



Dianne Herman

Transcript of an Oral History
Conducted by
Anjuli Grantham
at
Village Islands, Uganik Bay, Alaska
On June 22, 2015
(With subsequent corrections and additions)

Kodiak Historical Society

About West Side Stories

This oral history is part of the West Side Stories project of the Kodiak Historical Society. West Side Stories is a public humanities and art project that intended to document the history of the west side of Kodiak Island through oral history, photography, and art. The oral histories chart the personal stories of individuals with a longtime connection to the west side of Kodiak Island, defined for the scope of this project as the area buffeted by the Shelikof Strait that stretches from Kupreanof Strait south to the village of Karluk. The project endeavored to create historical primary source material for a region that lacks substantive documentation and engage west side individuals in the creation of that material.

The original audio recording of this interview is available by contacting the Kodiak Historical Society. Additional associated content is available at the Kodiak Historical Society/ Baranov Museum, including photographs of interview subjects and west side places taken during the summer of 2015, archival collections related to the west side, and journals and art projects created by west side residents in 2015.

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Note on Transcription

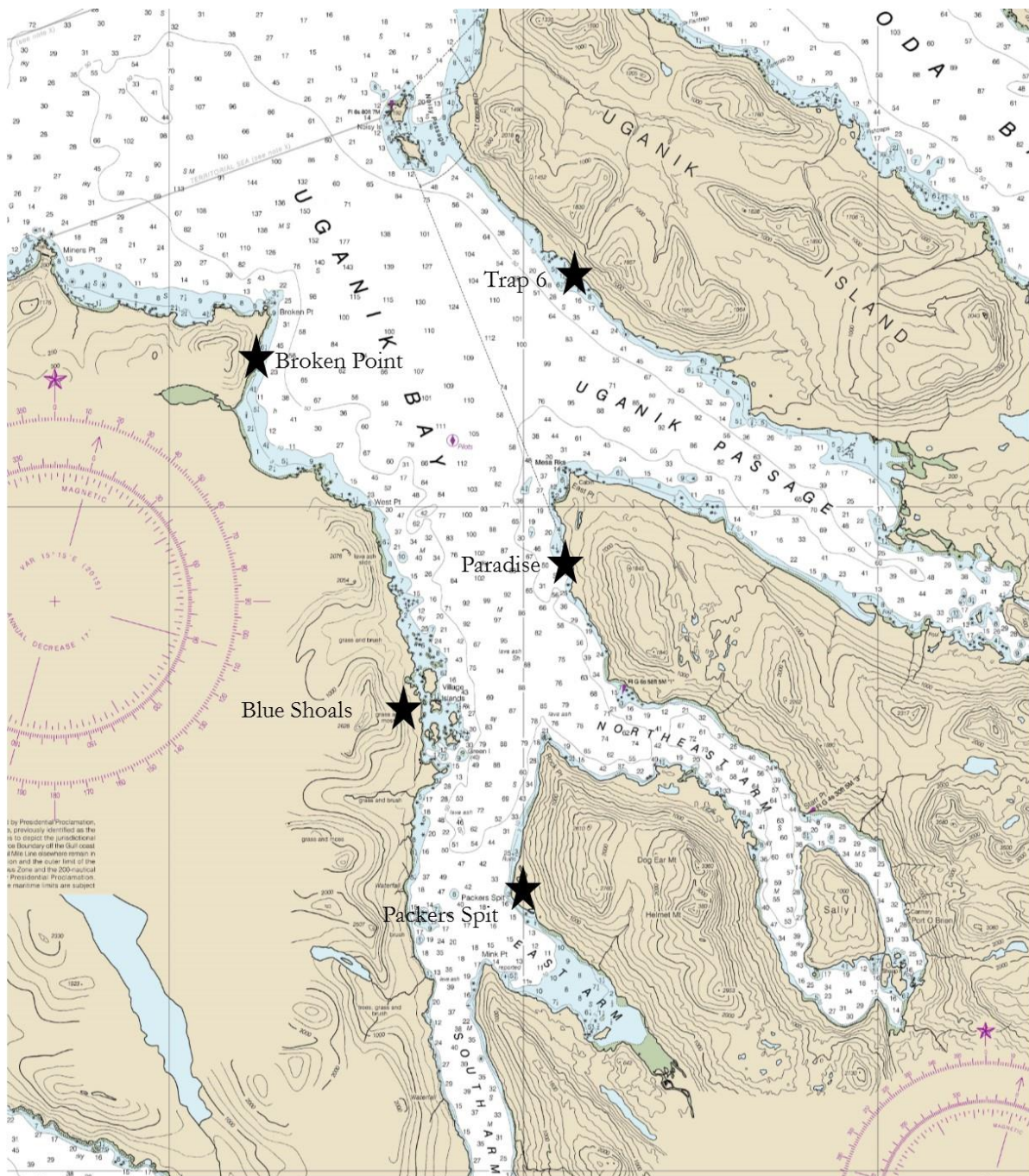
After the initial transcription was completed, a second transcriber performed an audit/edit by listening to the oral history recording and verifying the transcription. The interview subject then had the opportunity to add or retract information. The following transcript is the resulting document. Editing is intended to make the interview easier to understand. Bracketed words indicate they were added after the interview. The use of [...] indicates that something that was spoken does not appear in the transcription. Often, these are false starts. In some cases, it is information that the interview subject retracted later. The original audio file is available for listening.

