for the families over there. Evaporated milk and Klim, the powdered

milk, were the two big milks of the day. We didn't get fresh milk up here because they couldn't ship it up. Everything that came into Kodiak came in by ship and the ship only came in once every three months. So I can remember the excitement when the ship – the Denali was the name of the boat -- was coming in. Then you knew there would be fresh fruit in the store. And the fruit was apples and oranges mostly. That's what we knew. You could buy milk in the cartons in the store, but it was frozen and it didn't reconstitute very well. I mean it was lumpy and pretty gross.

"You could also get fresh milk from the Nixons. He had a small dairy on their island. Nixons' Island. I believe the Ardingers live there now. I think they bought that island.

"Anyway, we had the cow, and with the cow we were able to make our own butter and Mom would make cottage cheese and we just had an abundance of milk. So she started providing it to some of the people on the island there and it was my job to make the milk deliveries. I believe the milk sold for a quarter a quart. I didn't like fresh milk to drink at first. Raw milk was ... it tasted awful. It was years before I could eat fresh milk on cereal, I was so used to canned milk.

"In the summertime, when all the men were off fishing, I would stay with my grandmother. She, like I said, lived a couple hundred feet away from us. I think I was the one who was chosen because I was Grandpa's pet. So I would stay with Granny in the summertime and be the one who would gather the eggs for her and run errands and stuff like that.

"I remember feeding the chickens. She would put me in Uncle Cecil's big jeans and a big denim shirt and I would have to crawl under the shop and get eggs out of the chickens' nest. She would put me in those clothes because there were chicken droppings and there was always one hen that, whenever you reached for her eggs, would reach back and she'd forever peck the back of your hand. But every morning Granny would send me over to the house with a little silver pitcher – and I have the pitcher still now – but send me over to Mom's house to get a pitcher (of milk) for my cereal. God, I hated it. It just didn't taste right on cereal.

"But it was a pretty neat thing being able to stay with Granny in the summertime. My uncles all went fishing with my grandpa. My grandpa used to build fishing boats, small boats in those days, and he always had one called the Ella C. He had a boat shop and he was forever building dories or boats. (That was) Mike Chabitnoy. He was my mother's stepfather.

"They had this big two-story house on Woody Island. The house was given to my grandmother by Chief Yellow Pants. It had a big calidor. Grandpa had all sorts of neat things in there: National Geographic and a big jar of mercury and old artillery shell cases – big ones, the kind that are six or seven inches in diameter – that came from the Sea Bee battalions that were stationed on Woody Island."

SECOND INTERVIEW (one week later)

"I was thinking I'd better tell you about some of the family things that we did. Everything was very family-oriented on the island. My grandparents just lived a couple hundred feet away from us and my aunt and her children – I believe there were nine or 10 of them – lived up on the hill, maybe two city blocks away from us. In our family there were seven children; there were six of us at home. And I had – let me think, Cecil, Mickey, James, Buddy and Edson – five uncles, basically at home with my grandparents. Then, like I said, my aunt and her children up on the hill.

"In the spring, one of the first things we did after getting the gardens ready was – before my dad took off on his fishing and before my grandfather and my uncles took off on their fishing – we would make a couple of beach sets, get some salmon, and fill up the smokehouse. That was very much a family thing. My grandmother Ella Chabitnoy and Grandpa Mike, my mother and father -- Natalie and Kelly Simeonoff -- we would all be down there -- men in their hip boots, rain pants and aprons, and women with kerchiefs on their head -- you know, big washtubs on the beach filled with water and washing out and cleaning salmon, filleting and getting them ready for the smokehouse. It was a one-day thing, basically. Unless there were a lot of salmon; then it would take two days. My grandparents had a smokehouse and we did, too, and we used to try to fill it up at least once or twice a summer. Of course, you ate smoked salmon like it was candy back then."

About how many fish would they get in a couple of sets?

"Probably about 50 to 100 in each smokehouse. You didn't want to hang them too close, because then the smoke couldn't circulate well. You took the chance of the fish souring. Of course, spring was good because the flies weren't out that much and the weather was a little cooler, so things usually went pretty smooth. But I remember it was a great hustle-bustle time. Cleaning and filleting a couple hundred fish was no easy task so the little kids were turned into relay people, running coffee back and forth, lighting cigarettes (for the adults) because they were all covered with fish and gore. It was like a big picnic on the beach. It was just fun because everybody was there and they would be making jokes and laughing and talking about what a good haul it was and things like that, and just keeping busy.

Were her Aunt Nettie and cousins there also?

"I really don't remember them too often with the fish, maybe because she did work and couldn't always be there. Because my uncle was dead, my auntie and her family relied on welfare and she worked. Not that she didn't share in the fish and things like that. Her boys -- my cousins -- were very good at providing fish. But they had more cash money than we did. So, they had more of the modern things than we did, in some ways. Their house wasn't as big and they didn't have running water and they didn't have electricity, but they had some of the newer things first. It sounds funny. I mean sometimes they were on the tightest budget, but other times (early in the month) they lived very good. And then towards the end of the month they'd be scraping; they'd be back to the fish and the clams. They had more treats in some ways. We didn't have that.

"Anyway, then we'd be running around combing the beaches for good cottonwood for smoking. Nowadays people say you've got to have alder or chipped wood or apple chips, and when we mention we used to use beach-combed cottonwood, they say, "What?" But that's where the mildest, best-tasting smoked salmon came from."

Does she still do that?

"No, I don't. I don't have a smokehouse. I have all the recipes written down, but I don't have a smokehouse. You can't just put fish in there, turn the smoke on and then leave. You have to tend it every couple of hours, and when you work you just don't get to do that.

"Usually, those beach-fishing sessions used to end with a beach fry. We would have the frying pans and the salads and all that stuff down at the beach and you'd wind up just having a family picnic down there – with the coffee and the tea and the Kool Aid. I remember just having marvelous food down there, and I don't know where my mother got the recipe, but she would fix hush puppies. You wouldn't imagine this very Russian Aleut family, sitting on the beach with a fish fry, eating hush puppies from the South, but they were very good.

"Then later on in the summer, in July or August – it was probably August, because all the men would be home from fishing – if it was a good year for berries we'd load up the back of Grandpa's truck. He had this old, old truck and it would hold about four or five washtubs and everybody would have buckets, and we'd start walking towards the middle of the island. There was a super berry-picking patch and we would just start – probably around 9 or 10 in the morning, you don't want to start too late – and all my uncles, all the kids, Mom and Dad and Grandpa and Granny, we'd all be over there picking salmonberries. I was thinking about that this afternoon. The four or five washtubs would fill up quite fast with that many people, but we needed an awful lot of jam and jelly for a family that large. My uncles were big boys with big appetites, especially in their teens and early 20s. Granny must have gone through a tremendous amount of jam and jelly. It seems like we picked and cleaned berries for hours. I know Mom made jam and jellies, but I don't recall her spending a lot of time on it. Isn't that weird?"

Was it mostly salmonberries?

"No. On the island, there were blueberry bushes. But I don't think there are that many blueberry bushes there any more. When the rabbits started overrunning the island, the blueberry bushes suffered, and the cranberry bushes. We had low-bush cranberries over there, too."

Is the island overrun with rabbits now?

"I don't know. Rabbits have their ups and downs, but if there is nobody over there to really keep the population down, they get built up fairly heavy. You know, I don't

remember there being rabbits when we first moved over there. I don't know if that's just because I didn't notice them or if someone transplanted them later."

What year did they first move over to Woody Island?

"The first year that we moved back that I can remember must have been in about 1948. There are pictures of me having my first birthday over there. But I remember little spotlights of memory of being back in Kodiak here, when Dad must have come over here for a job or something, and we did have a house in town. We moved back to Woody Island before I started school.

"(Kinds of berries picked) depended on the time of year. It would be early for salmonberries, and then blueberries, and there were high-bush cranberries. I have never been fond of those. Now that jam I remember Mama making because it always smelled like dirty feet. I've never liked that, just because of the smell of it. It's funny, but it's still not one of my favorite berries. But berry-picking was always a big to-do. You know, just getting all that stored up for fall and winter...

"One year, Dad built on to the back porch so we had a big double porch with lots of storage. But you can't keep your vegetables in an unheated area because they freeze and get ruined. So I remember one year, next to the swing that Dad had built for us, he dug a pit – oh, it was probably about six feet deep and about ... yeah about six by six – a root cellar and he built a little building over it. We took barrels and filled it with dry sand from the jumping Hill and that's where we stored our potatoes and carrots and turnips and stuff. It was always a neat place to play when it was too rainy or when it was too hot; it made a good shady place to sit. We'd sit on top of the lid of the root cellar and play cards or cars or dolls, or whatever."

Did he need the sand for better drainage?

"No, sand is for air circulation. To keep the vegetables from touching too much. When vegetables touch each other, they have a tendency to mold and spoil."

So the vegetables were sort of buried in the sand?

"Yeah. You would put in a layer of sand and then a layer of vegetables and a layer of sand. Well, not vegetables per se, but potatoes; mostly potatoes and some carrots and turnips – all of your root vegetables.

"And then I remember the year we got a freezer. That was pretty exciting. We got this great big chest freezer. That meant we could start freezing salmon and clams. And, of course, Mom was a great cook; she could cook up soup and all those things in big batches and then freeze them in quart-size containers so you had all that stuff available for a quick meal.

"That also meant that they could start raising chickens. I can remember that in the early spring, right around this time, Mom would place an order at Sears and Roebuck and she would order 200 baby chicks. They would be flown up here, which was quite miraculous in itself, and we would get these chicks in cardboard boxes. There would be about 25 chicks to a box. Of course, you see them in all the pet shops and stores now; everybody has them. But we would get 200 baby chicks. I was 7 or 8 years old.

"Dad had one of his workshops that he converted into a chicken house. He built a pen around it and tables. When they're little you can't put them down low. They need heat and so when we first get these things, you have to tend them, just like you do a newborn baby. You're out there every couple of hours adjusting the heat lamps and you have pie tins with quart-size jars in them filled with water so it's a constant water level, but not too deep. You have to make sure they're not drowning in it. Then you have to dip their little feet in mineral oil to soften up the chicken mash that gets built up on the bottom of their feet. If you don't get it off of their feet, their little feet get crippled.

"There's a whole bunch of stuff. You're out there making sure they don't smother each other piling up under the heat lamp and then frying themselves. They're a pain in the neck for the first couple of weeks and then they start getting their first little feathers on them and you can stop going out there at all hours of the night. Then you're still feeding them a couple of times a day and it used to be the job for me and my two younger brothers to ride herd on these chickens. You would turn them loose a couple of times a day to get out there in the grass and let them scratch for bugs and worms and get gravel in their crops. We'd raise them through the summer."

Would most of them survive?

"Oh, yeah. All of them, basically. We'd lose five or six. We had one, I remember we called him Crooked Beak because his little beak was not aligned. The top was over to the left, the bottom was over to the right and he couldn't really get food in his mouth. I think somebody wrung his neck. And then a couple you'd lose to smothering, when they were very, very little. But, basically, they always lived. It was very easy raising them over there.

"And then in the fall you'd start butchering, which means getting out the chopping block and chopping heads off. You have a big pot of hot water and you'd dip the chickens in there and start plucking feathers. And there again, the little kids would run the relay team. We'd be running the chickens with their heads chopped off over to Dad or over to Mom who'd be dipping them in the hot water. She and Dad would sit there and start plucking, and after they got enough of them stripped of their feathers we'd run them into the house. Mama would start cleaning them and separating the parts into a gizzard, a neck and a heart, to make sure you have one for each bird. Then putting them all into plastic bags and dropping them in the freezer. I remember fried chicken was one of the first things (we'd make). Fried chicken, when you have a lot of kids is a real treat. You didn't get chicken that often up here.

"Everything had to come up on the boat. I remember when I was really small, the boat was in here only once a month, or once every three months, and then once a month when I was a little bit older. So all the fresh stuff, you'd make sure you got into town the first of the month because then the store would be well stocked. There were three grocery stores. One of them was the City Market. But we went mostly to DNA, which was the store on the dock, right there. They were quite small by today's standards. They had wooden floors and they had a whole wall full of candy. And you'd have all these different smells. Grocery smells smelled different back then. They did. Towards the back of the store they had the meat market. You'd have a meat cutter back there and you could go back and tell them what you wanted and he would measure it out and chop it up and wrap it up in paper and tie with string. All the romance is gone from the grocery business these days. Laughs. It was fun back then. Things were weighed out by the pound and sold out of jars."

What does she remember about her grandparents?

"Oh, Grandpa and Granny! One of my favorite memories of them is every evening after dinner... well, you'd know it was dinner time because one of the boys would come to the front door and Grandpa had a triangle hanging up and he'd bang on the triangle with a pipe or a wrench and he'd yell, "Chow down." So when Mickey or Cecil were out there yelling, "Chow down," you knew it was dinner time and everybody had to go home and the fun was over -- for a couple of hours, anyway -- until dinner was done and the dishes were done.

"Granny's house had this neat kitchen with tall, tall cupboards and a nice wood stove with a warming oven on top and a big oven. She had a nice kitchen and she had this -- I don't know what you'd call it, but it made me think of Carmen Miranda – with gourds and paper mache bananas, which was very gaudy but which I thought was gorgeous, hanging in her kitchen in front of the window. And she had a pump at her kitchen sink. All of her water had to be either heated on the stove or in the tea kettle on top of the stove. Her kitchen was always painted yellow and she had a little table on one wall and they had a separate dining room, which was unusual. Most people had a shared kitchen and dining area. She had a separate dining room that was quite nice and she had real silver that was in a chest that was kept in a cabinet under the stairs.

