

Project Women in Alaska Fisheries
Interviewee Anne Shankle [AS]
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Location Naknek, AK
Interviewed by Sarah Wise (NOAA Fisheries AFSC) and Kim Sparks (PSMFC, NOAA Fisheries AFSC)
Transcribed by Elizabeth Figus
Notes (??) indicates the transcriber's best guess for a word or name when not verified by the interviewee. When not provided by the interviewee, spelling and definitions for Yup'ik terms (shown in italics) are sourced from:

Jacobson, S. A. (2012). *Yup'ik Eskimo dictionary* (2nd ed.). Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Language Center.

[Some wind is prevalent throughout the interview recording, as well as Anne's dogs]

SW So this is Sarah Wise and Kim Sparks and we are in Naknek, Alaska on July 29, 2018. And can you introduce yourself and let us know how long you have lived in Naknek and what brought you here?

AS My name is Anne Shankle and I have lived in Naknek quite awhile. I first came to Bristol Bay in 1982, and was just here briefly flying through. I kept coming back, I worked in King Salmon in the [19]80s for awhile and in 1996 I bought an acre here and slowly built a house out of stuff I found from the dump and stuff that got thrown away from the processors and canneries, and here we are. The house still isn't finished, but I got a roof over my head. (laughs)

SW So you built the house itself?

AS Yeah.

SW And can you explain again, how you handle the water?

AS Ok. It would cost at least \$15,000 to put a well in here and there's problems with wells. So I just bought a tank and built my house around it. It's a thousand-gallon water tank. It's plastic, and I can gravity feed water to any place on my property without electricity from that tank, and it's worked out just fine. You know, we can get maybe 350 gallons of water on a good rainy day, just off the higher roof of the house. So I get plenty of water and I don't really use a tremendous amount of water and just, it's worked. And it cost 600 dollars instead of \$15,000. So that's, I've been using that for, it's probably been in place for almost 20 years. I've been using it for almost 16 actually living in the house, but that was in place before I even moved in. That's one of the first things I did. Because I had to build the house around it.

SW And in terms of subsistence, can you explain how you, what kinds of subsistence foods you catch and use and grow?

AS Oh, Yeah. Well, of course, fish. This place is all about fish. You know, so everybody thinks of salmon when you say the word fish. And so it's wonderful to catch a King in the early King run, and then I get lots of reds. We freeze them, and smoke them, and can them, and—like a lot of people around here kind of live off the red salmon run, cuz it's so easy to do. And it's fun to fish for a few silvers later on and to me it's all good stuff, you know? (laughs) So, in the winter time there's smelt runs. We eat a lot of smelt. It's a lot of fun. It's kind of a local hobby catching smelt, and they're wonderful fish to eat, too. It gives you a nice break from salmon and have some whitefish. And there's other fish around here, trout and stuff, too, but I don't catch them so much. I kind of live off the salmon. And the smelt, which is good in the winter. And these guys [Anne's dogs] eat fish. They eat the fish that people—people have too much fish here. So their freezers are overflowing with fish, and, then they give them to me to clear out the freezer instead of taking them to the dump. And the dogs just, I can keep a little dog team just off the fish people are throwing out. Last year's fish. Pretty healthy dogs. So that works out pretty good for me. I just have a small team of four dogs but they are big dogs, it's really fun taking the sled out. And I had every kid in town out on the sled last winter I think, you know? And the kids, it's a big deal for kids, you know? It's a real Alaskan thing to do, something fun.

SW How did you learn to do the dog team?

AS I guess it always appealed to me, but I guess I learned up on the Yukon River. I had some friends that trapped and lived up there, and they let me take their dogs out, and—there was, John Stam has seventy dogs and he was running the Iditarod at the time. And he was based out of Whiskey Creek on the Yukon River and I've always been kind of an outdoorsy person who got around, so I was skiing up and down the Yukon River and meeting people and stuff. And I wound up going up there and running them on their trapping trail a little bit. But I was not a very good dog musher. Took a trip and went back to Melozi Hot Springs that just about killed me on that trip. But I just play around, this is a small play around team, like people used to have, in the villages, like you can talk to Winnie Elford [sp] and she could tell you the stories of her and her sister, and maybe you have. When her sister got accidentally shot and her dad took her by dog team from way down south from here, over to Dillingham. And they went to dances with just a couple dogs, her and her sister, you know. Everything was just a couple dogs, you know. Now all that people think of is racing and big, powerful, fast teams. It's all about speed. It's not even about how much they can pull. But it used to be part of the lifestyle, to have dogs to use them to go places and do everyday life. And it's kind of fun to do that. So, my dogs chase the bears away for me. Ay—what are you doin, huh? [to dog]. And they help me haul fish off the beach. I've got a cart. He's [dog] hauled loads of fish off the beach when I subsistence fish. Nobody else does things like that. They all own