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Cover photo left: Dianne Herman, photographed at Village Islands on June 22, 2015. Photography by Breanna Peterson for West Side Stories. P-1001-6-264. Cover photo right: Dianne Herman, P-993-27-c.



Select locations within Uganik Bay mentioned in the interview.

Oral History of Dianne Herman

AG: Well, today is the 22 of June. We just had the solstice 2015. I'm sitting here with Dianne Herman at Village Islands and this interview is for the West Side Story project. So thank you. Thank you, Dianne, for hosting me.

DH: Oh, of course.

AG: Maybe we can begin at the beginning. Where and when were you born?

DH: I was born in Michigan in June 1945.

AG: And what sort of young experiences did you have that would draw you eventually to Alaska?

DH: My father had worked at Yellowstone, and so we very often went on trips to Yellowstone in the summer and I really liked the mountains and I liked the wilderness, and my father and I would often go off in the woods in Michigan and go mushroom hunting and things like that. So I always liked the outdoors, and I always liked to explore further of the outdoors.

AG: And did you live in the same town most of your childhood?

DH: Yep.

AG: Where was that?

DH: North Muskegon, Michigan.

AG: Oh okay. What did you do after high school?

DH: After high school, I went to University of Denver for a year and then I ran away to Finland because I'd been an exchange student there and went and lived in Finland for a year. And when I came back I went to University of Minnesota and I started studying languages, so I was always going here and going there. It took me eight years to get through school, and I got a degree in Danish which did me absolutely no good, but it was fun. And then one year I decided that I wanted to go to Alaska, and a friend of mine was urging me to go and then she backed out, but I came anyway.

AG: So what sort of work did you do during this time when you were going to college and traveling? Did you have some sort of profession along the way?

DH: I was a waitress and I worked in really good restaurants and I made a lot of money. So I could like save up all my money, work split shift, save up all my money, and then go travel.



Dianne Herman. P-993-9.

AG: Great. So what year was it that you came to Alaska?

DH: '76.

AG: And why Alaska?

DH: The last frontier and mystique, I guess.

AG: Did you know people up here?

DH: Nope.

AG: Tell me about your journey up here.

DH: I answered an ad in the *Minnesota Daily* university newspaper and it was a twenty year old girl whose father had bought her a truck with a camper on the back. And there was another woman and a guy, who was a friend of hers who also answered the ad, so it was the four of us who drove up. And we quickly discovered that the girl who owned the truck did not

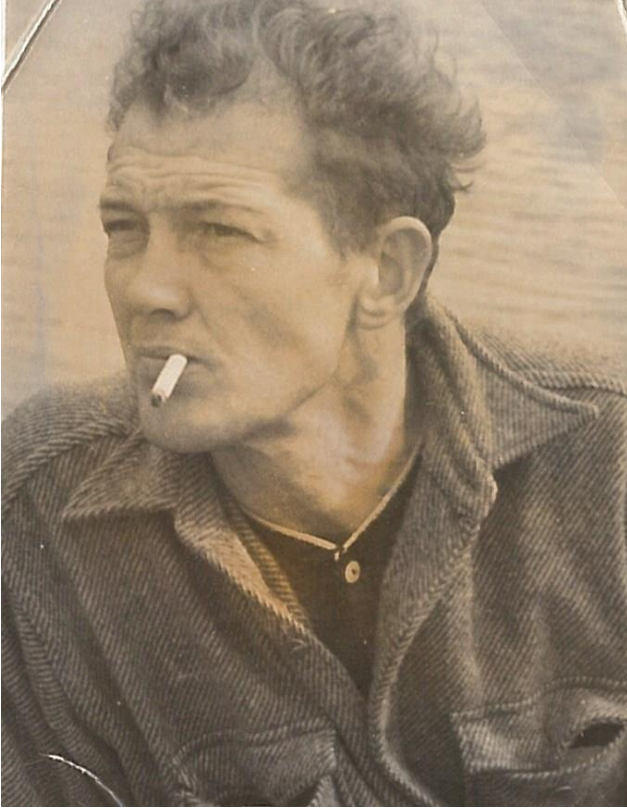
know how to drive a stick shift, so we didn't let her drive. And we had a flat tire like shortly after we got into Canada and she had no spare and no jack, so by the time we left that little place, we had, I think, four spares and a bunch of tools. And then we dropped the guy off at Tok and we drove down the Richardson Highway to Valdez over Thompson Pass. And the sun was sinking on one side, the full moon was coming up on the other side, and the ocean was down in front of us, and I was hooked. And I have never been back to Valdez. But we got on the ferry and went, "Oh, let's just see where the ferry goes," you know, and we got to Kodiak and it was pouring rain and [...] I looked at the boats and said, "I think I'd like to go fishing," and she said, "Fine, I'll go to the bar and talk to fishermen for you." And then I ended up meeting Fat Ray and coming out to Packers Spit.

AG: Wow, so just like that you were on the ferry and at the Spit pretty much?

DH: Yeah, about two days.

AG: Wow. Who was Fat Ray?

DH: Do you know Fat Ray?



Slim Trueman. P-962-74.

AG: [No]

DH: Oh, he was this character, kind of a dubious character who had a beach seine permit, and he was one of the six permits on Packers Spit. And he didn't work very hard, but he would get people that would work really hard and there were four of us. And [...] if you were pulling on a seine and the other three of us let go, the seine was not moving because Fat Ray was not pulling. He was just pretending to pull. So he's kind of a jerk. He didn't catch very many fish, but he was a character as were all the people on Packers Spit at the time.