"After dinner was done and after the dishes and everything were all done, and the dish rags were rinsed out and hung on the line and everybody had had their tea, she and Grandpa would go for a stroll, every evening. They would walk from their house, in front of our house and then down across the flats, over up the beach toward the flume, which was the runoff from Lower Lake there. Then they would stroll the edge of the beach on the shoreline all the way back around -- which was probably, maybe a mile -- from the flume to the beach just in front of their house. When I say in front of their house, there was a long flat area and it would slope way down from a fairly steep hill down to the beach where Grandpa had his boathouse. They would walk the beach and then up the grassy path up to the hill above the beach and above their house. Grandma had a bench up there and they would sit there for about half an hour or forty-five minutes, just

watching the evening sort of turn. Then they'd wander down – and it was always arm in arm – and go home."

Did they do that in the winter also?

"If it was dry, yes. If it was wet and blustery, no, they didn't. But my Grandpa and Granny were very much in love. It was a comforting thing to watch them because they were so easy with each other. I called him my Grandpa, but he wasn't my mother's father. My mother's father was quite the ne'r-do-well. Mike Chabitnoy was my mother's stepfather. She said after her father died and my grandmother married Mike that life was so much nicer and so much easier. But she used to talk about when she was small on Woody Island and she was a real rascal. Of course, my grandmother was a rascal, too. She told me about being raised in the Mission over there. She and my godmother were in the Mission at the same time. Grace Kerr was my godmother. My grandmother said that my godmother was quite a prissy, affected thing and forever with her airs and Granny would forever heckle her and tease her. I remember she said that one day Grace was bothering her about something and Granny just dragged her down the hill through all the cow pies. But she said, 'I had to pay for it,' because she had to do all of Grace's laundry because she messed her up."

This was while they were still in the Mission?

"Yes, they were in the Mission. I think Granny was about 11 when this happened."

Did Grace end up staying on Woody Island?

"No, Grace moved to Kodiak and she lived in a little house on – the street doesn't exist the way it did – but there was a little house along the edge of the bay by Cannery Row. She lived in a house there, later, during the tidal wave. But one of my earliest memories is Grace riding to Woody Island on the boat Sunday mornings and picking me up to go to church with her, because it is your godparent's responsibility to make sure that you get your religious training. So she would come over on the Woody Island boat and Mom would have me in my dress and ready to go to church and Grace would take me to the Russian Orthodox Church. I remember this little red plastic purse that she would have two or three pieces of fudge in. This was my bribe, I think, to keep me quiet or to keep me from getting too tired in church. Because the services were long, two or three hours, and you'd spend most of your time standing or on your knees. They didn't have pews in the church like they do now. It was all in Russian; and I didn't understand Russian. So you're in there, and these people are speaking in Russian and they're singing in Russian. When you're very short and all these adults are in front of you, all you see is the rear end of people. And you're looking in between and trying to see the front of the church."

Was this a church on Woody Island?

"No, no, no. She would ride the boat over and pick me up and take me back on the boat and we would go to church here in town. The church on Woody Island was no longer

functioning as a church when we moved over there. There was no priest and so it was closed up and I think in disrepair. A lot of the icons and paintings and artifacts I think had been brought over and put in the church over here. Then, when the service was over, she would put me on the boat, take me back to the island and come back to town. When you think about it, it was very dedicated of her, because she spent half an hour to 45 minutes on the boat going over there to get me and then the same bringing me back. I think that went on probably a couple of years. At least once or twice a month I would go to town and go to church. Then she would come over and visit once in a while."

Did her sibling also have godparents who did that?

"No. But I remember my older sister, Ellen, when we were small. When my godmother wasn't hauling me off to church, my sister was hauling us off to church. She seemed to be looking for the right one. I remember when Mom and Dad didn't take us to the Russian Church, she would have us coming across to Kodiak and sometimes we went to the Kodiak Bible Chapel and sometimes we went to the Baptist Church. Sometimes we went to the Christian Community Center. We never went to the Catholic Church. That's just about the only thing I could say. We went to every other one. Then occasionally there would be a lady on Woody Island who'd have a Bible school and we would all go to Bible school, and summer Bible school, depending on who was over there. There were people who were very religious and people who were not."

These were FAA folks?

"Yes these were various families with the FAA, but there was no established church over there. These were just people, who wanted their children to have Sunday school. Mrs. Mannering was what you would call a Christian lady. She was with the FAA. She was the lady who had the first Bible school. We used to go to Mrs. Mannering's house on Saturdays at, I think, 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon and be there for an hour or so. I can remember hearing the Bible stories for the first time and she did make an impression on me: Daniel in the lion's den and Joseph and his coat of many colors. In fact, she gave me, she gave all of us our first Bible. I still have mine – signed by her.

"Later on there was another family that moved to Woody Island with the FAA. They were an Eskimo family from Nome, the Johnsons. They were very much what we'd call very Bible-thumping. They were "Brother this" and "Sister that," and "Halleluiah." They were quite delightful to watch.

"I remember the first time we went to a Sunday school class over there at Mr. Johnson's. I remember my mother getting quite hysterical after I told her this. I went back and I was watching Mr. Johnson, he was preaching the sermon or whatever, and I was enthralled – big eyes, big ears. I remember going back and telling my mother that Mr. Johnson's sisters were here. I said he had a big family... (breaks out in laughter). You know, "Brother this" and "Sister that," and me not knowing any better, being 7 years old... My mother was laughing hysterically. When I think about it now, it's pretty funny. Like I said, they were Eskimos from Nome and some of their ways were quite strange to us, but

a fun family. I still stay in touch with a couple of them. In fact, one of them would call me up regularly, every year, when he had to give a speech at his Native corporation's annual meeting. I hadn't heard from him for many years and I got this call from him one evening at my house and it was Charlie Johnson, and he wanted to know about a joke. He called me up to get a joke for his speech!

"We had a lot of fun. We were rascals. I can remember crawling through the tall grass when the first radishes and turnips were starting to grow in the garden. We'd sneak through the grass and crawl under the fence and go into Mr. Chaffin's garden and steal his radishes."

A couple of the guys said they did that also, but they said they took their stolen vegetables up to their little tree house.

"The tree house is still over there. The little kids weren't allowed in the tree house. The girls not at all, and the boys not until they got bigger. But we knew where it was. I remember one summer my uncles and my boy cousins were very secretive. There were three of my uncles and five or six of my cousins. They were very sneaky for a period of about a week. We found out that they had gone into the woods and picked out a real tall tree and they cut it down and they stripped off the bark and they packed it out. It was about 16 to 20 feet high. And they packed it out of the woods and dug a hole on the top of the hill overlooking the swampy, boggy area below my aunt's house.

"This area wasn't a bog all the time. It would dry up and turn sandy, with sandy grass and stuff in the summertime. But in the spring and in the fall, when it was during the rainy season, it would turn into a swamp. So they put this stripped down tree up, with all the branches and the bark stripped off, and they had four ropes tied at the top of it and they made this gorgeous swing, this rope swing. The kind where you run and you jump and you swing out and around the tree, instead of back and forth.

"We wanted to try it so bad! They wouldn't let any of us on it. It looked so fun and scary because you would swing way out. The hill was maybe 30-40 feet high and the tree was on top of that. So when you swung out, you'd be swinging out over this huge area, way high up over the swamp. We wanted to get on that so bad. We'd sit there, all these little kids with big eyes, just begging. But they would get on the swing and say, "You guys are too little. Don't you dare get on this swing. We're never going to let you guys get on here!" There was my Uncle Mickey, my Uncle Cecil and my cousin Mitchell and my Uncle James, just swinging and having a glorious time. One time they all took off and they were swinging way out and that tree broke. They all landed in the swamp. We thought that was payback. We never did get to ride on that swing, but they didn't either after that. The tree only lasted a day!

"When we weren't in the woods climbing trees or running around the hills we were in the lake. If the sun was shining, we were in the water. It was just great. Of course, my cousins -- their father was, I think, from the Oklahoma area. Uncle Ray was Cherokee. He and his brother Chuck. Actually, I don't remember Uncle Ray; I remember his brother

Chuck. Beautiful, beautiful men. Dark-skinned Indians. I mean like you see pictures of Indians, except they had these absolutely sky-blue eyes. Just the most gorgeous, gorgeous blue eyes. So incongruous, this beautiful tanned skin and those blue, blue eyes. But because my cousins had so much Indian in them, the minute they would get out in the sun they would just start browning.

"We have pictures of us. There's one in particular of two of my brothers, I think, and three or four of my cousins and they're all standing kind of one right behind the other leaning over to form kind of like a totem pole going up this little slope. They had all just come out of the water and they looked like a bunch of little oven-baked cookies. You know, they're so dark and all with these big-stretched white grins on their faces. It was so funny.

"We had rafts. We were forever on the rafts on the water, under the water, trying to swim across the lake. It was really a great test of your endurance when you could swim across the lake! It couldn't have been that far. Maybe a couple hundred feet. But you're talking about little kids here. I learned to swim when my sister shoved me off the raft."

Which sister?

"My sister Judith. She said it was time I learned and that was the only way I was going to learn – if I had to. So she did and I did! She was 9; I was 6.

"I remember one year my friend Kathy Emwright and I had been saving salt all year and we must have had a whole pound of it. We were going to pour it into the lake and kill all the bloodsuckers in there! We thought a whole pound was going to do this. We couldn't stand bloodsuckers (leeches).

"It was fun over there. There are so many things that you just don't remember, then little things will come back to you – things that you did.

"In back of our house, we had this grassy hill, which broke away at the edges on one side toward the beach, and then broke away in a long sloping hill in the center. There was all this black volcanic sand. We called it our jumping hill. Well the grassy part was a graveyard, the size of a football field. In the back of the two houses it was all graves.

"A couple hundred feet wide and 600-800 feet long, at least. Of course, when you think about it in adult dimensions as opposed to when you're a child, the dimensions might differ. But it had to be at least that long. On the one side, as I said, the banks are all broken off and the sand is unstable, but we would play on that constantly. We called it our jumping hill. On the one side, where it sloped down to the beach, we would play on that occasionally. But not too often because if we jumped on that too much, the bank might cave in and at times there were old bones sticking out. Very old." (This was the mass grave, where victims of the Spanish flu epidemic were buried.)

"The whole island is basically black volcanic sand. There are a couple of white sandy beaches. There's one place in the middle of the island where there is white volcanic sand, but the black sand beaches is pretty much what the island is made of.

"But that jumping hill – when we weren't in the lake, that's pretty much where we were. That was where we sledded in the wintertime because it would build up beautiful drifts. And in the summertime we had little roads there. We played cards, we built sand castles, you know, it was so clean. Didn't have the dirt you have nowadays. That's where we had our picnics and played statues. We'd jump off the hill and you had to stay the way you landed.

"We'd find little furry caterpillars crawling around in the grass and the island was tremendous for wildflowers. There were water lilies in the lakes with yellow flowers; big fields of fireweed and lupine and white daisies up on the hill above Una's Lake; devil's paintbrush, wild iris, dandelions... Oh, it was gorgeous. We spent a lot of time on the reefs.

"I remember Mama and Auntie would take us. Most of the time we spent poking around finding *ohiducks* and clams, and, once in a while, Mom and Auntie would build a little teeny fire in the cliff in some little niche, and they'd get a can and fill it with water and get periwinkles and boil periwinkles and snails.

"Nettie and Mom got along pretty well. I don't remember any squabbles. We spent a lot of time at Auntie's house and she spent a lot of time at ours."

Did they spend time at Angeline's house, too?

"I didn't. Angeline was spooky for us little kids. We thought she was spooky. She was an old lady who didn't have teeth and she had white hair. She was the Sundbergs' grandmother but she wasn't my grandmother, so we didn't know her very well. Her house was up on the hill and we would run errands up there every once in a while, but it was knocking on the door, handing her a note and then going home. My cousins may have spent more time up there than I did. I remember a couple of times being in her house and I remember high ceilings and rather dark and gloomy, because her house was in the trees on the hillside. So it was kind of spooky.

"I remember one time Mom visiting there and Angeline had a white cake with bright green frosting on it. It was good cake! I remember we used to go up to her house, my cousins and I, every once in a while and open up her shutters. It was horribly delicious and scary for little kids to open them and let the bats out. All in all, Angeline's house was spooky for me. You know when you're 8 or 9, your imagination runs away with you a little bit."

What about Ella's house? Was there anything scary about it?

"No, not Granny's house. Granny's house was always kind of magical to me, because it was two stories, for one thing. It had an upstairs.

"There were seven or eight cottonwood trees. Four or five in the front and four or five in the back. They were planted by my aunts and uncles when they were quite small. So she had this beautiful grove of trees around her house. She had lots of windows. She had pink geranium plants that were always in bloom. Beautiful red, white and pink geraniums. And I remember she had this old dog, named Suzie -- she was about 18 years old -- and cats that would have kittens upstairs.

'We never got to go upstairs. That was my uncles' bedroom. It was one big room at the top of the house, and the stairs were very steep short steps. My uncles slept in this big dormitory that stretched the length of the house. Their beds were on either side of the room there and each had his own section. We weren't allowed up there. We were little; we weren't allowed to mess up my uncles' things. But when I was there in the summertime, when Grandpa was out fishing, if the cat had kittens and I was very, very good, I'd get to go see them once or twice. Of course, your head would just be swiveling while you were up there, trying to take everything in; look at everything so you could tell everybody – what it was like in the uncles' bedroom! I'd spend five or ten minutes petting the kitty and then go back downstairs.