wheelers. But I play around with the dogs. And they eat fish, so it kind of works really well here, you know? And I always say, you know, a dog team with no snow is way more fun than a snow machine with no snow. They keep me entertained year round, so—

SW And, subsistence fishing. Can you explain a little bit about that, and how—you have a subsistence permit?

AS Yeah, any state resident gets a permit. You just go down to King Salmon and get a permit. And then I decide where I want to put my net out. And put up a little sign with my permit number on it and that's my spot. And there's plenty of room around here. There's not that many people here, so—

SW How big is your net?

AS Oh, whatever they legally say. Just a subsistence net. They are much shorter than the commercial ones.

SW Oh. And you were saying this year that you got a lot of the fish from neighbors and people in town so you didn't even have to do much fishing yourself.

AS Yea, well I really only fished for a couple of kings early, and then, yeah, then next thing I know, Pawel—he's from Czechoslovakia but he's here in the summertime, and he's been in Alaska quite awhile—he's in the middle of the road waving at us and hollering and everything and saying he f-ed up and he needs to get rid of fish and he only wanted 10 and he had 100 and some, so he brought em over and that was our frozen fish. We froze all those. And then a little while, maybe a week later, we get phone calls, you know—too many fish down on City Dock Beach. And so, we took their extra fish and it turned out 120 fish in the smokehouse, so we were done after that. That was it. That was, no point in putting a net out myself. You have to watch those nets. They get too many fish in em (laughs).

SW And then, in terms of what you take from the land here, we saw some of the berries?

AS Yeah, There's wonderful berries here. And I showed you the main ones, the cloudberry—also called salmonberries sometimes. And the blackberries, which are also called crowberries. The blueberries—everybody loves the blueberries. And they all mix really well together. And a lot of people make *akutaq*¹ out of them. It's very traditional. And then later in September, after we're done picking the mushrooms and all those things—we have wonderful mushrooms here, too. They bring a lot of money other places, for those kind of mushrooms. Later on, we'll pick cranberries; after the frost. After the frost, you quit pickin mushrooms and you start pickin cranberries. And we have wonderful cranberries here, too. Just like little red rubies out there on the tundra and, we have really good berries here. We're really

¹ Ice cream

fortunate. This place is so blessed with so much food. Between the fish and the berries, and the caribou and the moose, and it's so easy to grow a garden. Lots of potatoes, and lots of peas and broccoli and just lots of other things you can grow. It's really easy to live here. Not to mention the fishermen and the processors, everybody, give away so much food, you don't know what to do with it all. So I just invest in freezers and store as much as I can and feed a lot of it to the dogs. It's a pretty rich place; a pretty powerful place, with the world's largest sockeye salmon runs, and steaming volcanoes, and howling winds. But it's awesome here. I really like it here.

SW And what are some of the changes you've seen in the years you've lived here?

AS It's getting warmer and warmer and warmer. Back in the 1980s, I remember winter in the late 80s, which is the coldest since I've been in the state—it's been more than 35 years. It was more than 100 below windchill factor. Actual temperature was minus 50 something? 52 or 54. People were getting frostbite. Houses were going down; havin lots of problems. We had cold winters. When I first came here, I went up Big Creek and we shot caribou and we pulled them back behind a Volkswagen, just pulled the caribou back behind, and back in the 80s. And you couldn't think about doing anything like that now. But back then it was 40 below zero, before Thanksgiving, and the only thing you could get to start was the Volkswagen, so (laughs). There was lots of caribou around. They'd come right across the river. We still occasionally have caribou come into town. But it is noticeably warmer. I can't take the dogs out like I could. I used to take longer trips, and now in March when the days are long, and you wanna go out longer, the creeks are all open. You really can't go very far. All the people who hunt are saying the same thing—they can't go out and hunt, you know. Every winter's different, but in the 30-some years I've been here, and it's more than 35, it's just getting warmer and warmer. And some winters are so warm, it's like—you're on the beach and there isn't even ice. It's like it's summertime. The beach is better than summer. It, in other winters we still get some ice and stuff, but it's definitely getting warmer.