AG: Yeah. Describe arriving at the Spit for the first time.

DH: It was foggy, rainy, you couldn't see any of the mountains and Fat Ray had been describing his cabin, which turned out to be a shack, and I was wondering what had I gotten myself into. But Slim Trueman was there and [Bob] Volker. And Slim and Volker were incredible and Slim, of course, had been fishing for years and Volker, I don't really remember exactly what he did, but I think he worked on the pipeline. But the two of them they could smell the fish. They would like wake up at 3:30 in the morning. They could either like hear the fish or smell the fish in the water. They were just incredible. And then there were maybe, probably, forty or fifty people on Packers Spit at the time and then we would all help each other.

AG: Wow.

DH: And Coyote would stand out in the water in his tennis shoes and no rain gear [...] up to his neck in the water, holding up the cork line of the beach seine.

AG: Wow. So forty or fifty people. It's like a city out there almost.

DH: It was.

AG: Who had these six permits that you mentioned?

DH: There was George Terabasso who was married to Linda, who's now Linda Lindberg now, and she had her six kids. So he had one permit. The next one was, I think, Fat Ray. Then, let's see, Bob Gardener. He was this South African who lived in Kodiak for a long time. And Mick McCrea. [Dave] Lindberg was there, only Lindberg lived on this little boat that was anchored off. So that's five. I don't know. I mean, Linda will probably remember. She could tell you 'cause she lived there and they lived in that lagoon there. Did anybody point out to you kinda like across from the *Karen Sue*. They had a house in there.

AG: So do you know when this whole crew started fishing out at beach seining or about the history of beach seining on the Spit?

DH: I'm pretty sure they were fishing there in the seventies. I'm not sure exactly when they started fishing there. Don Fox would know.

AG: What was the attraction of beach seining at Packers Spit. Why there?

DH: Oh because there were so many humpies that came past there. It was mainly humpy fishing. And they would just swell. You know, they'd swell up to the beach, and then they'd go in the middle of the bay, and then they'd come back along the shores. So sometimes Fat Ray and his crew, including myself, would go over to the other side of the South Arm and we'd try a couple of those places over there, but they're a backout fish.

AG: And could you maybe describe the beach seining operation. How did it all work?

DH: Well, I went off to Fairbanks 'cause I had been planning on going to Fairbanks and when I came back Daniel Boone [Reed] had taken my job, and so I ended up working for Bob Gardener, "Boob Gardener" we called him, along with Roger Benny who fished out here for years, "Roger the Limey," English guy, and so we were his crew. He would fish with one contact in and one contact out, so he couldn't see anything. And I would be standing on the beach on an anchor and the seine was in the skiff, and they'd take off and they'd go off and they'd hold a hook. And I would be on the beach, Roger would be plunging, Bob would be driving the skiff, and there's like a big pillar post thing in the middle of the skiff, and that would be what would hold the seine, the other end of the seine. So I would be jumping up and down and screaming 'cause I'd see the fish swimming in. And Bob Gardener would go, Roger would go [*speaking with British accent*], "Do you see these fish swimming in?" And he would go, "But I don't see them," and then I'd watch them back out and then he'd close up. So anyway beach seining is somebody's on the beach on the anchor, the skiff goes out,

brings it in, and then it helps to have more people on shore to help drag that in because beach seines are really heavy.

AG: And so did you have like any sort of like a winch or anything to help you get it to shore or was it just muscle power?

DH: Muscle power. Yeah, that's why there aren't very many beach seiners anymore.

AG: Yeah, I was wondering about the allure of beach seining versus setnetting?

DH: At the time that was a job I got offered so I took it.

AG: And why do you think that people were beach seining instead of setnetting? Like what's the advantage or disadvantage of beach seining over setnetting?

DH: Because [...] back then they could have three permits. I mean back then they could have a setnet permit and a beach seine permit and a purse seine permit all at the same time, and you can't do that anymore.

AG: Oh I see so it was like a supplemental gear type pretty much.

DH: Yeah.

AG: Okay.

DH: I think the allure on Packers Spit was with a lot of the guys it was the camaraderie, but it was also like you can catch so many fish at one time. And Cliff used to say, "Oh setnetting. It's just picky, picky, picky, picky, picky." [...] Beach seine takes a lot more muscle power, but setnetting takes a lot of patience and perseverance and mending, mending, mending.

AG: What sort of [...] gear were you using like skiffs and all of that?

DH: Wooden. Old wooden skiffs. A lot of Opheims then.

AG: And what about the nets, [...] did someone own those or did you use the cannery nets or how did that work?

DH: Oh, no, no. Everybody owned their own nets.

AG: Okay. So could you maybe describe what the Spit looked like at that time?

DH: Flat, flat, flat with a sloping beach just like you saw yesterday, and no trees and five little fish shacks there [...] and tents, a few tents up, very small little shacks, and then there was a clothesline because Mick McCrea's wife at the time had, I can't remember how many kids, two kids I think, and

then two of Mick's little sisters like I don't know eighteen, seventeen, eighteen. So there were a lot of people at their camp. And she had a clothesline strung out there and I remember it would rain for days on end and those clothes would hang out in the rain and get rinsed over and over and a lot of times, but Slim and Volker always had a campfire going and they always had beer and whiskey and they'd be singing around the campfire.



Chris Berns and Slim Trueman. P-995-22.

AG: Could you describe Slim? What was he like in terms of character and appearance?