"And, of course, when Suzie would have puppies, that's where we got our dog. My grandmother's dog was part spaniel and I don't know what she bred with. Suzie had puppies one year when we got this little brown and white – must have been part beagle – little short-haired brown-and-white dog we called Queenie. Couldn't have weighed more, full grown, than about 35 pounds, 40 pounds maximum. Small dog. Then after she was 7 or 8 years old, she had a black-and-white long-haired pup that we kept. We called him Ring. I think he had a white ring of fur around his neck or something. I don't know where kids get the names from. But Ring smiled and he would scare the hell out of people because they thought he was baring his teeth at them, snarling or growling. But he wasn't; he was smiling. We had these dogs for a long time.

"My grandmother always had pets. They always had neat pets in that house. My uncles would go out and catch ground squirrels and build a cage for them in the back of the shed. They'd have a cage full of squirrels. Of course, little kids weren't allowed to go near all this, on pain of death. 'You stay away from there. Those are our squirrels. Get out of there.'"

How much older were the uncles?

"Oh, my heavens. Let me see. The youngest uncle was the same age as my oldest sister. So my youngest uncle was six years older than I. (Cecil was the same age as Ellen.) Then there was Mickey. I don't really know how old Mickey was. Mickey was probably two years older than Cecil. His name was Cecil Catherine. His middle name was Catherine! It was years before I found out. He threatened to kill anybody who used it.

"Holidays were always a lot of fun. Christmas we'd put on a pageant at the school and everybody would be involved. I was an angel the first time; my sister was the spirit of something or other; and I still remember her line: "The door was ajar and I just walked in." I didn't understand how a door could be *a jar*! (Laughs.)

"Holidays meant new shoes, a new dress, and new socks. I remember one year when the school moved (to the other side of the island), I played a little black girl -- Petunia Jackson; I had to have my hair in braids. But I don't remember the play or the lines any more. Halloween was always a great time; we'd make a haul. We'd get apples and hot chocolate; it wasn't like it is now. The adults had a Halloween party in the rec hall. I remember Mom dressed Dad like a rose bud. Another year, my godfather was dressed up as Mammy Yokum and Dad was Li'l Abner. It was so neat; the weather was pretty much always good; there wasn't a lot of snow and rain like now. I don't remember a snowy, rainy, or nasty Halloween. I remember when the moon was full we'd sneak out after Mom and Dad were asleep, and joined our cousins and uncles. When the moon was full, it was almost like daylight; the air was soft and still warm and we'd play like it was daytime."

What did they play?

"Sometimes we'd do the normal bratty kid stuff, like knocking on someone's door and then running away. Once Paul got caught, so he had to go in and visit. It was an apartment on the lower floor. The hill in front of that apartment building and the schoolhouse was where we went sledding. It was very steep and very short.

"We had the hill for sledding and the lake for skating. We carried on all our activities within a small area pretty much in sight of everyone's houses.

"I had two younger brothers; three younger cousins and one girl cousin one year younger than me. Peter and Freddy were younger. Peter died in Uganik two years after Freddie died. His health was never really great; he had bouts of depression. He would go on a bender and his heart just basically gave out. He was very young. I think he was 28 or 29 when he died. That was a very bad stretch of time.

"When my mother's health started to go, they moved back and she and my father used to fish and live out in Uganik; my mother had allergies and asthma really bad; got to the point that allergies put her in such precarious position that she had to be medevaced out. It put an end to a very good time. That was in the 70s; it was very tough on my parents.

"I was living back and forth between Kodiak and Woody Island; my husband fortunately liked that lifestyle. We spent every minute on the water or the island. Our girls got to spend a lot of time in the boat with us. After the tidal wave, I moved back there because it was cleaner there. Cien was a baby; four months old at the time of the earthquake. I remember when I was pregnant we went to Woody to visit my uncle James, who was still living there at the time, and I remember my husband and I stayed upstairs in the boys' room. My stomach and I were bigger than the little bunk bed.

"It was logical to move to the island when Kodiak was so messed up. Woody Island was clean; I could put Cien out in the sun. We had a couple of dogs at the time. Then my aunt and her children moved back for the same reason. Johnny was already there. Junior Sundberg used to come over for weeks at a time and stayed with either Johnny or someone else on the hillside. There were my aunt and her husband, my cousin Leann, my cousin Jimmy, Maurice and Danny, and my uncle James. That was all of us on the west side of the island. There also would be visitors off and on. Then there were two families with the FAA on the other side of the island. The Chaffins did not live there at the time; they bought property from my grandmother and built a house on the hill, where they went during the summers.

"The vehicles on the island tended to belong to the government; no one had personal vehicles. One government vehicle was used as a school bus and general transportation. There were no sedan type cars. They were all pretty much work vehicles. It's not a huge island. You can walk from one side to the other in 20 minutes. In the middle of the island there is a road that branches off to the north, which goes to the CT (communications tower) site where the largest towers were. And there was an old, old road that went down to the beach to the old sawmill. It still had vestiges of a roof and side beams and various parts when I was small, but it was pretty much gone by the '50s.

"I remember my grandmother telling me a story one time about my grandfather. Well, the island is very haunted. Granny told me a story of when grandpa worked at the sawmill. She would pack his lunch every day. One morning she saw him stumbling in the back field, bumping into the headstones. He said he'd been walking to work and in front of him, he thought he saw the superintendent's wife wearing a black dress in the style of the early 1900s. She had on a hat and a veil. He thought he'd catch up and walk her to the sawmill. That's all he remembered. But she had been dead for quite a while! When Granny went out to get Grandpa, he said that's what he'd been doing. My father also mentioned several strange stories but I don't remember them.

"We were either spending the night at my cousins' house or they were spending the night with us. Or we were camping outside somewhere or sleeping in the tent in the front yard and the older kids would start dishing out the spooky stories. They would scare the daylights out of the little kids. They were always spooky stories and when the kids were telling them, we didn't know if they were true stories or just made-up spooky stories. But the ones that my grandmother told me you could pretty much figure that she wasn't trying to scare the daylight out of me. This was when I was an adult. She was just telling me strange things that had happened.

"I can remember when I was small, really, really being uncomfortable at times. Not all the time, just once in a while when the island would feel really strange."

Can she describe it?

"No, just uneasy. Just creepy. Most of the time there was nothing that would ever bother you. Like I said we played outside at night, we played outside during the day, you name it. But once in a while it just wouldn't feel right.

"But for the most part it was a pretty magic place. Every child should have a chance to grow up like that.

"After the FAA had moved off of the west side of the island to the east side, the Mission, I guess, approached the government and got the government to donate the building on this side of the island to them. After a certain period of time they started having their summer Bible Camp over there. We hated to see them come because the kids that they brought over would take over our swings, our raft and all of our stuff. The island in the summer time would be completely ruined for about a month. They were intruders while they had their Bible Camp over there.

"We got along pretty well with the FAA families. We all played together. Back then radio was your entertainment. If you didn't have radio, your evenings were spent knitting and sewing and one of the activities we had on our side of the island, we would go over to a good neighbor friend, or they would come over to our house, and we'd have card parties. Canasta was big, Rummy, Pinochle. So there would be a card party and snacks. The ladies occasionally would get together and have a bazaar, which would be very exciting. And there would be bingo once a month. After a certain amount of time – I can't remember when it started -- everybody pitched in a certain amount of money a month, it wasn't very much, and they started having movies shipped in. So a real treat would be to be able to go to a movie. I think it would cost 10 or 25 cents. We would get to go to the Rec Hall and watch a real movie. I remember that Woody Island was where I saw "The Quiet Man" for the first time, with John Wayne. This was on the west side of Woody Island. They had a Rec Hall on both sides. They had two separate sets of facilities.

"When they (the FAA) still had people on the west side of the island, they had a Rec Hall and the apartment building and the BOQ (the Bachelors' Quarters) and a tool shop. They always maintained the big garage, which they later called the boathouse, and they had a couple of supply warehouses. Later on, after the crew moved and after they moved all the people from the west side, all the social functions occurred in the Rec Hall on the other side of the island. Over there they had the school, the carpenter shop and two apartment buildings and, I believe, seven or eight houses which were double – a small apartment type dwelling on the top floor and a full-size residence on the bottom floor. The apartment buildings had six apartments in them, I believe: two large apartments on each floor and then it was either two small apartments on the top floor or one small apartment on the top floor. I can't remember.

"But it was very much a community. The locals... we were all tied together through the school. If you had children, you were tied in to the community. All the doings were open and available to everybody. There was no distinction between Natives and white people,

per se. I guess you'd call them people who worked for the FAA and people who didn't. That was just about the only distinction."

What were some of the most dramatic changes, from the time she was a kid to the time she became an adult?

"The earthquake caused the most dramatic changes, but mainly it was the FAA leaving the island. And then one of the biggest, most shocking changes was when the government cleared the center of the island for tracking sites. I don't know how many acres it was, but it was a huge, huge clearing that they built in the center of the island. They ripped all the trees out and denuded it of all growth. Of course, that was laid back to the corporation, with rumors flying hot and heavy that we were going to strip the island of all of its trees and everything. I have no idea of the official name for it, but they had some sort of antenna field in there.

"When the earthquake and tidal wave occurred, the tidal wave damaged the main dock over there and the earthquake did some damage also. The piping and sewage systems on the island, some of them were the old wooden pipes. I know the earthquake broke the main water line; broke the cap off the main water line that ran down our side of the island from Upper Lake to the lower buildings. And so, after one particularly good jolt and the storm, the cap came off the piping."

Was this during the quake or after the quake?

"This was soon after the quake. I know the water was still functioning and running when my husband and I first moved over there afterwards. And then later on in '64 or '65 the piping malfunctioned. There was no water pressure. All the water had to be either hand-carried from either the lake or my aunt's spring. It made living there very difficult with a small child. That's when we stopped living full time over there. It was just too difficult. After that we went over there just visiting. It was strange not to see people over there anymore, especially my grandmother. That was one of the big changes. She found it very hard to stay on the island without Grandpa. She said, 'Too much tragedy over there.' She didn't want to stay there. There was too much unhappiness. I guess in some ways it had been a very tragic island for her.

"But I would like to see some sort of community there again. If nothing else, I'd like to see some sort of summer community. But I want to be rather stingy about it. I don't want all and sundry over there. I want it to be people who are with the corporation. We've been invaded too much, I think. I want to leave some of it for ourselves."

Top row: Ellen Mae Simeonoff, Mickey Chabitnoy, Cecil Chabitnoy.

Second row: Priscilla Burton, Marilyn Manring, Judith Simeonoff.

Third row: Paul Harmon (cut off), Paul Coleman, Christina Simeonoff, Maurice Harmon.

Bottom: Rayna Harmon. Picture taken on Lower Lake looking north.

ELLEN PAGANO interview
Interviewed 1/21/02

"Well, I think if you're going to be interviewing my brothers and sisters, in order not to be too redundant, probably the thing that I remember that they wouldn't remember too well, (are things) like living in the little cabin up by the church. That was our first home on Woody Island, on the little bluff there, next to the church, above Lower Lake. I remember living there; it was a one-room cabin and there was just my brother Richard and myself; and I remember Daddy going down the hill to build our house down on the flats."

How old was Ellen at that time?

"I must have been pretty young because I started school when we lived in the house on the flats. That must have been around 1942; it was during the Second World War. The schoolteacher's name was Miss. Yonkers; I don't remember too much about the school, except that there were just two of us in kindergarten – that was Anita Sundberg and I. The Sundberg family lived on Woody Island at that time and it was quite a large family. Rudy and Jenny Sundberg were Anita's parents. It was a Territorial School at the time. (The name Longwood School didn't mean anything to her; the school was just known as the Territorial School.) The building was over on the flats, where the Sea Bees built their buildings when they came in. Flats are the areas down below; the area where there were no trees or anything, down where we built our home. We always called it the flats.

"But our home was built not even a block away from my grandmother's house, and that's Ella and Mike Chabitnoy. When we moved down there, that was real nice. It was a two-room house that was plenty big enough for the size of our family at that time. Dad built on to it in later years as our family grew. It began with a two-room house that mainly consisted of a kitchen and front room combined, and a bedroom in the back. And then later Dad added another bedroom and (still) later he added another two bedrooms. Then when he added our kitchen – he added a lovely new kitchen when I was in junior high school or high school – then one of the bedrooms became the dining room, and he added a bathroom. It was a fairly nice house."

What did her dad do for a living?

"Dad was a fisherman; he was not at home a lot; he used to have to go away for jobs in the wintertime. He was a fisherman in the summertime. My father belonged to the pile buck union. Whenever there was a job in Alaska, wherever they were building a dock or extending a dock, Daddy would go wherever the job was. If there was work, he would have to go away from home because there was only a short time when there was work for him on Woody Island. There was a period of time, after we moved and came back again, when he worked for the FAA. At that time it was called the CAA, Civil Aeronautics Administration."

How long did he have that job?

"He worked for them for about three years, but he also worked for them off and on as they had small maintenance types of things that had to be done. When Daddy wasn't on another job out of town, they'd come and get him to do small jobs also."

Was that the only job possibility on Woody Island?