SW Are you noticing differences in the kinds of animals you are seeing or when fish run?

AS No. I mean, seals are really a problem now. But I really haven't noticed too much. They've always been a problem. They've always been a problem for fishermen. Eagles have been a real problem with the nets, too. Tons of seals and tons of eagles here. But that's not a bad thing. So, and the bears. There's lots of bears. I think there always has been lots of bears and they compete for the fish. So, definitely lots and lots of wildlife. There's not any really doing poorly. They say the fish are getting smaller, but it's hard to tell just as a subsistence person, what's going on.

SW What about the canneries and the people that come in for that kind of season? Do you notice that living here?

AS You certainly notice, you know. And you notice when they let more foreign students in and there's some really nice people around town. And other years, I am also an EMT, so I also track what's going on with the Fire Department, although I don't respond much anymore. But you notice just what's going on with people here. It used to be a lot easier to get foreign workers and foreign students in here, and they were some pretty nice people. They're having a lot more problem. A lot of the processors will be 100 workers short or so. They just can't get people in here and the people they do get in here have lots of problems. So, that's a problem that could probably easily [be] remedied, but it does make a difference to all of us in town here with who else is in town. Cuz there's only a few 100 of us, and then it swells to thousands and thousands in the summertime. It's quite a difference. I enjoy all of the changes in the seasons and all that, but yea, it's interesting. People from all over.

SW And what are some of the issues that you see in the community or even people coming in that—some of the struggles that the community faces?

AS Well, I think our population is really going down. I think everybody tells everybody else it's expensive, too expensive to live here, which I find absolutely not to be true. I simply have the processor bring pallets over here and I burn em and heat my house. I have for more than 15 years that way. I like wood heat. I like sawin em up. It's super easy. And the food here is just incredible. There's so much really high quality food that I don't wanna eat anything else. But people build their own challenges. They don't, a lot of the younger people don't wanna eat salmon. They don't wanna live a subsistence lifestyle. Some of the older people really value that, but a lot of the younger ones are proud that they never eat it, or say that they can't stand it, and all they want is expensive processed food. That's a cultural thing that goes on. And it's happening. People talk themselves into this isn't a good place, but I see it quite the opposite. This has huge potential. I mean, I built this house with stuff that's thrown off from the dump. From all these processors and government places. And, the food here is phenomenal. You can, I think it's true anywhere, though. You can find a lifestyle for yourself, if you just have that, looking around, wondering what is your path? What is there for you, you know? There's potential and a lot of people tend to look at things negatively. Only want what they don't have. Only want to live in these internet devices that I don't even like. (laughs) I'm lucky. I'm very lucky. I've been very blessed.

SW In terms of passing knowledge to other people, you do a lot of different EMT and the Roling and, where do you get these bodies of knowledge? Do you have to leave to learn them?

AS Yeah. For the body work absolutely. It's not something you learn over the internet. In fact, I don't think you learn very much valuable over the internet. You get more confused by too much information that isn't really from the best sources. So, I just drifted around til I was fifty. And then, for some reason the message gradually got

into my head. I'm not sure how this works, but it wouldn't leave me alone that I wanted to study. And I didn't want to study. And I didn't want to work indoors. I liked my life. It was pretty easy. It was pretty good. But looking back I know I was drifting, and somehow, it took a couple years but the message got through to me that I wanted to study. And I wanted to study this thing that I didn't even know what it was. I had heard of it thirty years earlier and it sounded cool, but I didn't really know what it was, you know? So finally after about three years, I kinda just gave in and I went and studied it. And I'm like, Oh my gosh! This is amazing! And that turned out to be a pathway that just leads me to a better understanding of what this human condition really is. What's really going on here. It's not about that pile of money. It's not about what you want. There's a lot more going on in this, there's an intelligence in this universe that it's hard for me to put a finger on. But every once in awhile I just get shown something that just kinda blows me away. And that allowed me to be in touch with people who were teachers and I still got my feelers out lookin for what's next. But that really allowed me to be put in with and learn from people who have really developed their human potential in a way that most of us do not.