DH: He was a tall, lanky, you know, you could tell that he'd been a cowboy from Montana, I think, and he was probably, I don't know, six-two at least, blue eyes, kind of bushy grayish dirty blonde hair, and always a smile and extremely well spoken. He could be very chivalrous and then he could just be a crazy, old kind of cowboy redneck type, but [...] you couldn't help but like him. And he was interested in everything. And he was also gold mining out here. Did you see, Chris took you to Broken Point? He used to gold mine at Broken Point, and he had another gold beach that was further on towards Bartenders. Chris didn't tell you about that? You gotta get Dale's number 'cause Dale worked with him.

Yeah get Dale's number. Oh, Dale is an incredible story teller.

AG: Great.

DH: Yeah, get Dale's number from Chris. I might have it, too.

AG: He gave it to me.

DH: Okay.

AG: I'll get in touch with him. So what was Slim's operation then? [...] Cause I know that he had all sorts of setnet sites and what was his role in all of this?



Dianne Herman. P-993-25.

DH: We'd call him the "father of gillnetting in Uganik Bay." And he had gone and prospected all of these various sites with setnets to see if they'd catch any fish. And then when limited entry went through, he started selling them. And I remember he sold what is now Bear Garden to Jon and Vann Dudding and for two thousand dollars and that site is worth a lot more now. And with the site went the two places to put your net, a place on the beach that you could pay the Refuge to put up a tent there and then two sites, like this is a rock you tie your net to here and this rock over here and [...] if you prospected somewhere and you fished it two years in a row, it was yours. But if you didn't fish it two years in a row then you know somebody could just come along and take it. But I mean Slim also beach seined. I don't know if he ever purse seined. I don't know about that, but I met him beach seining. He was beach seining and everybody else was setnetting, but he would like bring all these people out from town from the bars. He'd bring them out to fish out here and he'd give them some old wooden skiff and nets and anchors and like Paradise, this little old funky cabin to live in, and that's how Paradise got its name. You've heard that story, right? The two old guys

were sitting out there going, “Man, we got food. We got fish in the nets. We got a skiff and a kicker. This must be paradise.”

AG: So you arrived actually right when limited entry started?

DH: I can't remember. Did it start '76.



Jim and Deedie Pearson. P-776-74.

AG: I think it did.

DH: I think it started the year before. I think it started in '74.

AG: Okay. It was right around then.

DH: Yeah.

AG: Do you remember people talking about it or what they thought of it?

DH: Oh yeah.

AG: What was the general consensus about limited entry at that time?

DH: I would say the general consensus was, “Ah, the government's trying to put more regulations on us.” Yeah.

AG: People were dissatisfied?

DH: Well they weren't too happy about it, but they knew they couldn't do anything about it so they put up with it. I mean the people that had been out here a long time were not very happy about it, but then new people would come in, like John and Vann came in, and bought their site and started fishing and.

AG: Who were the people that had been out here for a long time when you first started coming?

DH: Well, Tarabasso. Slim. Well, Nan and Dan [Reed] lived here, and Chief [Wilmer Asiksick], and various people from the cannery. Cue. Gary Cue was over what is now called Shark Cove. Chris Berns had grown up fishing at Gull Light with his mom and his brother. Don Fox had been out here since '71, and he was fishing over at Cue Ball's place. Oh, Deedie and Jim [Pearson], of course. The Owens had been out here, and Deedie had a permit and Hazel [Jones] had a permit. And the Hawaiians had Surf City. There were these Hawaiians that would put out their subsistence net in June when the fishing was closed and they'd catch all of these reds, and then they'd load up these

fifty-five gallon drums with salted reds and ship them to Hawaii and sell them for a fortune. And Bartenders.



Floyd Anderson. P-986-6a.

AG: Floyd [Anderson]?

DH: Floyd, yeah. Floyd and Nancy [Anderson] were here. And who was at Miners [Point]? I can't remember who was at Miners. I know John Rogers had been out here for a while and Eddie McCrea.

AG: So were you out here then when Mick McCrea's family was lost in that accident? Could you maybe tell about that? What happened there?

DH: Well, it was the *Deep Sea*. [He] as this really nice guy, John, who ran the *Deep Sea*, and their family wanted to go in and it was a closure. And so Mick's wife and the kids and the two sisters, the two young sisters, all got in the *Deep Sea* for a ride to town and he got to Whale Pass and he said, "I don't feel right going through here," when the cannery radioed him and said, "You need to come to town now or these fish are gonna be too old." So they sunk and everybody died.

AG That's heartbreaking.

DH: Yeah.

AG: Were you out here?

DH: I was still out here, yeah.

AG: And how did you receive notification of it?

DH: CBs probably was what we had then.

AG: What sort of communication actually, how did people communicate when you first arrived?

DH: We had CBs and you'd hear like truck drivers Anchorage to Fairbanks, you know, in the middle of the night because when I fished in Viekoda with Keith Moore. I think it was an even straighter



Kieth Moore and family at Longbeach
in Viekoda Bay. P-1000-5-201.

shot over in Viekoda [...] and we hooked up the CB and he's like, "Oh, what's my handle?" And I went, "Well, did you have any nicknames in high school?" and he goes, "They called me the blonde bomber." I went, "Well I guess you're the blonde bomber." But we'd have to leave it on 'cause the tender would come in the middle of the night sometimes, and it was the *Gladys R*, and it was this old guy that ran the tender and he always wore his slippers and he was pretty stove up. [...] There was a rock right in front of our place and he would always forget about that rock and so we'd be yelling at him on the CB, "No. No. To your right." But yeah so we had CBs. That's how we communicated, but we couldn't communicate from Viekoda to Uganik. I mean a lot of it was just like now. The tender would tell you stuff. I mean

now people have internet, but we went from CBs to VHF's at some point. I don't remember when, but VHF's reaches a little further, but I can't reach, for instance, Lacey [Berns] in Viekoda and Tollef [Monson] can, but I mean I'm too far in here.