"Well, yeah! There weren't any; there was no industry there or anything. Of course, during the war it was just a big Army and Navy base, and there was no work during that time; and then when the FAA/CAA moved in, there were odd jobs once in a while. But one of the reasons my father couldn't work for them full time is that in the summertime he always went fishing. And they didn't let him go fishing because that would take three months out of the year. So that was always a problem."

Did he go on someone else's boat or did he have his own boat?

"He used to fish with Edwin Lillegren. Anyway, my earliest memories of going to school was while Miss Yonkers was there; I only went to school one school year and then, I believe, when the war got close to Alaska, down the chain, she became frightened and she caught the next boat away and left us without a school teacher. So then my parents had a decision to make because there were two of us going to school, my older brother, Richard, and myself. And so what they had to do is they had to farm us out in Kodiak. I lived with Mama's cousin Carrie, Carrie Heater and her husband, Jim. We were given a choice of where we wanted to live in Kodiak for the remainder of the school year. I chose to live with Carrie, she lived on Mission Road, Richard chose to go to the Baptist Mission, where we had two cousins, Ronnie and Lexie Fadaoff. Richard is about four and a half years older than I am, so he must have been around 11 years old.

"Anyway, this was a real sad time. I was just a little girl, about 6 years old. Carrie had floor-to-ceiling windows in the front of her house and she lived right on the bluff. From her window, I could see home. I could see Woody Island. And so it was a very lonesome time for us being away from the family, and a little strange living in the city. But that summer, or that spring, Mom and Daddy moved over with the rest of the family and we lived in Sears No. 2.

"Sears had about nine homes and they were called Sears No. 1, 2, 3, 4... We actually lived in two of them over a period of time. We lived in Sears No. 2 and Sears No.9. Sears No. 9 was a little bit larger. As our family got bigger, we moved to a larger house and then my father bought a house across the street; it was a rabbit farm. They sold all the rabbits and Daddy bought the house. It was our first house in Kodiak.

"It must have been about 1944, or maybe it was 1943, when we came to Kodiak. I was born in 1937 and I began kindergarten, I believe, at 5. Something like that.

"Then we moved back. We actually moved from Hollers house; Daddy sold it and we moved to a much larger house in downtown Kodiak. Daddy bought a much larger home. (The Hollers' place was the rabbit place. Just an old lady with her son who raised these rabbits.) We moved into a big two-story house behind the Belmont and next to the Filipino Bunkhouse. It was a two-story home. (Belmont was on the main street, next to where the new post office is right now.) So it was right off the main street, down a little hill, close to the water. That's where we lived. We lived there until we moved back to Woody Island in 1948, when I was in fifth grade.

"I think the reason that we moved back was because they needed a school on Woody Island. They needed to have more children (for the school). In order to have a Territorial School, they had to have 25 children. So Mom and Dad were approached by the CAA, to see if we would consider moving back to make up those numbers – so they could have a school for their children. Daddy really considered it because he couldn't find a job at that time. That was during the Eisenhower administration, I believe, and you could not find a job; there just was no work. I remember my father finally got a job at the cafeteria on the base, washing pots and pans."

Did the CAA offer him a job in order to move back?

"No. They, of course, didn't have a job for him, but my parents requested certain things and that was that the CAA would give us electricity and running water. They said, yes, they would hook us up with electricity and we would have running water. So that was a real consideration."

Did she have other siblings besides Richard by that time?

"By that time there was Kelly Jr., Judy, and Christina, and, I believe, Peter was born during that period of time. We lived on the island from the time I was in fifth grade, until, let's see, until I was... I think it was the '53-'54 school year we moved back to Kodiak because we were in high school then. I had been traveling back and forth on the boat to go to high school for two years. Then my brother Kelly was going to be entering high school, and my sister Judy after him, so my parents had to move back because it was just too hard to have so many children riding the boat back and forth every day – with bad weather and everything.

"There's a gap in here that I've left out and it's because I don't remember it real well. We actually moved to Kodiak one other time, and that was when Christina was born. We were in Kodiak for a period of time when my mother was pregnant, because the hospital was built. Christina was the first child she had in the Griffin Memorial Hospital."

So the family was there just during her pregnancy?

"Yeah, until she had Christina and that was during the war also; we rented a house during that period of time. That was when the whole town was full of military. We were also

under military rule; there were curfews and everything. It was very hard to live on Woody Island during that period of time."

So her family lived on the island until 1954; did anybody from the family move back after that?

"Let's see? Yes, my parents moved back again around 1960. It was about a year after my grandpa died (Mike Chabitnoy). I think he died in 1959 and they moved back again. And, of course, by this time I was married. I graduated in '55 from high school and I married that same year. I turned 19 a week after I got married.

"But, you know, to go back: I remember those years living on Woody Island really well. I remember them because the island was just loaded with military. The Army was on the other side of the island in their big barracks and mess halls and things like that. And the Sea Bees were on our side of the island. The Sea Bees were in the process of building this huge hangar-like type of building, right in the flats in front of our house. The foundation is probably still there. We were always invited on holidays and things like that, by the military people. I remember having Christmas parties with them. And these were thousands of guys, you know, young fellows away from home. They were homesick."

Really? There were thousands?

"Uh-huh. I don't remember how many thousands, but there were thousands of them."

On Woody Island?

"On Woody Island. All of those older buildings were full."

That must have been strange to go from such a small population to so many people!

"Yeah. There were a lot of people, a lot of men. My parents became very familiar and friendly with the head of the Sea Bees, Mr Wildman. I believe my mother corresponded with Mr. Wildman until she died. They would exchange Christmas cards. They made some friends during those years. I can remember that Daddy had some special friends among the Army fellows; they would come to out house for dinner and things like that. Then my father wanted to enter the military, he so envied military people. But he couldn't join the military because he had too many children.

"All of a sudden they moved the whole military out of Woody Island. I mean one day they just.... I don't remember when that was; probably my brothers will remember, but I don't remember the date that that happened. But when they decided to go, they got rid of everything except the buildings; they just got rid of everything. I remember they bulldozed a great big hole in the ground, a huge, huge hole in the ground and dumped everything in this big hole. I remember it. They dumped everything in this big hole and covered it up with the bulldozer."

Was that site in the flats?

"That was... as you're leaving the flats and going to the other side of the island, it was at the base of the first hill. So it was at the edge of the flats, close by my aunt's home, up on the little hill there."

Which aunt was that?

"That was Nettie; Nettie Harmon. It was down at the base of the first hill at the edge of the flats, down below her house where the road goes over to the other side of the island. It was over on the right side of the road, at the base of the first hill there. They just bulldozed a huge, huge, hole and they dumped everything in it; I suppose everything that they didn't want confiscated by anybody."

It must have seemed like such an incredible waste?

(Laughs.) "Yeah, it was an incredible waste and they just moved out. We were a very quiet island after that.

"I remember my brother and I being invited to movies on the other side of the island, to the Army post. My father's friends would come and get my brother and I to go see a movie and we would sit with all those soldiers. I remember I was just a little girl; we would sit with all those soldiers and watch movies."

Does she remember what movies they saw?

I remember one. You know I don't remember the name of it, but I remember that it was too scary for me and I started crying and they had to take me home. Maybe that's why that sticks in my mind. But that was an interesting period of time. We were under military rule and we couldn't go out in boats whenever we wanted to. You know, there were curfews and things like that. And there were constant air raids. Daddy had built an air raid shelter into the side of the hill and I remember going to the air raid shelter at nighttime in the dark."

Was that shelter just for her family?

"You know, I don't remember. I don't remember if Granny and Grandpa had their own air raid shelter. I don't know why they would have, but I just remember being bundled up at nighttime in the dark – I was very young then -- and going and sitting in the air raid shelter in the side of the hill. Our air raid shelter must have been around where the Baptist Mission was, or close to it. The air raids were usually at night; we would hear the air raid sirens from Kodiak and we knew when there was an air raid. I remember we did all the things you do, like cover the windows with dark cloth. It was very scary."

What were some of the foods they had?

"We pretty much lived off the land and the sea. There was no hunting on the island at that time. There might have been rabbits (to hunt), but that's all. (No big game). We ate a lot of clams, mussels, *uhiduck* (bivalve that stuck to rocks; bigger than mussels). They were found at low tide and were very tough, so Mama would grind them up and put them in gravy or clean them and boil them to tenderize them. They were a good source of protein and a nice change from clams. I remember daddy taking a lantern in the middle of the night if there was a low tide. It was a bit of a walk to the reef, but he'd bring them back for us and we'd have clam chowder, clam fritters -- our favorites -- butter clams, baby clam steamers....

"We had ducks a lot during hunting season. Mama would make duck soup and roasted duck. Once in a while there was a seal, but that wasn't very often. Seal was always shared with everybody because there was a lot of meat to a seal, so that was always shared with everybody. I used to hate seal meat; it was very strong tasting."

Did they use the seal oil?

"Yes, Mama used to make the rendered kind that you make on the stove. One of our favorite meals. Living off the land, you know, we had to preserve the fish through the winter. So we always had barrels of salt fish. When there was cod we would have salt cod, and there was always a barrel of salt salmon. We lived on that way into the winter."

Would she describe that process from catching it to putting it up for the winter?

"We were allowed to beach seine a certain amount of fish for subsistence. You know, just like now. You could get 25 fish for a family, or something like that. Well, anyway, when Daddy was home we would make beach seines or if he was out fishing with Edwin, he would make sure to put up salt salmon for us. They would catch it, clean it and fillet it out, and then they'd layer it in a keg with rock salt. I don't know the whole process, but I know that cured the fish. That kept it all winter. You had to keep it where it was cool.

"Whenever Mama needed fish to make a meal, she would have to think about it three days in advance, because the fish had to be taken out of the barrel and it had to be soaked in fresh water for three days (to remove the salt). Then she would make various things out of it. One of her favorite things to do was to boil pieces of the salt salmon with potatoes from the garden. You know we had a root cellar also. In the root cellar were potatoes, rutabagas, turnips, cabbages, carrots, you know, things like that. This root cellar was by Mama's clothesline and it had a little building on top of it, just a shelter, just a chalet type of roof, and you'd go in there and open the hatch and go down the ladder for the vegetables. That's where we stored our garden vegetables."

Were the kegs of fish also stored there?

"You know, it could've been because that was a cool place. We had a cool room, the calidor, where things were kept cool in the wintertime. Things could be stored in the root

cellar. Oh, I hated going into the root cellar. It always had spiders in it. It was usually Daddy's job to go get that stuff, but as we got older, then we had to do those things, too.

"A favorite meal was to get vegetables from the root cellar; and Mama would boil the salt salmon and the boiled vegetables and we ate it with the rendered seal oil. That was one of our meals. Mama would also grind up the fish and make fish hash with rice or potatoes – depending on how many potatoes we had in the root cellar. Daddy would order winter groceries from the cannery; when he came home from fishing he would bring our winter groceries.

"Our winter groceries consisted of things like canned Spam and corned beef, dried raisins, apples, apricots; and there was always rice, big sacks of rice. And there was always flour, sugar, and shortening. There were cases of Klim (dried milk) and cornflakes."

Does she remember the quantities needed for the winter?

"Oh, yeah, they were big sacks! I mean, Mama made all of our bread, so they were great big 25-pound sacks of flour. There were always three or four of those. It was always a large supply of groceries, and those came every fall when Daddy was done fishing. Edwin would bring them over on his boat for us. We even did that in Kodiak, because we couldn't just run to the store; nobody had money to run to the store. So you had to make sure that you had food to eat. Daddy fed us really well; we were a large family, eventually, and we always had lots of food. Mama would bake usually once a week and she'd make eight or nine loaves of bread and cinnamon rolls. She'd do all her baking in one day.

"I think I was about 13 years old when daddy was working full time for the CAA, and that was a really nice period of time because he had a paycheck that came every two weeks and we were allowed commissary privileges. Daddy was an employee of the government. So we would go on the boat, Mom and I would go on the boat every two weeks and then we'd get a cab to the base – the Naval station – and we'd shop in the commissary and get two weeks' of groceries and then take them back to the island. That was very luxurious for us, and I remember that my mother loved it. But that was short-lived, that was only for about three years.

"Then, you know, as the family got older and we were living in Kodiak, everybody was working. Mama worked, Daddy worked, and those of us that were in high school even worked, had part-time jobs and things like that. So the living was quite different."

What kinds of jobs did she and her brothers have while they were in high school?

"I had three jobs: I went to work in a dress shop after school, when we moved over to Kodiak. It was a little specialty women's shop called Carol's. I worked there after school and on weekends. Of course, at that time, everything closed on Sunday. We did not work on Sunday. Even the grocery stores were closed. But I had that job for a while, then I had

a restaurant job in the summertime; I learned to be a waitress. And then when I got older, also after school, I worked both in the Polar Bear Café and the Dog House. They were cafes. When I got old enough, I also worked in the canneries in the summertime. I learned how to slime fish. My first job in the cannery was working for Bob Resoff. My mother was his forelady; she was the boss of the women workers at King Crab and he owned King Crab. He just died recently. She (her mom) was the forelady for years. She also worked for the clam cannery. Wherever she worked, she was the supervisor of the women workers."

How long did they have a clam cannery? When did those close?

"I worked in the clam cannery, let's see, it was after I was married, and I worked in the clam cannery for a couple of years. And my mother worked there before that, so the clam canneries were there for quite a while. I eventually had to stop working there because I was allergic to the clams. I would get big blisters on my hands from the clam juice. That was our summer employment.