SW And what about where you grew up, were some of the same foods available where you grew up or did you learn that when you came here?

AS I learned a lot from Michigan. It was different, but fish and growing gardens was part of my life, all my life. My dad took me fishin for bluegills and grew a huge garden. And so, when I came up here I just grew things that liked to grow here and started transitioning more to wild foods. But it wasn't that big of a transition. I was livin in northern Michigan before I came to Alaska and people would make a big deal about the weather in Alaska when I came here—the Alaskans, you know. It's like, what are you guys talkin about? Black ice? Cold weather? I mean, I was already, I had already seen 35 below zero and I just, I was already out in the weather all the time. So it wasn't that big of a transition. It just, you find remarkable places up here. It, because it is more cut off from the rest of the world. There's these remarkable places off the road system. And I think just being off the road system, having to fly out here. You just don't have that traffic in and out. You have these communities built on subsistence lifestyles, and the rest of the country is losing that.

[break in recording]

SW Yeah, so tell us about smelting.

AS Well, smelting, we always had holes. And there was guys who would just drills holes up at King Salmon in one spot. And you could just drive up there. Stop after work. Drop a line in, start catching smelt through the hole in the ice, jigging for em. It's a very popular thing to do. Grandmas, little kids, guys after work, everybody's down there, catching piles of smelt. Cuz, lots of action, you're just (makes swishing noise), got another one! You know. In fact, when the tide comes in, the smelt might just come up through the holes and flood the ice. Just huuuge amounts of smelt, you

know. And really fun, and they're really tasty! So, you'd catch so many here that people would send em to the other villages because they appreciated em. So it was a fun thing to do. In fact, Carla would catch so many, she'd send em to the zoo in Anchorage to feed all the animals just to share the wealth. So, yeah, it's just as simple as a hole through the ice, but guess what? Recent years, there isn't necessarily ice. Takes a lot of the fun out of it. It could be fun to go get em with a net, but it's a—you gotta have the right net and it's a lot harder to do. And you can beach seine em and you can catch em with a gillnet. Small nets. You know. I got an old beach seine net around here someplace that's really really old, that'd make a good pattern. But it's not the same as the kids slidin down the hill and grandma out there catchin smelt, and everybody runnin around havin fun. There might be thirty people out there sometimes just catchin smelt, cuz it's everybody's favorite thing to do in the wintertime. So if we're lucky we have a cold winter and we still get to go smelting but it's, there's been winters where you really couldn't. And it warms up at any time and just the ice just washes out and it's just all gone—the smelting platform. But we got to go smelting last winter. It was good.

SW And how do you cook em?

AS Well, you know, people got all their favorite ways but it's basically mostly fried. CarolAnn did smoke like 500 of em one year, though, but they turned out to be kind of boney. So, she was smokin and sellin everything, and they taste good. They're wonderful, they have a flavor like cucumber. They're wonderful, but the bones, they get stuck in your teeth, at least some of us. So, I think she gave up on smokin em after awhile but she did smoke a bunch of em. And most people fry em. So it's popular to, you can just fry em guts and all in em and they're delicious and just eat the meat off the bones. But people will clean em and soak em in milk and do this and do that, you know. Depends on how good of a cook you are. I mostly just cook dog food. So, yeah. (laughs) they're just a great white meat. Delicious flavor when they're fresh. It's even one of those delicate flavors you don't wanna freeze. You want to eat it fresh. Yeah. A nice winter treat and a nice winter hobby. Subsistence is the hobby here, really. I mean, that's the main thing we have to do. Of course, there's lots of bad hobbies that are problems for people. But the good hobby is going out and catchin smelt, pickin berries, you know, doin the fish thing, hunting, just goin out and, some people trap. Different things like that. We still have it all right here. It's the thing to do, and lots of it. The resource is plentiful. I don't know, have they hit the record yet? Is this the biggest year ever for salmon?

KS I think it's pretty close.

AS Yeah, I know it's really close. I just didn't know if they ever pushed across it, because they're right on that edge, of being the biggest year ever. Which is pretty amazing, you know, because it has been recorded for quite awhile. So, yeah, that's, that's it on smelting I guess.

SW And can you tell me a little bit about the boat?

AS Uhuh.

SW Of how, just tell me about its history, how you got it.