AG: What was the Ed, you said Ed Volker? Was that his name or Bob Volker?

DH: Bob Volker.

AG: Bob Volker. Who was he? What was his deal?

DH: I can't remember, but Chris [Berns] probably knows.

AG: Okay.

DH: And Don Fox for sure knows, but he was just a really, really good buddy of Slim's [...]. I mean Slim was a true fisherman and I think probably in Montana he'd been like a hunter, you know. He was one of those guys with the eyes that he knew so much and he was so smart. And he was also persuasive to like persuade these guys sitting on a bar stool in town to come out here and go fishing and [...] then it was, let's see, [...] a third for the crew, a third for the boat and gear, and a third for the owner. So, you know, Slim got a third from all these sites.

AG: Because he had pioneered them and had found the crew.

DH: Yeah, yeah.

AG: I see and that was still happening when you came out? So he was kind of like just the manager of it all in a way.

DH: He was the father of gillnetting in Uganik Bay.

AG: Do you have any stories of Slim that kind of articulate well his character or his knowledge of the area?

DH: You have to get them from Dale. I mean my best story of Slim is Slim and Volker sitting around the campfire because we used to get plane loads of beer and whiskey delivered or he used to, to the Spit, and people would stay up, you know, to the wee hours of the morning sitting around the campfire and he would always wanna sing, "The squaws along the Yukon are good enough for me." You know that song?

AG: No.

DH: That's where I learned it.

AG: That's funny because we always called the mountain in front of Packers Spit, Squaw Tit Mountain.

DH: Well, it's probably Slim.

AG: Yeah, singing the song.

DH: Yeah, yeah.

AG: So that was '76. What happened after your first summer at Packers Spit? Was it a good season?

DH: Well, first of all, Fat Ray didn't work out. Second, Boob Gardener was so bad that both Roger and I quit. [...] Roger and I, used to speak Spanish in the skiff and it would drive [Bob] crazy. And one day, I don't even remember what the fight was about, but I remember Roger had almost forced Bob to build a cabin 'cause they'd gotten this free wood. So they built a cabin, but he wouldn't let me stay in the cabin. So I ended up staying at Coyote's shack in the top bunk. And Roger got, on my behalf, and I can't remember what it was, but Roger got in a huge argument with Bob Gardener and the shack was shaking. And the next day we both quit and he took us to the cannery and we spoke Spanish all the way in. And Roger immediately got a job with Billy Yurioff seining, and I walked in and there's this guy there, he goes, "You wanna be a skiffman?" I went, "Umm, what do you mean?" He goes, "Well, I'm the skiffman and I'm quitting. So when the Phoenix comes in, you just tell him that you're the skiffman." And it was Oliver and Eva Holm. Oliver had caught his finger in the net



Eva Holm with Elizabeth and Malina. P-1000-5-576.

and he had his finger taped up like this and he couldn't do much except steer, and so Eva and I had to take turns being a skiffman and neither of us did a very good job and we went to town in three days. I made more money in those three days than I made the whole summer on the Spit! And then I had to go to work. I went to work at Solly's and the KI [...] until I got enough money to get off

the rock, and then I went back to Minnesota. And then I came up the next year and that's when I met Arne, the Norwegian that took that picture of Tiger Olsen [on the ferry]. So I came back, didn't



Dianne hanging a net. P-993-25.

have a job, and I remember, you know, walking around looking for a job and Keith Moore saw me and he was in Tony's and [...] he'd had a few drinks and we came out and he sits me down on the sidewalk. He sits like this and he goes, "You sit there." And we talked all about this and he goes, "You get twelve percent. I pay for everything. I pay for all the propane, groceries, gas, and you're my only crew." And I went, "Okay." And it was Keith Moore that really taught me how to setnet.

AG: Where'd you head? Where did you go out?

DH: Viekoda. He has a place in Viekoda. And then the next year [...] was the year that I ended up with Roger's permit, '78. I ended up with Roger's permit 'cause he could not get a

permit to come back into the United States. So I ended up with his permit and these two leaky skiffs and Chief. Didn't make any money but had a lot of fun.

AG: Could you tell about that summer again now that the audio's on?

DH: About fishing with Chief?

AG: Yeah.

DH: Oh okay. So I ended up with this permit. I had nothing. I flew to the Village Islands. I went to Nan and Dan's [...] and Dan goes, "Okay." We go up to the barn and we start dragging out all of these old nets of his 'cause they didn't fish anymore. [...] I think we had wooden king kegs, and buoys and anchors and lines and somehow I ended up with these two skiffs. I can't remember how. And one was a sixteen foot holding skiff with high sides and the other one was a fourteen foot Opheim to pick out of. And Nan goes, "Well you gotta take Chief," I went, "I don't know about taking Chief. You know he gets drunk." She goes, "Well, just don't have any liquor in camp. He's a hell of a worker." Chief was fifty-seven at the time. I was maybe thirty-two. And we worked our butts off, and I think I ended up with twelve hundred dollars. And then the next year I still had Roger's permit and Sammy Litzsinger called me up. And I was in Juneau. And he's like, "I need you to come out. Bring your permit and come out and fish at Cape Ugat." I'm like, "Uhh. Sealion heaven. I don't wanna go out there." But he talked me into it. And Johnny J was out there. John Jaskoski and Nava [Jaskoski] and the kids who were, David Raven was like four. He could already hang nets. He'd complain if we hung the corkline too high and he couldn't reach it. He was incredible. And then Maya was just a little girl, little toddler, and so we fished out there. It was awful. I mean the weather could just be horrendous. We'd have to wake up in the middle of the night sometimes and move the skiffs all around to the other side. We had to wear chest waders just to get into the skiff, especially at low tide. You'd be walking off of these slippery rocks, and we would spend pretty much eighteen hours in the skiff.