"On Woody Island, even as a very young girl, I baby sat, I helped clean house, I ironed shirts for some of the men. I remember ironing shirts for this one fellow in exchange for him tutoring me in algebra. We were always looking for ways to make money. I baby-sat, I did everything."

Was there a lot of bartering?

"We owned a piano and exchanged baby-sitting for piano lessons. I don't think there was a lot of it. There were some teen-age girls from FAA who also did babysitting, but not as much as I did. I was always willing to baby-sit and help somebody clean their house and things like that to make extra bucks."

Does she remember how much she made baby-sitting?

"I don't remember how much I made baby-sitting, but I sure remember how much I made ironing men's white shirts! I remember 25 cents a shirt. Washed and starched! I washed them, starched them, and pressed them. Can you imagine, 25 cents? But I did that. I had a couple of steady customers. I wasn't a real good algebra student. I always had to have help with my algebra and the main work of most of the men in the FAA was electronics. They were electronic technicians and they had a good math background. I would exchange baby-sitting and things like that for tutoring.

"Let's see, in the food area, we did a lot of berry picking. Berry picking was always a full day endeavor. We would pack up the baby -- we always had a baby – we'd take a couple of blankets with us and go out into the woods. And it was always a whole family affair. There was always Daddy and Mom and all of us kids. And somebody would sit with the baby – entertain the baby and watch the baby -- while everybody else picked berries. And then when we got home, it was cleaning the berries and then Mom would make the jams

and jellies. It was all just part of what we did. It still is. In the summertime we had a large, large garden, a large potato garden and a large vegetable area."

Who took care of it?

"We were weeding the garden all summer long. It was usually a twice-a-week affair – it was Wednesday and Saturday – I remember that. Those were also bath night; we had a banya. We always had a banya and Wednesdays and Saturdays were banya night, so of course, weeding the garden was on that day, when you get the dirtiest. So at night, when we were done eating, Mama would always put a pot of something, beans or something, on the stove and when we got done, we would have our supper and then we'd have banya, get nice and clean. Oh, I hated the weeding!"

Can she describe the banya?

"We always had a banya. Even in Kodiak we had a banya. Daddy built it. The banya was always a separate building. There were two rooms to it, the steaming and wash room, and the dressing room. There were benches in the dressing room, and there were hooks to hang your clothes, and hooks for towels. In the actual steam bath, there was a stove of sorts. Usually it was concocted out of a 50-gallon drum with rocks around them, seasoned rocks, big rocks from the beach that had been seasoned."

How were they seasoned?

"They seasoned them by heating them. It takes out all the gasses from the rock. The rocks have gasses in them and have to be seasoned. I don't know (for how long), but I know that if it isn't done properly, it can be very serious. I remember that grandpa one time put in new rocks in his banya and he didn't season the rocks well and Mickey and Cecil – those are my uncles -- were having banya first over at their house and they came out of the banya staggering and had their clothes on cockeyed. It was from not seasoning the rocks properly. So that was always something that Daddy paid a lot of attention to. One time Daddy made the mistake of painting the inside of our banya with some kind of base paint that never dried. He ended up having to scrape it all off and redo areas of the banya because of the toxins. They had to be careful about things like that.

"But the banya was nice. There were big vats of cold water, and then on top of the stove were great big 5-gallon pans that held water that was heated by the stove. So you had a little washbasin and you filled your washbasin with hot and cold water and you had your soap, your washcloths, and we used some kind of roots for scrubbing. I think we called them *ragashkis*. Don't ask me how to spell that. But I know that Mama and Daddy, when we needed new *ragashkis* -- they're like loofahs -- they would go out into the fields and they would dig up roots. They were washed and everything. I don't know what kind of roots they were, but we always had them. And they used to have a branch called a *wineke* branch. I remember the older people waving this branch that had leaves and things, waving it in the air to get the heat in the banya, and they would slap their bodies with this *wineke*. It was just an old people's thing.

"The banya was a big part of our lives. When the FAA put in running water for us, Daddy built a bathroom, with a proper toilet and a rubber bathtub and we had a shower in the house later. But we never did stop using the banya because the banya was kind of ingrained in us. Most people in Kodiak had a banya. It was a good part of our lives. We really enjoyed the banya."

Was that something that was shared with visitors in those days?

"Yes it was, especially the FAA people. The FAA people used to come down on banya night, if Mama invited them. They would always ask first, 'Can I come to banya?' and Mama would say, 'OK.' We had to keep things really nice, you know, if you have company. The banya got scrubbed out and things like that. But it was our bathhouse and it was always kept nice and clean. People loved banya.

"You know, another thing I forgot to mention is we always had chickens. Mama would get baby chicks at a certain time of the year, and there were lots of them. We had a chicken house. Then at a certain time of the year they would slaughter the chickens – this was after we had electricity -- and the chickens were put into deep freeze for winter. That was always part of our fall work, I think. I hated it. My brother Kelly and my sister Judy were always the ones who would kill the chickens. They didn't mind doing it and Mom and I would cut up the chickens and wash them and package them and get them ready for the freezer.

"During that period we also had a cow and the cow had to be taken care of. My brother took care of the cow. Her name was Goldie. She was a 5-galllon milker. She was part Gernsie and Jersey.

Which brother took care of her?

"It was my brother Kelly. He took care of Goldie. That was a real ordeal on that island. It took us a long time to learn how to handle a cow. It was a long time before we realized we had to have a bell on her. She would wander off. I can remember my brother at nighttime in the dark looking for Goldie. That was a real chore because she had to be milked every morning and every evening.

KELLY SIMEONOFF interview
Interviewed 3/22/02

(Kelly first read two pieces he had written for his sons, as well as something his mother, Natalie, had written about gardening.)

Was Kelly's family typical or atypical of what life was like on Woody Island?

"Typical of most. Not everybody lived like us. By the 1950s, the CAA (Civil Aviation Administration) had families from the outside coming in and they didn't live like us. They had apartments and lived pretty much a modern lifestyle. We always lived a lifestyle of subsistence.

"My grandmother, my mother, the Pavloffs, up until probably the 1940s, they kept huge gardens and that type of thing. There were large families there. They had communal gardens. Up by Una's Lake, where the Chaffin house is, there used to be gardens up there that were community gardens that everybody worked on."

Until when?

"Oh, I don't know. Probably until the flu epidemic. That's when basically a huge number of Native people died – during that epidemic. Where our house was and where my grandmother's house was, behind them towards the beach and bluff there, it was all graves. Hundreds of people have probably died on Woody Island. That's when Woody became a small community. Woody was larger at one time than Kodiak was. It was the hub; it was the center in the 1800s. The Russians started it and later on the Americans. They took ice in blocks from a man-made lake, called Upper Lake. As a matter of fact, you go to the museum you'll see some pictures where they've got chutes, where they're sliding ice blocks down to Lower Lake."

Will Kelly be able to make it to the reunion?

"I don't know. I have a real bad back problem and I broke my arm about a week ago. So I don't know if I'll be able to go. I want to go. We'll see.

"The island has changed a lot since I grew up there. Used to be the whole island was all trees and then, of course, in the middle of the island there is a huge gap now, that they put in there when they were building a tracking station, or something. I don't know what.

"When I was a kid growing up, there were the Tunuhuns, there were the Maliknaks, the Pavloffs -- the Pavloffs being the largest family there. And then there were the Fadaoffs and Chabitnoys, my mother's family and then her Simeonoff family. Later on my aunt and her family moved from Kodiak back to Woody Island, so there were 11 children; well, not 11, but maybe 9 or 10 children.

"By then, by the mid-1940s, we were the only Native people living there. There were a few scattered people; there was an old man by the name of Gabriel who lived a stone's throw from us by my grandmother's potato garden, but that's gone now. Well, actually all the houses that were there in the flats, that were lived in by Native families, are gone now. My grandmother's house and my aunt Auka's house. (Aunt Auka is Nettie, whose real name was Anastasia.) My grandmother had nine children all together that lived. There were two Chabitnoy boys (Mickey and Cecil), James Fadaoff, Buddy Fadaoff, Edson Fadaoff, Marjorie (moved away and never came back), Judy Komm, my mother (Natalie) and Nettie. Only Mickey and Cecil were Chabitnoy."

Does Kelly have any hopes and vision for Woody Island?

"Oh, I don't know. It would be nice to go back and live there some day. But I doubt that will happen in my lifetime. I'd like it to happen for my children. The best of it was taken by the Baptist Mission, and others got it. But, you know, what remains should go to the Native people. A lot of the people who have roots there never lived there. Actually, the ones who lived there were the Harmons, the Simeonoffs, the Chabitnoys and the Fadaoffs, the Sundbergs and the Pavloffs. They were born and grew up there. Anita Hartman, she's a Sundberg. She grew up there. Of course, there were some very old ones, Sarah Bandi and Martha Zaravaloff. They lived there and moved away from there. There are a lot of people in Ouzinkie who lived on Woody Island. But by the time I grew up, of the age group that was my age group and maybe 10 years younger, we (the ones mentioned) were the only Native people living there.

"There were the various FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) people who came and went from the island. A lot of people visited the island from time to time. The Robertsons actually lived there. Well, actually, Bill Robertson, probably when he was a little boy, his grandfather built a house there. That was there when I was a kid, but nobody lived there any more. That was out past Una's Lake.

"There were various old home sites. Nikolai Maliknak, his old barabara is gone. Petruska Tunuhun, their place is gone. Their family moved to Old Harbor, but Patruska lived and died there. So did Elaine Tunuhun. The Pavloffs, many of them ... actually Wilford .... Of course, Angeline was originally from Ouzinkie. She married Pavloff. The Pavloffs were well established on the island. They were Russians and go way back. One was governor of Russian Alaska. Then, of course, there was Chief Yellow Pants, who actually gave my grandmother the land grant, the tribal land grant where she lived."

Which land is that?

"That's the land owned by the Brechans now, I think. That's where her home was. My grandmother's home."

There are two stories: One that her house came from Chief Yellow Pants and the other that it came from Chief Nanjack.

"Could be, could be. The house may have come from Nanjack, but the land was tribally held. In those days people didn't consider themselves owning land. It was tribally kept land. When outsiders began moving in there were no titles. They didn't know about such things. It was just territorial. You know, everybody owned the lands. But people came in and grabbed what they wanted until the Native tribal people and communities established land perimeters. When my grandmother helped save so many people during the flu epidemic, Chief Yellow Pants was the man that was in charge of the land grant that her house was on. Her house, I imagine, stood before then."

What were some of the interactions among the families on the island and among family members? Were the Simeonoffs close to others on the island?

"Not as close probably as.... well, my grandmother didn't like my father and so there was a bit of coolness there. On the other hand, she was very good to us children, except she was still raising her own children. She had three boys when Mom was having children."

Yes, at one point she was pregnant when both her daughters were pregnant, right?

"Yes, Ronnie and Buddy were about the same age. Then Lexie and Richard and James were about the same age. Or it might have been when my grandmother was having Cecil. My mother was pregnant with Ellen and my aunt was pregnant with Mitchell."

Has Kelly written other pieces (beside the two he read before the interview started)?

"I've written quite a few. They're not all about Woody Island; they're about my life. I can send you the transcripts. We moved back and forth, so some of it is about Woody and some is about Kodiak. I've only gotten through about the age of 11 or 12. I haven't gotten into my teens or when I was old enough to remember certain things. That was in the 1950s.

"We finally left the island in 1955 because it was time to go to high school and the FAA was moving out, so Dad didn't have a job. He had to move to Kodiak. Then my parents moved back in 1960 when I was in the Navy. They lived there in 1961 and 1962, except then my brother Freddie had to go to high school."

So the last time Kelly lived there was in 1955?

"Yeah, we left there when I was 15, actually it was 1954 when I was a freshman in high school. Then my sister Tina lived there from 1964 to 1967. And Uncle James lived there.... James was the last to live there."

Wasn't Richard the last one?

"Well actually, Richard moved back there in the late 1980s. We all did. We all moved back and forth from time to time. Usually because in the summer it was easy to get back and forth, but in the winter the weather would be too prohibitive to travel back and forth

in a small boat. So we'd have to move to Kodiak to work. So until about 1970 we all lived back and forth on the island. There were many times after I got out of the Navy. I stayed there as often as I could.

"We owned a cow until 1955 and we had to leave her. She was a very ill-behaved cow. She often ran off to be with the Mission herd. But she had to be milked at 6 in the morning and 6 at night. That was my job. I had lots of jobs.

"Actually summers for us, the Simeonoff children was... actually school was when we had our vacations. Summer was work time for us. We got to play, but it was mostly work. To keep a family of our size together and well-fed, Dad had worked for a few years for FAA. Those were good years. He didn't stay because one year they didn't allow him to take his leave to go fishing, so he quit. But we always kept a garden, we always kept a seine. We did our subsistence fishing, and Dad did the hunting and stuff like that and kept our gardens, so that we were well-fed and well-nourished children, but we all did work.

"My aunt, poor thing, my uncle Ray drowned I think in 1940. Well, actually he got lost, he disappeared in his boat and she had to raise nine children without a man; and she basically lived on $120 per month welfare to raise nine children. You know, we had wood stoves and stuff like that.

"We moved back when I was 10 years old. We lived briefly in Kodiak until my grandfather had a heart attack and we moved back to take care of him. We didn't have running water or lights then, and we also had wood stoves. We didn't have oil heat, so that was a lot more work. I remember the treks we made even as little children collecting driftwood and sawing it up and pulling it back with ropes tied to the back of the skiff to cut up for wood for winter. We also had root cellars and stuff like that. The whole ball of wax."