AS That's a '61 Bryant. And it was owned since 19- I think he said '72, maybe '71, by Steven Bruno [sp?] and it broke his heart when they said they wouldn't work on it anymore. Because it's wood. They don't wanna work on wooden boats anymore. So he had to find a new home for it. And I've always thought it'd be cool to have one and fix it up and have just a little sleeping space cabin in there. Not a lot of room. But it's a beautiful old wood boat, and I tend to kind of keep it painted up and fixed up and, a little guest cabin out there is the idea. So, it looks very Naknek to have a boat in your yard. (laughs) And the wooden boats are goin away. They're just goin away, and nobody's really taking care of em. They're just sittin there rotting mostly. If you don't block em up good and keep em painted, in a few years they're just ruined. They were traditionally kept inside. In these big processors, they'd keep em inside, then they'd bring em out, work on em, and it took a great deal of care to keep a wooden boat goin. And everything has gone into aluminum now. They can make really big aluminum boats.

SW And they don't rot.

AS They don't rot, no. Well, they do, but that's a different rotting process and there's things you can do about that, too, to keep the boat from rotting from the saltwater, cuz saltwater will eat aluminum, too. But, yeah. It's one of the remaining few wooden boats. And I figure I'll just park it in my yard.

SW Do you have a boat that you go out on the water with?

AS No, well I have a couple kayaks. And, it's kind of like the dog team. I kind of like playing around with things without motors. And I don't go out so much anymore but I used to kayak more and I still could like kayak just around here. But I don't have a boat. I commercial fished for a couple of summers a long time ago but mostly I just don't use a boat. The way the tides are there's no reason to have a boat to get fish. I was explaining to you about setting the net before—you just use the tide. You put out the bottom anchor when the tide's low and then you have a top anchor and put the net any depth you want. Whatever you think would work the best. And you can rig it up so you can pull it in and out. So, no boat required. Some people use waders to pick the fish, some people just wait til it goes dry. And it's kind of fun to just go out there with shorts on and get wet and go pick your fish, too.

SW And Carla was explaining that you have to put the net pointed a certain way? I mean, I know the tide, but the way the tide's going so the net doesn't tangle.

AS Well, yeah. Especially if you're gonna use a haul back rope. You don't want it to tangle in the haul back rope. There isn't really too much to it otherwise. If you just

put it out there, it should fish properly and there's lots of exactness to try to catch more fish, but like I explained earlier, a lot of people have a problem of catching too many fish, so catching more fish is more of a commercial thing and not catching too many fish is more of a subsistence thing. So, some people, they don't want too many fish, they just throw a little rag piece of net out there and catch a few fish. Which was what Pawel shoulda done. But you don't know when you're gonna get the big jag of fish, you know. You can guess when it's risky and you can watch your net and pull it back in and hope it—that's when you don't want it to get tangled up. When you're at risk of having two or three hundred reds in your net and you don't want them, you don't want it to get tangled up in that haul back line and not be able to get it back in. And the tides can make it difficult, too. So, there's things you need to be careful of that way but it's mostly about catching too many fish, as far as the subsistence person. And I've never set netted commercial. When I did commercial fish it was off a boat.

SW Fishing for what?

AS I'll give you one guess. Sockeye salmon. (laughs) It was right here. Sockeye salmon, oh I have commercial fished for other things but I meant the sockeye fishery here. I have fished for crab out of Kodiak, years ago. Not very many women have, but I did, and I did longline. I did halibut back in the derby days, when it went for three days. You didn't sleep and you just caught fish like crazy. That was awhile ago, those were pretty wild days. The whole town of Kodiak would empty out, full of people, and the first time I was there like that I was like, I wanna go! So, I wound up goin a couple times. It was fun. And, uh, fished halibut down by Chignik and went overboard. That was a funny story. Yeah, I got on this, with this—I fished the season here, then went over to Kodiak for the next season, and had a hard time getting on a seiner. A lot of guys didn't wanna hire women, and I wound up with this guy who really shouldn't have been fishin, on this boat he was half scared of. And he took me down to Chignik and decided he really liked me. He always wanted me to fish with him after that. But, I was about his age, and he showed me how to seine and there was a couple college kids on the boat, and, well he wanted the young guys to be gaffin the halibut and pullin em on. But after awhile one was scared and one just burnt out. It was too many hours, you're just too tired. And it was a blast. He let me gaff halibut and I was good at it. Cuz I wasn't as (??) as he was, and it was fun, but this boat sat up so high, you had to lay on your belly and reach down and get these halibut with a gaff and then you could pull em up. And we caught some over 300 pounds. These are big fish and we got a lot of fish. And it was a blast. I loved it. But the third, final set, we had to go check. Because this is longlining sets. You've go check em. And the final set we went, and this weather was beautiful and I get seasick. That wasn't a problem on this trip. It was too nice. And then last set all of a sudden we get hit by some big swell, and so the boat just goes, TILT! And I slid right off the deck. And I grabbed the ground line, because it was about five foot down to the water. I grabbed the