Chief and Dianne. P-993-7.

AG: Picking or what?

DH: Well not picking the whole time. I mean, we had like this little cove that we could nose into and try and take a nap, but we didn't want to go ashore 'cause it was so hard to get on and off shore. And then the next year, I fished at the Foxhole with Don [...] now [it] is called Midnight Cove, but we called it the Foxhole. I started to fish there in '80 with Don and then '81 I went sailing, '82 I came back and I was on the *Invader* with Chris Berns for a short time, and no, I don't know. '81, '82, '83 were my sailing days and [...] I came back and subsistence fished with Dan and Chief here one summer and then I fished with Chris shortly and then '84, '85, '86 I fished out at the Foxhole with Don and then he bought Broken Point in '87.

AG: From?

DH: From Tony who lived in Lake Tahoe, who'd been out here a long time. Yeah, Tony was out here when I first got here. Can't remember his last name right now. Gotta talk to Don. He remembers everything. So that was funny because Don had sold the Foxhole to these people named Powers, and so Don had to go out there and show them everything 'cause we had two permits out there and four places to put nets and it was complicated. And so Don's out there and Ilva and I are fishing Broken Point, one set, and I was kind of living here cleaning up the homestead 'cause we'd bought land. So I'd go out there for three days. So the very first opening, it's Ilva and I out there by ourselves, and we put out the net and, you know, there weren't very many fish. So we go over to Surf City to visit Tom Kourmetis and we went dry for like three hours. It's like really minus tide, and we're sitting there looking out the window, beautiful sunny day. We finally get back in the skiff and we can feel the wind coming up. It was like a twenty-four hour opening. We go, "We're taking in this net right now." It's like six o'clock. We take the net in, we just barely managed to get the net over to this one side of the beach. If you look at it way over to the left when you come in, this kind of little bite, we got the net in there, not where it belonged, and we got the skiff tied up and we're

like, “Oh, it's gonna be horrible to deliver.” And we hear this chunka chunka chunka chunka, and here comes the *Northern Jaeger* around the corner and it's Ronnie and Russell and they're just laughing. They knew that it was just the two of us girls there. And anyway they came to help us out, but it was like awful. We had put the reds in a sling in the skiff and I don't remember what else we had, but it was like, “Just the reds.” We had the aluminum skiff and we're banging against the side of the boat even though we're in the lee. That was pretty funny.

AG: Bad weather, huh?

DH: Yeah, yeah it was. Yeah and then Ilva—. Nevermind. I'll tell you that off the tape.



Coyote Bowers, unknown, and Clifford Trueman at Bartenders, Uganik. P-986-53.

AG: Okay. Tell me about first meeting Coyote.

DH: Met Coyote [Bowers] on Packers Spit. He was very friendly. You know, he had that Montana drawl and he actually played a guitar then instead of the broom. He played the broom, too. He was one tough guy, and he took me in when Boob Gardener wouldn't let me

live in the tent and treated me like a little sister, yeah.

AG: Do you have some examples of how he was tough?

DH: Standing out in the water up to his neck with no raingear. Yeah. Yeah. He hated raingear. He never wore raingear. And he was always happy and he could sing. I learned so many country western songs from him. I mean he really had a repertoire and he knew who wrote them and where they came from and then, of course, he always bragged about that one Joni Mitchell song where she sings about Coyote. He said, “That was me, yeah.”

AG: Do you think that's true?

DH: I do. Yeah.

AG: It's good to know. I'll have to listen to that.

DH: Yeah.

AG:[...] You mentioned before that Slim had a bit of a mining operation. I'll ask Dale about it, too, but do you remember or know much about people that have mined around this area?

DH: All I know is that he used to mine—. There was like this one beach they called Gold Beach. He tried Broken Point and there was another beach that's kind of between Bartender's and Broken, but I don't think he got much. He got a little bit. [...] Well people that are hungry for gold are hungry for gold you know it's the older Robert Service poems that are good examples.

AG: That's true. And what about trapping when you first came? Are people trapping around here?

DH: Yeah.

AG: Could you maybe describe that. How did that?

DH: Well, I wasn't here in the winter when they were trapping because you trap in the winter, but yeah they'd trap fox mainly and beaver and save the skins and bring them some place and sell them. [...] People still trap around here.



P-993-27a.

AG: Did they have set traplines that they worked or how did that usually operate? Yeah I have to talk to someone about that.

DH: Yep. Dale might know, too, 'cause Dale spent a whole winter out here. He like skied over the mountains.

AG: Wow.

DH: Yeah.

AG: Tell me about Chief.



P-997-27b.



P-997-27e.