After he left the island the last time, did he think he was going to live back there again?

"I always thought I was going to go back there."

(End of Tape 1, Side A)

"I always believed that we would go back. I had no choice for high school. Kodiak was a necessity, you just had to go there because we had to go to school and Dad had to work. Fortunately we had never sold our house in Kodiak. Dad had bought the house in Kodiak just after World War II, in 1945 or 1946. We lived there two years and then moved back to the island. When we moved back to the island, one of the provisions was that if we would move back there, the FAA could open a school. They didn't have enough children. So (we moved and) I went to the fifth through the eighth grade there.

"When I was growing up there, it was still a thriving community. There was East Woody and West Woody and that was all FAA people. We lived on West Woody in the flats. There was my aunt's house; it was a little two-room house actually, it wasn't very big.

"There were nine children living in that little house, with a wood stove and an outhouse. My grandmothers' house was the first one on the flats. She had a huge potato garden, a vegetable garden and a berry garden. And then about 50 yards away was our house. Our house was an old five- or six-room house – kitchen, dining room, living room, a bedroom for the boys, a bedroom for the girls and, by 1948, we had indoor plumbing so we didn't have to use an outhouse anymore. But we were on the flats and we had gardens, and we had a cow and chickens and whatnot. Then across the flats there were two or three FAA houses along the beach and then there was the electrical powerhouse there, up by the lake, and then there was a pump house and there was kind of a hill where the old Mission was. Oh, and there was an eight-apartment building, a recreation hall and a school, and there was a bachelors' quarters there.

"And then the road went through the island and cut off about half way across and went to the old CT site, where the (communication) towers were. Actually, during the Second World War, the Sea Bees had a little saw mill there. Then the road extended across to East Woody about a mile and a half. There were apartment buildings there, about eight or nine duplex-type houses and then the station house. There must have been a good 50 or 60 people that lived there when there was the FAA. Generally, there were five or six single guys that lived at the BOQ, and mostly young families that lived there.

"This is what it was like around 1954. Of course, by then the Sea Bees' old rec room was cut in half and they made half of it the school room, so we had an eight-grades classroom there. First through the eighth grade in one room. And there must have been, oh, maybe 30 of us kids there. Or something like that. There were the Harmons, there were the Simeonoffs, Chabitnoys, the Pavloffs and several children from the FAA. They came by a big truck in the winter.

"I went through about two or three teachers, I guess, that came and went from the island. Then they finally built a middle school on East Woody. So we had first through third or fourth, and then fifth on through the eighth. There was the younger elementary and then there was the older middle school. Actually, I think it was sixth, seventh and eighth.

"Then we left. By then there were three of us in high school. My dad had quit the FAA by then, so we moved back to Kodiak so he could work and the older kids could go to high school.

"I think all of us, more or less, had thoughts of one day going back and living there eventually. We never thought that it would go so long. Of course, my grandmother lived there until about '63 or '64 when she moved to Kodiak. She was getting elderly and pretty much the tidal wave kept her from moving back completely. By then her children were all grown; there was only James that really stayed there. Cecil stayed and worked in Kodiak and took care of her."

How long did James stay there?

"James stayed there until '65 or '66, then a terrible thing happened. He ended up killing this woman he was living with. Rose Chelliak. They were fighting. He ended up being sentenced to several years in prison and he died at McNeals Island, WA.

"The only one who still lives there full time is Johnny Pavloff (Johnny Maliknak)."

Did Kelly learn to speak Aleut or Russian?

"I speak some Russian. Much more Russian than Aleut. Aleut was pretty commonly spoken when I was small, but then in the Creole families, such as ours was – my grandmother was basically raised in the Baptist Mission there (from around1906; Ella and her sister Pauline; for some odd reason, they didn't keep the girls together. They sent Pauline to a home in Seward and they never saw each other again. Pauline married a Lang and they lived in Southeast in the Cordova area.) My grandmother first married a Fadaoff, so she basically came from a very Westernized social life to a very Russian Native community. She had to learn to cook Native style and she had to learn to live the Native lifestyle. My aunt Anastasia, my mother, Natalia, and my aunt Julia were all named after women in the tribe who had kind of taken my grandmother under their wing and they taught her how to keep a Native household. Of course, my grandmother all her life was probably fundamentally Baptist, but she lived and raised her children Russian Orthodox. She spoke Russian, Aleut and English. She always had a deep affection for the Baptist church and, of course, my aunt Auka (Nettie), her two boys Ronnie and Alexander were raised in the Mission and my grandmother was close to them. I think we were closer to my aunt Auka -- I spent a lot of time with her -- than I was with my grandmother. But, like I said, Cecil and Mickey were my playmates. My grandmother was not always pleased with me, but I think Ellen and Tina were probably much closer with Granny than I was."

Did all the kids call her Granny?

"Yes."

What did they call Mike Chabitnoy?

"Grandpa. We didn't know anyone else. As children we didn't know about Nick Fadaoff. He died before I was born. He was probably alive when my older brother and sister were born.

"Actually, my grandmother ended up divorcing Nick. Something that people don't know."

When was that?

"Probably in the late 1930s. I was reading a story of my mother's, actually it's in a book that my mother's story is in, "The Faces of Alaska." It's the first time I realized that my grandmother actually did divorce my grandfather (Nick Fadaoff)."

So before he disappeared, they had been divorced?

"Yes. She divorced him with the intention of marrying Mike. My grandmother's life didn't prosper until Mike came into her life. That was my grandfather Mike Chabitnoy."

Anything else that stands out, that's memorable about the island?

"Well, one thing that stands out – not for any other reason than I can still see the wreckage of it – is 1991, when my youngest son was 13 years old. I had moved to Kodiak and they were still here in Anchorage, and he came to visit me until his mother got to Kodiak. I took him to see Woody Island where I grew up. We were walking along an old car dump, a little dump where the FAA threw their old cars that no longer worked. It was near where we boys -- Mitchell, Paul, Maurice, myself, and my uncle Cecil – built a tree house. We thought it was a very secret place. It was in the woods, just off the road. We thought it was so secret, you know, and as we were walking by, I said let me go check something. I went over there and, by golly, you could see the tree just as plain as day from the road! As I approached, the wreckage from our tree house was on the ground below the tree. I'll never forget. I thought it was such a big tree house and it was really a little thing. We had built it on an old pallet board that we had hoisted up into the tree and built walls.

"We camped all over the island, too. After I milked the cow, after 6 o'clock, that's when I got off work. In the summertime my dad would be gone and so my mother pretty much let us kids stay out, until midnight if we wanted to. There was nothing that could hurt us, so we frequently would camp along the beaches and we built forts in the middle of the woods. I think by the time I was 10 or 12 years old I knew every inch of that island. I could tell you where everything was and I imagine the Harmon kids were the same way.

"Of course, we swam in the summer time in Lower Lake. Sometimes we would swim in Upper Lake, but it was too deep and cold. If the lake was cold, we'd swim in the ocean a little bit, which was freezing, and run across the flats and jump in the lake and it felt warm. We had rafts and boats and all kinds of things that we built, the things that kids normally did. And we fished over there. We went to Elephant Lake, which was on the other side of the island, and caught rainbow trout. We dug clams and hunted octopus.

"We got a lot of our food from the ocean. There was an old saying when I was little: 'When the tide is out, the table is set.' There was never any reason for anybody ever to go hungry. There was always food available; you just had to go get it. There were clams and octopus and any number of different sea urchins off the shore. And in deep water there was halibut, cod, bass... Fish was always in abundance in one shape or another. King crab, flounder and whatnot. So there was never any reason for anybody to go hungry any time of the year, really. There was salmon and trout in the summer and clams and whatnot in the winter.

"We'd have skating parties and we'd also go caroling and all sorts of things that we did that were lots of fun. In school we'd have a school pageant every year. There were no stores or anything like that. There was a movie that was shown every week. We did normal things.

"In our household we all had heavy work schedules, but we had fun, too. I remember in the winter time when the weather would be bad and Dad would be stuck in Kodiak, Mom would take out her guitar and we'd all put our mattresses in the living room and put blankets on the doors to block the heat from going into the other rooms and we'd all be in one room around a pot-bellied stove. We'd eat popcorn and sing along, stuff like that."

No one else had mentioned that Natalie played the guitar.

"Mom taught herself how to do it. And she had an old piano and I used to play that."

When Kelly returned with his son in the early '90s, did he still feel like he knew the island?

"Oh, yeah. I took him to all the places I used to go. The only things that were gone were the old trails that kids had followed for years, that we made ourselves, basically. Some of them were cow paths. But the roads on the island were still intact and it was still navigable. My brother had an old broken-down truck that he let us use. So we drove across the island to East Woody and I showed him where we played on the beach below the school and where we would go on the natural-bridge walk on the other side; you know things that we'd do. (I showed him) the old berry patches that we had along the trails up to Angeline's house."

Were there still berries there?

"Actually, in some places I did see them, but in other places the rabbits had pretty much killed them off. Rabbits were not indigenous to the island. They were planted there and I guess that and the ground squirrels killed them off by eating the roots and whatnot. That or the cattle.

"But, basically, I recognized everything. The flats were the same and the old – I'm not sure what the Sea Bees were building in 1942, but the remnants of it are still there in the flats. Concrete. You can still see where that was. The old Mission, the burned-out Mission that was still there, grown over. The familiar houses are gone. Both of Angeline's, the Malkinaks' and the Pavloffs'. She had a little house up on the hill and down by the lake there was the big house. Those are both gone. She had a wonderful well up there. There is a natural spring up there. I don't know how they got water there. It must have been an underground spring that ran there. It was a wonderful well because it was well above sea level and above the lakes."

Did he find that well when he visited with his son?

"No, we didn't go that far up. If we did, we didn't know where we were treading. So we pretty much stayed to areas I was familiar, I didn't want to go on someone else's property. But actually some of the familiar places are still there. The old apartment building that used to be the FAA's that the Mission uses now for their summer camps. I didn't get over to the old barn. The Mission had all that fenced off with barbed wire."

Did the Mission still have cows there then?

"I don't know. I think they have taken the cows off the island now. I remember in the summertime, that's where that wild lupine used to grow. That whole field just beyond my grandmother's house, towards Una's Lake, every summer it was this splendidly purple, light purple, kind of a lilac, field. Just a huge field of lupine growing there. And on the beaches there would be wild peas (?) and stuff like that. The coastline changed a little bit, but not a great deal. Things are still familiar.

"The old lake at the north end of the island, they called it Natural Lake because at high tide salt water would go in there. Past Pavloffs' house, towards the end there, we used to go down there and herring used to come in there and spawn. We'd go and we'd get a load of herring there. It kind of goes dry at low tide, then at high tide it's salty so we called it Salt Lake. We had our own names; I don't know what other people call them now.

"There were several good size lakes on the island. But the ones we used the most were Upper Lake, Lower Lake, Una's Lake, Dark Lake and Elephant Lake.

"Children have names for places; there were different names when my parents were growing up and there probably were old Aleut names for places that by the time I was growing up were no longer used. In my Dad's time Aleut and Russian were the common languages of the day. By the time I was growing up, they were common languages of the household that adults spoke, but by the time we went to school our language was no longer encouraged. Most of the Russian I kept up on and remember was through the church. We children spent a lot of time in the Russian Orthodox church. My first knowledge of the Russian language, beginning to read it and write it, is from there. I can read it better than I can speak it or understand it. But by the time I was growing up, the Native community in Kodiak spoke English. That was one of the things I always admired. There was a family, actually the father was a schoolteacher and he taught eighth grade. For many years he had lived with his wife and two boys in Old Harbor. When they moved to Kodiak – and these were white people, these were not people from Kodiak – both boys spoke beautiful Aleut. I always admired that.

"Kodiak pretty much included the Baptist Mission children. Of course in Kodiak and the Mission they discouraged the use of the Aleut language. I don't recall when I was a kid that we were ever punished for using the language. Could've been that in my mother's time they did. My grandmother grew up in the Mission and the Mission kids were kept away by the Mission people from the local people. Mission kids weren't allowed to mingle socially with us. My brother Richard lived there (in the Mission) briefly in 1943.

"Because that was the year Miss Yonkie (sp?), the BIA teacher, left. Richard was in grade school and Mom and Dad sent him to Kodiak to live in the Mission that winter."

That was the teacher who left when the war broke out?

"Yes. Her name was Miss Yonkie. But that was when there was a huge Native community there. The Sundbergs lived there, the Maliknaks lived there, the Pavloffs – with 10 or 12 kids. The Pavloff family was huge! There were people who came and went from the island. They came and lived there in the summer time or whatever. But after 1942, and after the war, you didn't see a lot of them there and the old church by then finally got closed. Somebody had vandalized it. It no longer exists."

When did they stop using the church?

"I imagine probably in the early 40s when the war was going on. Because you couldn't travel the water there safely. I remember when I was a little boy, my Dad rowed to Kodiak for groceries or something and had stopped by the B&B. We were almost home, almost on the beach, when a PT boat, or whatever it was, actually shot at us and we had to go back to Kodiak. Because we were on the water after 6 o'clock. It was against the law to be on the water after 6. I recall that I was more dumfounded (than scared). But that was the war years.

"That changed a lot of things. Kodiak kind of became a boomtown during the war years. The Sea Bees were pretty much nice people; they lived with us. But in town it was a different story. It was hard for the people there because the Navy wasn't very kind to them.