groundline, made sure I got the gaff hook away from me so I didn't kill myself, and sat on the halibut. And then watched the three of them, really tired people, just kind of freak out and not figure out how to pull me over the side. And the locals were callin em the wimpy crew anyways. But I just said, Use the hydraulics, guys! And I got them to use the hydraulics and they lifted me back on the boat, and—It was pretty funny, actually, sittin there on the halibut, trying to tell them guys what to do. But, after that, you know, well it was almost over then. But I changed my clothes and he wanted the other guys to gaff them after that. I lost my spot. That was fun. And handling those big fish were fun. Those two young guys were from the east coast, and they never did any heavy work before. They were so intimidated by those big fish, you know. It's actually pretty easy to slide em around. Yep. That was a bunch of years ago.

SW And tell us more about getting into that—because, like you said a lot of people didn't wanna hire women?

AS Um, yea, I think. So, everybody had a crew then. And I found it hard to really get on with anybody except the locals here, just traveling around, just asking, because I didn't really have any experience, so. And I didn't have any experience seining over there. But the few people that want somebody, you know, it was kind of an odd time to pick up a job. You're better off getting one ahead of time. Some of them wouldn't take women out on the boats for one reason or the other—superstition or maybe a jealous wife. Who knows, you know? But I'd just hear from the young guys about that. So, anyways, I finally found a boat but it wasn't probably the best boat to be out on. Lots of funny stories about that boat. I called it the Wonderbread boat. They wouldn't eat anything but bacon and Wonderbread. They wouldn't even eat salmon. There's something wrong with a boat where they won't even eat salmon (laughs)

SW And what about the crabbing? You did that as well?

AS I did. I heard about crabbing and stuff and I loved Kodiak, so it was just, that was back in my kickin around days, and I went over to Kodiak, and I'm terrible about getting seasick, but what the hell? I don't mind failing, you know. I can try, you know, so I walked around and asked for jobs and wound up livin over in Dog Bay on a boat where the guy would bring in crab every weekend and just give me crab, and these guys were unloadin all these boats from Dutch Harbor and they'd just give me crab for helpin em haul stuff up and finally found a job on a little crab boat out of Kodiak, and that—he was a quality guy. And we fished dungies, and uh finished up the dungie season, and then went out for Tanner Crab with him, and then we pot fished cod. Same pots, changed the triggers on them. So, that was a good experience for the most part, you know. There's always some problems, but yeah. That was a good boat to be on, and learned a lot on that boat. He let me kind of learn to do everything on that boat. That was Kodiak. I didn't fish out West on the big boats that tender here. I just fished around Kodiak for tanner crab and dungies. And it's a lot of

fun eatin crab all the time. We ate everything out of the pots—lamprey, crab, halibut, whatever showed up in the pots, you know. And that skipper was great. He loved all that stuff. There was another guy on the boat that kept growling, real crabbers don't eat crab. He wanted to eat steak. But the skipper never bought steak, so he was out of luck.

SW And were there other women—did you ever meet any women who were doin fish crewing as well?