DH: Chief. Chief was wonderful, sweet, generous, giving, but oh he was a prankster. He loved to play tricks on you. And he was a hard worker, but he had his own mode of operation. And when I built this house, my friend Pete was gone and I had put the windows in the clerestory upstairs, so Chief came over to help me. And I had just so much lumber, you know. I didn't have very much. Well,

Chief would cut something wrong and then he'd just throw it outside and I'm like, "That's all the wood I have, Chief."

Somehow we got the windows in there. You know. It was just making like the little frames. And then when he fished with me, [...] we called it Bull Kelp Beach, and we made like little heads of bull kelp and decorated them. We had eight sheets of plywood and a

bunch of Visqueen and a wall

tent. So we went out, we set up the wall tent, and that was like the sleeping tent, and then the front, Chief pretty much built this Visqueen kitchen. So when the sun was shining it was really hot, so [...] that was our kitchen, and bread would rise in there really well. And I was making what I called munucks which were kind of like English muffins and you didn't need an oven, 'cause we just had a Coleman stove. And he had an order of Wonder Bread and Snickers bars and then flaunted [them] 'cause he knew I hated Wonder Bread. So he loved to tease. He really loved to tease and when, 'cause we had all that fish, we had salted a bunch of it, all that fish that he'd been smoking, and then



Chief. P-993-31.

we salted it and put it in this big you know this big blue fifty-five gallon barrels and they were kind of shaped like waste baskets, you know. They weren't perfectly round. They were like narrower on the bottom than they were on the top and we managed to get the top on and we got that all spliced down. Then we had *Matilda*, the fourteen foot Opheim, and we had a plank, and it's just the two of us. We both weighed about a hundred and twenty pounds [each] trying to push in this big, big barrel up into the Opheim. We finally got it in there. Chief was a doll and he could carve. And he lived in this little red house over here on the homestead. And I would stay here with Nan and Dan and then Nan would go, "Go get Chief. It's time for dinner." So I'd go up to get Chief and he'd be sitting there and he'd have the stove just cranking in this little teeny house. So he'd



Chief building a model sled, P-986-74.

be sitting there in his underwear. And he made the sleds out of yellow cedar and so he'd go, "Oh, okay, okay. I'm coming for dinner," you know, put his carving away, so he'd come in, put his pants and shirt on and he'd come in and he'd go, "God, I'm just itching." And it was the yellow cedar dust like all over his skin. Yeah, and he carved ivory, too, that he got someplace. I mean he came from Shaktoolik, so I don't know if somebody sent it to him. Apparently he had gone in the Army when he was probably eighteen, and then he'd gone back to Shaktoolik and he'd gotten some girl pregnant. So he left and he came to Kodiak and he didn't marry her and he never went back to Shaktoolik.

AG: [...] Do you know when he arrived in Village Islands about?



Nan Reed. P-993-16.

DH: Well, he was working at the cannery. That's where Nan and Dan found him and then they [invited] him over here.

AG: Oh okay. And what was his—?

DH: See that's why you need to talk to Deedie, too. She would know all those dates.

AG: [...] Was his first name actually Chief?

DH: No, Wilmer.

AG: Wilmer—?

DH: Asiksick.

AG: Asiksick, okay, but he was always known by Chief, huh?

DH: Well, [...] they'd started calling him Chief when he was in the Army. He was in Germany in the Army.

AG: During World War II?

DH: [Yes]

AG: Wow. And what about Nan?

DH: Nan?

AG: What was her story?

DH: Nan came from New Jersey and she was born and raised in New Jersey, rural New Jersey. [...] At that time women couldn't have blue collared jobs, so she [...] had secretarial skills. She was living in San Francisco and worked in the Presidio [...]. I'm not sure if that's Army, but some kind of military. And she'd been married down there, but she was no longer with her husband when she came to work for the Navy in the '40s in Kodiak. And so she was working for the Navy and her son,



Daniel Boone Reed and Dianne. P-993-16.

John Clayton, was in school with Jim Pearson. So he finished high school in Kodiak and then he went back down to the lower forty-eight. [...] She had a friend in town who was working at this cannery out here, Dominici's, the cannery [...] that you're gonna pass right by when you—, yeah, you gotta go down the trail. I was gonna take you in the skiff, but no

I'm taking you down the trail. And so she came up for two weeks to be the cook because her friend, who was a cook, had to go somewhere. And she met Daniel Boone and they walked over the hill and they went, "Let's homestead." So they homesteaded here.

AG: At this point they were able to just claim land and live on there for seven years or do you know how did that work? They were able to actually—.

DH: [...] Maybe it was living there for seven years because I mean the rules change from time to time because there was that land lottery and I got a lot in southeast that I never did anything with, but that was five years you had to prove up. So I mean it could've been seven years because they didn't actually get their paper work in until the early '60s and they'd been living here since, I don't know, '40 something.

AG: And they'd met in town?

DH: [No], they met out here. They met at Dominici's cannery.

AG: So he was working out at the cannery?

DH: Yeah, yeah.

AG: And it was just kind of like immediately love at first sight sort of situation?

DH: Yeah, yeah and they were in their forties, yeah. And [...] his father was from Iowa and his father had gone up to the Gold Rush [...] on the Seward Peninsula in Candle, which is now a

deserted village, but people still have houses there, people from other villages around and they go there sometimes. [...] That's where he grew up, in Candle, with an Eskimo mother, and he grew up very Inuit fashion except his father was a white guy. [...] They didn't have any money and so the dad dragged the whole family down to Iowa to a farm. So he grew up the rest of the time until he was like eighteen on this farm in Iowa. So he knew a bit about farming and Nan was always totally into growing things so that's what they did. They came over here and they had a huge garden and they grafted different pieces of different kinds of apple trees together. And I still have Dan's map of what is in the orchard which is by Chris and Lacey's cabin.