"The Sea Bees were very nice to us children. They always had a candy bar or something. They had these huge trucks, taking loads across the island, and we would stand by the road and they would let us hop in and drive us around. They had this big Christmas party for us kids one year that they were there. They had Santa Claus and gave us Christmas candy and presents and all the stuff that went with it. They lived in the community and got along with the people there. Several of them married local women. I just don't recall there were ever any incidents. But in Kodiak I can remember that soldiers would get pretty rambunctious. And if a woman was out after a certain hour by herself or something, she wasn't safe. They would use them in ways that were not nice. It was like an occupied town, like we were a foreign community."

Does talking about these things open other memories?

"I just remember we had a lot of fun on the island. It was a carefree time for us children, mainly because there was nothing to harm us. Things that I would probably never let my children do on their own, we were allowed to do. We built campfires on the beach, we were allowed to camp out on our own and stuff like that. But again, there was nothing to harm us. There was no real mischief we could get into. I think the worst thing we could get into is to start raiding gardens. By then there were three gardens on the island and

they were all family-owned. One was my grandmother's. She had a strawberry patch and we kids would go out at night and get into her strawberry patch. Or she had better turnips than we did, so we'd do stuff like that. It was fun because it wasn't our own. I'm sure other kids were after our garden, too! So it was kind of a kid thing.

"I built my own little private places all over the island. I'd build myself a little shack. We always had salvage stuff around the island. I remember the crates that were thrown away. They were big crates. I would put them on a wagon and carry them into the woods and make my own private play stuff.

"One wintertime when the wind got up to 106 knots per hour, I remember the roof of my grandfather's barn went flying. A lot of the Native houses didn't have problems with the high wind. The houses that lost roofs were houses that were built later. I imagine the reason was that the (Native) people knew how to build them because they knew there were high winds. Kodiak had pretty bad winds back then and it snowed much more than it does now."

What did they use for the roofs that made them so sturdy?

"Oh, I imagine local timber and some of them even built their beams out of driftwood. I remember my grandfather with an ax, carving the keel for his fishing boat out of an old oak log that washed ashore. It was about a 50-foot length of log that he carved into a fine keel. So I imagine that's how they did it. I remember seeing old timber and stuff like that. During the Russian era they had pretty remarkable stuff. They had to have a smelting place; there was a place where they made bricks. There was industry that went on there and there were tools.

"The wood on Kodiak and Woody island is not prime wood. They're knotty. Woody Island trees were really not timber trees at all. But people built. When I was little there were still people who lived in barabaras, but the other houses were pretty much above the ground by then. But when my mother was a kid, there were lots of barabaras. They were built that way because of the weather. They knew that the weather was destructive, so that's how they protected themselves."

Who was the last person to live in the Simeonoff house on Woody Island?

"I think Tina was to actually live in it for any length of time."

Was that one of the houses to be burned down?

"Finally, by 1980, both houses, my grandmother's and our house, had become dangerous. They were starting to fall in. So it was necessary to burn them down."

Who were the leaders in the Woody Island community during the time Kelly lived there?

"I guess my grandmother was kind of a leader in the community then. People referred to her for a number of years, for whatever reason. She wasn't the chief or anything. My grandfather Nick Fadaoff, had been a reader in the church for a number of years and my grandmother and grandfather kept up the church for a number of years. And then later on after my grandfather went away, probably in the late '40s, my grandfather Mike had a heart attack, my grandmother couldn't look after the church anymore. So Angeline Pavloff began looking after it. They were nice people, but they drank a lot and so they didn't really look after it; they didn't keep the doors locked. So it became vandalized and pretty much by the late 1950s it had been vandalized pretty badly. Then a man who I think was retarded went over there and pretty much ruined the place. They eventually burned it down."

Any others considered community leaders?

"My grandmother is pretty much the only one I can think of by the time I was growing up. She was kind of the person that people went to for advice or whatnot. By the time I was growing up, there were no, what you call, tribes. They didn't have any tribal governments, so to speak. By then we relied a lot on Kodiak for certain things. Also by that time (by 1948) FAA was on Woody Island and they had a boat that came twice a day, so you could go back and forth on a daily basis. Woody Island was a place where people lived because that's where they wanted to be."

RAYNA WHETHAM interview
Interviewed 2/20/02

(From notes taken during the interview. It is not an exact transcription of the recorded interview because the tape was difficult to hear.)

What are Rayna's most vivid memories from Woody Island?

I don't know; I guess the security and the freedom. It was a good clean place to grow up. Too bad all kids can't grow up in a place like that.

(Rayna had eight older brothers, two younger brothers, and one younger sister. She was the oldest girl. Born in 1944.)

We used the whole island. We would take a day hike, go around the island along the beach, or we would go camping in one big group. All the kids on our side of the island would go together; almost everything was done as a group. There was a lot of community atmosphere.

I remember the blackouts when I was a little girl. It had to be in the early part of grade school. I remember someone on the FAA side shooting off some firecrackers during a blackout.

Was she born on Woody Island?

I was born in Kodiak. Mom was probably living out at Uyak at the time. My father had built a small house there. His name was Raymond Harmon. We probably lived there just about two and a half years. My dad drowned when I was 2.

We moved back to Woody Island when I was 5 or 6. I started school on Woody Island, probably in1950.

Can she describe the school?

Right across from the parking lot was the rec hall building. At the other end was the classroom. This was on the village side, the west side of the island. It was called Wood Island Territorial School.

There was one teacher (Joe Gross) for all eight grades. I remember the first teacher was a redheaded man; he wasn't married. The kids made comments about his hair, but he was a really good teacher. He was a teacher there only for one or two years.

When I had my first baby, his wife was also having a baby. He became superintendent of schools for Alaska; I think he just passed away a year or two ago.

Every teacher that we had on the island was a good teacher. They gave us a variety in the curriculum for all eight grades. All the classes were together with one teacher who taught all the levels but we had current events together and did some projects together. Some projects were community-wide. They had spelling bees, Christmas plays and school picnics for the whole community. They involved families, not just the kids. We had community ice-skating and sledding parties. The FAA side organized a lot of those. We always had something to do there.

We had a pretty good education, not like the kids get today. We learned penmanship, reading, arithmetic, spelling, and how the teachers did it I don't know. They had eight different classes. The levels sometimes did things with other levels, like current events, art; growing plants...

When the school moved, when I was in the fourth grade, to the FAA side, all the kids helped to build our own volleyball court. The teacher took us down to collect gravel at the beach. We also did an art mural by all ages up on the high wall. We did it on paper rolls. They just had so much for us to do. The eighth grade boys overhauled a diesel engine for the FAA. We even had music; we learned to listen to Burl Ives and Harry Belafonte. Mrs. Chaffin had first, second, and third graders in the basement of the apartment building and she taught those kids how to play the harmonica.

(Rayna completed all eight grades on Woody Island. When she graduated, it was the Woody Island Grade School – WIGS; it became a Territorial School later.)

At graduation, we got our report card and a pin. There was no ceremony; just a little gold pin that said WIGS on it.

How did families get along?

Families got along fine; it was a community. That included FAA families. There were quite a few FAA families on our side. Then after grade school, they were all on the other side. They built the new school on the FAA side when I was in the fourth grade. It was in front of the FAA station.

By the time I started high school and had to go on the boat, there were no FAA families on our side. All the FAA families were on the other side. There were fewer people on the island after that, after they eliminated the FAA buildings on the village side. I don't know what happened to the buildings. They sat there empty for a while.

Can she describe the village?

There were three beach houses on the left corner, and a duplex by the garage; then there was an apartment building by where the camp (Camp Woody) is now. That had seven units. Then they had a BLQ (bachelors' living quarters) for the single men. I don't know how many were living in there. They had a family living in there for a while. They were the Johnsons, an Inuit family; then they moved to the other side, too.

Who were some of the families she remembers?

Talbots -- Palmers -- Chaffins -- O'Donnels -- Lees -- Johnsons -- Pavaloffs -- Frumps -- Chabitnoys -- Simeonoffs -- Ericsons -- Bacons -- Colmans -- Dolmans -- Rouscolps -- Harrys -- Nylunds -- Kessler's -- Lowes -- Holroyds -- Enrights -- Kesslers

The teachers were Gross, Carey, Post, Stern, and Virginia (?).

Coming from the dock, there were three houses on the right side. There was a beach house where the Johnsons lived, then the Bacons, then Mr. Gross and another bachelor. Then on the left side was the duplex and, I believe, the Palmers lived on one end and the Enrights lived on the other. And then up in the apartments were the Colmans, the Lowes. There were some who didn't stay too long. Then there were the Kesslers and the Dolmans.

On the other side (FAA side), across the island, those were two story houses. The manager's family lived alone. I'm not sure, but I think there were six of those houses. I remember the kids, but the families came and went a lot. The O'Donnels lived upstairs, and I can't remember the last name of the family who lived downstairs. There were the Ericsons; but it's kind of vague because they came and went. They also had two apartment buildings that held five families each. That had a basement and a second-story and an attic-like apartment.

How about other families on her side of the island?

The Simeonoffs, Chabitnoys, Pavloffs. Then for a while there was Talbot, Polly Talbot. And then, back in the woods, there was an old man. I can't tell you what his name was. I can still see him. He used to scare us. He lived alone.

Was he still on the island by the time she left there?

No, he had died before we left there.

What were some of the places she remembers on the island?

Una's Lake, where I picked flowers. Gere Boon where we picked coal left by the Army. The old sawmill and CT site. I remember swimming in Lower Lake, but now I think it's open salt water. There were apartments where Camp Woody is now. When they were empty we used to play hide and seek. I think most of all I remember the jumping hill. It's not even hardly a hill any more! But the coffins and stuff are still coming out!

Was the hill actually bigger or did it just seem bigger?

It seemed bigger then. When I showed my husband, and told him we lived on a hill, he said, "That's not a hill!" It was across from the road.

I remember ice-skating on the lake on the FAA side, on Elephant Lake, and on Upper Lake. I remember hiking clear around the island and the old sawmill that was still standing when we first moved there; it was pretty well intact. There was a room down below; there were books in there. It probably fell down; I imagine after the tidal wave it probably came down. There's no evidence of it. It was by the water line. There were little lakes right down by the mill.

Does she remember anybody using the sawmill?

No, not while we were there. Out there by the sawmill, there was also a clay bank, where you could get the kind of clay used for pottery. My mother showed me. (But didn't know anyone who used it.)

Were there other wells on the island, or did they all use the one her family used?

No, no, no. Everybody had their own well, other than the FAA people who pumped the water from the lake.

Ours was a little tiny well down at the bottom, just above the pond; actually it was nothing more than a barrel in the ground. But the Pavloffs had a humongous well. In fact, I didn't even dare go scouting around because it's covered over with bushes and I know that there was a great big wooden platform over it. It's probably all rotted away by now. There was a ladder down into it.

Why was their well so big?

Probably because the Pavloffs were a pretty big family. They had a humongous house. Pavloff was the first lieutenant governor of Alaska.

Who were the Pavloffs that were still there when Rayna was a kid?

Angeline; Wilford; Angeline's daughter, Agnes; Agnes's children, Virginia (who was adopted out to a family named West), Maryann, Harold, Brenda and Johnny.

Did they all live in the same house?

No. Well, actually, when we first moved over, she let us live in her house and she lived in a small cabin. Then after our family fixed her roof, then she wanted her house back, so we switched houses. Agnes stayed in the small cabin on the hill right behind the big house. We moved into a house down by my grandmother's. It was an old lady's house. When the old lady moved, before she died, she told my mother she was welcome to use that house any time.

It was the dead of winter. I remember the lake was frozen and we moved by sled across the lake.

The old Russian Church was still there; it was fully intact when we first moved there. Bejerkin – that was Agnes's boyfriend -- he started taking pieces of wood from the church. Then everyone else was doing it, so the church officials had it burned because it was desecrated. I can remember the pulpit, the altar; I think there were pictures. I don't remember pews in the church at all; they had to stand. It was a big open space and the altar. There was a little room off on the right; there were windows but not stained glass. (Asked about the flag her brothers had mentioned, Rayna said she doesn't recall one, but the boys may recall it because they were a little older than she was. She later recalled that, yes, there was a flag. The church was burned down sometime when she was in grade school.)

Other memories?

Well, I do remember sometimes when it got cold and mom would take all of us little ones and hike out to Gere Boone. There used to be an old Army lookout there, and they had stockpiled coal. Mom would take us and give us each a little bag and we'd bring back coal to burn. At the time, I remember when we were younger, there were old houses here and there. Back behind where we lived there was a strawberry and rhubarb patch. Grew by itself, and when we wanted strawberry or rhubarb we'd just get it. Didn't belong to anyone.

Out by Una's Lake, this side of Una's Lake, early in the morning in the summertime, I'd hike out and pick flowers that somebody had planted a long time ago. They were very pretty. They had almost a powdery-like leaf and little pearl-like white flowers. There were also some purple flowers. These were not wildflowers; these were flowers someone had planted, but they didn't belong to anyone anymore. These would recede and come back.

The ghosts: My brothers probably told you about the little black man. They probably told you all I know. I know they were there because one night, on Friday night, on our side they brought in a movie to the Rec Hall and charged 25 cents. My brother Danny, who was three years younger than me, and Leanna, who was 3 years younger than Danny, and I went down to the movie. It was about a half mile from our house; we went over the hill and through the woods on a path, then to the road and followed the road as it curved downhill, then straight. Past the BLQ there was an old cemetery behind a big tree; it went from one side of the fence to another; we passed the BLQ and then there was the Rec Hall where we watched the movie.