AS Not—you know, I don't think I hardly met any over there. I did here, cuz there's more women in the fishery here. I would hear about em sometimes. I'd hear about women that were out West that could climb the stack better than any man, that were just better than any man at something, you know? You'd hear about em. It always kinda bugged me. It's—what about us average, average women, who can do the job, but we're not better than every guy? I was like, c'mon. We can't all be better than everybody. But, no, there is another woman in town here that said she fished out West, but most of the crab fishing is out West and I never went out there. I've always had problems with sea sickness, and I just wanna look around, really. I was—I'm more of a tourist. And they'd complain about tourist types, but they always liked me when I was on a boat. I wound up like, dive fishing for sea cucumbers and things like that. Just fun, lookin around, it's like, Wow! Underwater it's like, cool. You know? I had already made enough money, I just didn't care. I was just travelin. Once I made a hundred thousand dollars in Alaska and Alaska is generous compared to Michigan, where I'm from. I just didn't care about money. Cuz I don't like expensive things, really. I like just lookin around. So, I just did. Fishing was part of that for me, just whatever sounded good at the time I would try it, and uh, had a lot of fun tryin it too. It was good. Kodiak, I love Kodiak. I haven't been back for a long time, but I always say if my house burns down, I'm movin to Kodiak.

SW And what about your family? Are—do you have sisters, or anybody else? I know you have a brother.

AS I have two brothers and two sisters. When I was crab fishing I remember the skipper asked about my sisters. My sisters just reported back that they broke the mold after me, that they weren't interested. But, uh, yeah, one's a just retired archaeologist and one's a social worker in Minneapolis. Yep. Neither one of em are anywhere near here. Uh, one retired brother who kinda likes it up here. And I built a little cabin out of pallets over there. He's stayin over there, but he's not feelin good today.

KS I would like to know more about the subsistence plants you use and pick.

AS Yea. Well I talked about the berries, which are our primary, uh, besides that the wormwood, which is the most important medicinal plant of the North, of the Arctic. We use that. It's just kind of good for everything. I mean I was tellin ya how they use

it for malaria in areas with malaria, which we don't have here. But it's anti-cancer, anti-bacterial, and really good for respiratory and skin problems. It gets used a lot by local people, to the point where the Yupik name for it is Si[sp?]. And if you go over to Dillingham, that's the last name of a bunch of people over there. And none of em live here, and I kind of wonder about that connection, with that plant. That very important, very spiritual medicinal plant with such a history in all the books, in all the continents. I mean, it's related to what they use in the moxi [sp] in the Chinese medicine and it was a big deal in Europe. I mean, those are different varieties of the same plant but it's still the same plant family. So, that's right here. It's growin around my steambath. It's real handy for usin in the steambath. And besides that, the Labrador tea, which you liked. It makes a wonderful tea and that's a special plant. And the pineapple weed you see growin there, I have friends that's their favorite tea. It's, uh, like chamomile. A type of chamomile tea. And I grow valerian in the garden. There's a wild one but I don't have it right here. So, growing more herbs in the garden, just cuz it's kind of fun to see what they're like and how they grow, and see what likes to grow here. I'm not so big on greenhouses. My brother is building a greenhouse for me, but I just like to grow what likes to grow here, cuz there's so many plants out there. And willow is a useful plant. You can make a tea that's real appealing out of the leaves and the bark. It's good for pain. It's what aspirin's based on. We use the Alder to smoke fish. Alder growin around here gives a—we use a lot of the leaves and the small twigs. It gives it a wonderful smokey, sweet flavor. And it's a nice wind block, too. And mushrooms. Mushrooms are a big one for us. We love pickin mushrooms. Mostly go down to King Salmon. And, uh, they're called porcini if you buy em in the grocery stores and they're expensive. King boletes is uh another name for em. There's lots of kings up around King Salmon. Bushels and bushels of them. Some of the guys I know, I showed em, to pick em and sell em to the lodges. And there's lots of them. Some years we just dry huge amounts of em. I use my steambath and get the fire goin and have screens all over there and drying all kinds of mushrooms. There's a few other kinds around, too, but those are kind of my favorite to pick, cuz there's so many of em. You can just get lots of them dried and use em year round. I looked at the cost of them in the grocery stores in Anchorage and Minneapolis and, you know, it's like, five bucks an ounce or something crazy. Those are really healthy, too. I guess most of the mushrooms have a lot of minerals they pull out of the ground. Porcini have a light (??) gold in em. Interesting.

[Break in recording. Recording cuts off the interviewer's question]

AS I guess subsistence means to me a real connection to the place you're living and what resources are there. And I'm afraid a lot of people are losing that, really. And they don't even see what's right in front of em. So, subsistence is a big word, but um, there's a lot of different kinds of subsistence and food is the first one that comes to mind of people around here. Food and fish (laughs).

End of Transcript