It was dark when we headed back. We just about got to the area on the road where we went up to the cemetery; on the right side it went down to the creek. We were holding hands as we were walking and we saw this not-quite a full form; it was not fully shaped. We were walking and I said, "Danny, look!" I said it loud and that thing, whatever it was, stopped right there. And all of a sudden it was about one foot off the ground and went off,

up towards the cemetery. We just panicked. We went screaming home. Mom looked around; but she didn't see anything.

And, oh, yeah! In the little two-room house where we lived, there was a ghost in there. There was a curtain for a doorway to the bedroom and there was a dining room table and a chair by the curtain. There was a window facing the beach. And we heard footsteps and they'd come out; they'd either walk across to the front door or they would go over and come right around the corner to the dining room table and chairs near the curtain to the bedroom. We heard the chair creak when we heard footsteps. The dogs would bark and the cat's hair would stand straight up.

So you never figured out who or what it was?

Oh, it was a ghost; it was somebody who had lived there before.

What was the history of the house?

I don't know. Mom just told me the old lady told her she could use the house. I know there were ghosts; my full-grown uncles were afraid to go out.

Which uncles were these?

(Laughs.) All of them. Cecil, Mickey, James, Bud, they were always in during the evening. It's funny, but they were. My last uncle died about a year ago; that was Uncle Mickey.

When my brothers got a little bit older, Mitch opened a spot and grew vegetables right below our house. My grandmother faithfully depended on their garden; they grew it for eating. They had a great big potato garden; and they had a vegetable garden.

Mitch sounds like he was the responsible one. Is that a fair representation?

Yeah, because Ronnie wasn't there. Lexie wasn't there. Mitch was pretty much in charge, watching over us. He did the cooking and I did the cleaning. Ron and Lexie already were gone; in the Army, then got married. I was in charge of watching Leanna and Jimmy; Danny was kind of an independent little guy; he went fishing every day in the summer, or out in the woods, catching little animals. He was a real nature boy. He could go out all day and just walk up to a rabbit or a chipmunk. He'd let them loose the next day. He'd put them in Mom's sewing machine drawer and let them go the next day; he must have been around 7 or 8 years old.

He was a very gentle person; that's why we were so shocked when he was drafted to Vietnam.

Did the family ever hear the circumstances of Danny's death?

Have you ever read the book about LARP? It tells about Danny when he got killed. My sister, Leanna, has the book, but I don't. I read it, and I know it has a story about this Indian from Alaska. There were some soldiers who got sent to Vietnam, who were sent to this one camp. One said he went in and met an Indian from Alaska; they were a special forces, that's probably what LARP stands for. He was gunned down trying to save a buddy. He was hanging on to the buddy and didn't realize the buddy was already dead.

We were pretty shocked; we were expecting him home in three days. It happened the last week he was there. It was an awful shock. He was just 21.

It was a coincidence that his cousin, the one he played with on the island, Freddy Simeonoff, was killed in Vietnam three years later.

Does she remember what family did when they found out about Danny's death? Was there a ceremony right away, or did they wait for his body to be returned?

We were told when his body would come in. It wasn't very long. He was taken to the Kodiak mortuary. Mom couldn't get herself to go to identify the body, so my stepfather and I had to go to the Mortuary to identify him. Then mom went down; I don't recall who went with her; she went down to prepare him for a Russian Orthodox burial. They had to put band on his head, but I'm not sure what all else they do. The service was in Kodiak at the Russian Orthodox Church. And then we took him by boat to the island and buried him in the old church cemetery.

The Army sent out pallbearers and local National Guard; they both were there. The only way to get up to the burial site was to pack that heavy casket; they took turns. There were more than seven of each and then had a 21-gun salute at the burial site. Our family was there, the Chaffins, and beyond that I don't remember. I was already married and had two kids. That was in 1968, so I was probably about 24.

Was Danny the first one Rayna remembers being buried there during her lifetime?

Mike Chabitnoy was buried on the island, behind grandmother's house. I don't remember anyone else, unless that old guy who lived in the woods was buried there.

Was she in Kodiak when Lexie died and was buried?

I've been down here (in Port Orchard) for 34 years. Port Orchard, Washington, is right across from the water, from the shipyard (Bremerton Naval ship yard).

Any other thoughts on Danny's funeral or other burials on the island?

I don't know about anyone else being buried there. I know when I was little, Mom told me there was an epidemic when she was a girl. (Her father -- Nick Fadaoff -- was the one who would go around to collect the bodies and dig graves for the dead. She used to go with him sometime. Many are buried near the jumping hill.)

The cemetery spans from way down by the grassy area past the flats, all the way to the jumping hill – those are all graves. My uncles would not cross that at night. Jumping off the jumping hill, eventually we eroded away the hill and skulls came out. Mom got on the boys once for playing ball with a skull.

What happened to that skull?

I don't know. I think it got buried back in the sand there.

On the same jumping hill in the wintertime, the snow would drift and pile up. We would jump off into the snow, but got into trouble. One time my uncle James was running and he jumped and got buried in the snow and we had to dig him out. Then we just used that as a tunnel to slide down. Oh, the things that we did together, from the little ones right up to my uncles! I remember one time we were playing with cars; we all had a car with a string on it. Even my uncles were out there, pulling cars. We would make real neat tracks in the sand (with the cars).

And the cows! Did anyone tell you about the cows? The road that went past in front of our house, had tall beach grass on both sides. One time Danny and I, and I don't know who else was with us, we decided we would go out and pile the sand on the road. It was maybe a foot high and we waited for a car to come by. When we heard a car coming we went to jump in the tall grass, and Danny landed in a pile of fresh cow poop! Oh, Mom was so mad! She made Danny take his clothes off outside. I guess we got into some mischief.

Does she remember her brothers picking on her?

All the time! They tell stories now, they tell stories to my kids, that they did and I got the blame. Oh, they played real nasty tricks on me. I hated boys. I hated my brothers. Even Mom couldn't control them.

Is there any trick that comes to her mind more than any of the others?

(Laughs.) Yeah!

There's a little hill below the house that went down to the pond by the well. There's a bunch of short alder bushes there. I was coming home, and my brothers called to me. "Hey, Rayna, come here." I went over there, but I was always leery when they were calling me. They had a cow and they had a rope and they said, "Come on, get on the cow." I said, "No way." They took me and sat me up on the cow, and they said, "Hold on to the rope, hold on to the rope." I'm terrified. My hands are out, my feet are out and the cow took off and I ended up head first in the bushes. They loved doing those kinds of tricks. I wasn't hurt, but I was mad. They cracked up; they didn't care what happened!

Which brothers did that to her?

Mitchell, Paul, Maurice. Ronald used to pull this, too, with my sister, Leanna. I remember this one time: Leanna always wanted to wear these little black boots she had with a red stripe on top. I don't care when it was – summertime, anytime! In the summertime she had a bathing suit and would wear it with her boots. In the wintertime, my brother Ronald -- she was 3 years old or so – and he says, "Leanna, come on, let's go swimming. Go get your bathing suit on." She runs and gets her bathing suit on and he takes her out into the snow!

What are some of the changes she witnessed on the island during the years she was there?

Well, everyone from the FAA was moving to the other side. I left the island when I was in ninth grade. When I was 14 we moved to Kodiak. I used to go back and visit Aunt Mary, Uncle Edson's wife. After my uncle disappeared, she was there a couple of years before she married Nick Pavloff.

When was the last time Rayna was back on the island?

I think it was 1999. We were lucky to get on the island in the short time we were there. My husband and I drove to Alaska and hoped to go on the ferry with our pickup, but it happened to be the busiest time of the year. So in Kenai they let us park the pick up in the employee parking lot and we walked onto the ferry. We got to Kodiak and spent the night in the Shelikoff Hotel. We flew out to Uganik for a week. But because they didn't know how the weather would be, we flew back a couple of days early and stayed in the Shelikoff again. I asked Margaret Roberts who could take us over (to Woody Island). She called David Olsen, who said he was going on a day fishing trip. He said he would drop us off and pick us up on the way back. We had time to walk around and I saw where Granny's house and our house had been. Everything was overgrown.

What happened to their house?

Sometime after we moved out of there, my brother Ronald and my Uncle James were going to live in it, but they got scared out by the ghost. They ended up burning down the house.

Was her grandmother's house still there?

No. Somebody burned Granny's house, too. (The spot where her house had been) was so overgrown we couldn't tell where anything was. Where our house was, the water heater was still there; that's all I could see there.

Was anything on the island still preserved, or more preserved than she expected?

My uncle Edson's house, the one that was bought by the Madsens, that was still there. The old FAA garage was still there. And the Mission buildings; I could see the buildings

across there. We walked up to Danny's grave, and went through the woods trying to find Johnny Pavloff, but didn't find him. We had to be careful, we didn't dare go too far because I knew the old well was there someplace, underneath the overgrown bushes.

Johnny could really play the accordion; he used to entertain us at night!

Getting back to ghosts, there was something very scary once. Out by Una's lake, there was a place we called Witch's Knoll. There had been some sort of shamans there. Sometimes we used to see a figure there, walking. One time when Danny, Aeine Johnson, and Marcus Lee were going to go camping, they hiked out on this side of Una's Lake. They set up camp, built a fire and they were getting ready to go into their tent when they heard a weird scream or whistle. It scared them so bad, they headed for home. I was in the outer bedroom. Aunt Mary was over, and Johnny, Paul, and Maurice were sleeping in the back bedroom. The boys came in screaming and crying. We had to ask what's wrong and Paul asked Danny where his .22 (rifle) was. Danny said, "It's out on the porch." Paul said, "Go get it." As soon as Danny opened the door and started reaching, there was a piercing loud scream or screech. I was by the door and started crying, "Somebody come get me." I was so scared. Aunt Mary said, "I'll come get you," and she came running to get me.

We all heard it. The island is haunted. Definitely.

Does she know if anybody kept a journal or diary?

No. If anybody did, Yule Chaffin would probably have been the one.

Who were Rayna's closest friends on the island?

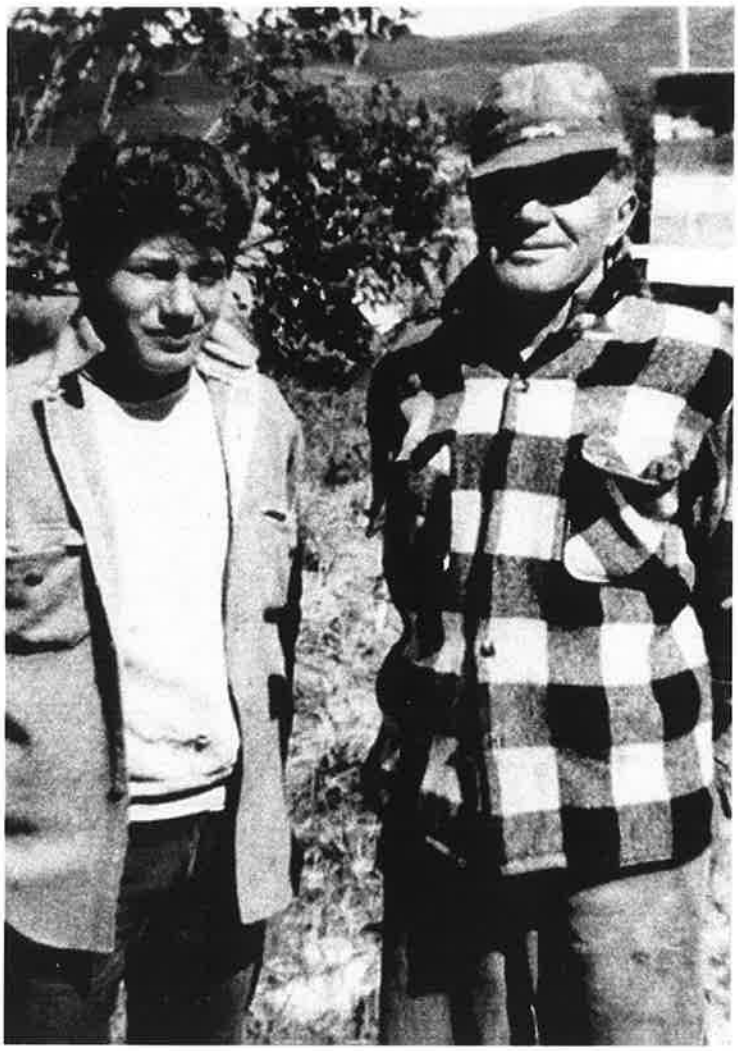
Early on it was Virginia Frump and then after that I guess it was Lois Penny Johnson. Then in the seventh and eighth grades, it was Arlene and Gail Rostulp, and Sandy Nylund.

Does she remember anyone on the island having a job aside from FAA folks?

There were some contractors. They were putting in some sort of utility poles and they hired some locals. I know my Uncle Edson helped. They became contractors for FAA; might have been just one year. Two of the wives came to do cooking. There were Mary and Art Wickman. After that they went to Kodiak, where Art did some carpentry and Mary had the laundry.

Does she have any hopes and dreams for Woody Island?

I'm hoping something gets built there so we can go back. I know my brothers want to go back to live there. I think if they were there, I'd go, too.



Freddy Simeonoff with Kelly Sr.