AG: Wow.



Dianne looks at the Reed's garden plan. P-1000-6-268.

DH: Yeah. They had a huge raspberry patch over there which is kind of all overgrown now, but there's still raspberries. And there's some red currants and white currants in there and gooseberry bushes and this incredible herbal garden right behind the house that had been fertilized with seaweed for forty years. And I took some of the dirt once, and I took it to the co-op extension service with me

when I went back to Juneau and the guy there calls me up and he goes, "I have to talk to you about this dirt. Where did you get this?" Yeah so its kind of like Jeanne's [Shepherd] garden back there.

AG: And what was Daniel Boone Reed's character? What was he like?

DH: You know Eskimos, 'cause I've lived in Eskimo villages, Eskimos really like to joke around, and he was always joking around you. And Nan would get really mad at him and he'd take out his hearing aids so he couldn't hear her and she'd go, "Daniel! Put in your hearing aid." And he'd get this like funny little grin, ha-ha-ha-ha, you know 'cause he thought he was pulling the wool over her eyes. He was actually pretty lazy and he liked to get other people to do things for him, but he did chop with a machete. He would chop the path all the way down to the mail plane beach, but Nan would send him out sometimes to chop and then she would find him like on this hillside taking a nap with the machete by his side. She was the one that kept the place organized.

AG: But it's always known as Daniel Boone Reed's place instead of Nan's place, unfortunately, huh? That's what it seems that people always talk about, Daniel Boone Reed, and don't talk as much about Nan.

DH: I call it Nan and Dan's, I always did.

AG: That's good.

DH: Yeah, yeah, I mean people out here do. Yeah.

AG: I think he has such an iconic name that people are drawn to it.

DH: Yeah, yeah maybe, yeah. Yeah, Nan, she was the mover and shaker behind it all. But I was out here one time in October and we were going, I don't know, deer hunting or something, but so Nan sends us off in his little dory which is maybe twelve feet, this little teeny wooden dory, and she like packs us a lunch and sends a thermos bottle of tea and everything, so we get in and we start off and we went out to Miners Point. We stopped on all these beaches. We went over to Uganik Island. We went way in. We walked down to the lagoon. I don't know how many seal oil lamps we came home with. We didn't get a deer. [...] We were looking for deer. But we were gone for like twelve hours and yeah and I remember being out here getting logs with him when he was eighty-three and I was in my thirties, and I could hardly keep up with him. But then, unfortunately, he moved to town and lost all his muscles.

AG: So they eventually moved back to town. Is that where they—?

DH: Nan died.

AG: Okay.

DH: Nan died and Dan tried to live out here and [...] he just couldn't do it by himself and then he moved to town. He moved into the senior citizens and he met this floozy from Florida. Nan would not allow alcohol or cigarettes. They actually had smoked for years 'cause everybody smoked back then, you know, '20s, '30s, '40s, but they had quit smoking and I think that's what killed Nan, she had lung cancer. I don't think it was like the old smoking. I think it was breathing in Coleman fumes 'cause they cooked on the Coleman stove inside. I think that's what killed her, but so yeah so she died. Dan moved to town and then he married this woman from Florida, daughter of a Pentecostal preacher she was, she was something. And then there was this this guy, Stretch, who was just wonderful. He fished out here with Roger for a couple of years. He's really tall, like six foot eight or something, and so he and Roger and Dan were having lunch and Dan starts telling a story and he

goes, "Well, I was filling Eve's breast one day and I felt a lump." Well, shortly after he married her, she had a double mastectomy and then the Mormons came onboard and they started coming over and helping them and they lived in this little funky house. It was falling apart and the Mormon's like wrapped it with plastic or something and they were always bringing him food and so Dan joined the Mormon church, but he didn't know [about the religion]. He loved to join. He joined everything. He was in the American Legion. He was in the Elks. He just liked to join, you know. He just didn't understand. And so he was becoming a deacon in the Mormon church, so we had to go. Don and Ilva and my boyfriend, Russell, at the time, the four of us had to go. So of course, I'm in Kodiak, I don't have a dress. Well I wore this dress of Ilva's and Ilva's like five foot two and at the time was pretty fat, but I just dressed in it, you know, synched it up at the waist and I happened to have pair of sandals. So we go in and we sit down and it's all testifying and people going, you know, "Oh, I have sinned," you know, and going on and on. And then they call Daniel to give a prayer. Well, he wasn't any good at giving a prayer. It was rambling. And then like church is over and he's like, "No, I'm getting ordained." And then they go, "Well these people can't go in there with you." And he had



Don Fox and John Finley. P-986-9b.

a little fit. He could have fits like a little boy. He had a little fit, and so they let us come in. And we're sitting in these little teeny room. And I don't know if you remember Ken Manthey. He was always on the radio, the Department of Fish and Game. "This is Ken Manthey, of the Department of Fish and Game." And he was like this tall skinny Mormon guy. Well, Dan was

sitting in a chair in the middle. There

were four guys. It was like this square dance move going around like this. Four guys going around him. Ilva and I are sitting on this bench next to each other and we're like—. We knew we could not look at each other or we would be rolling on the floor.

AG: Yes, yes.



Dianne, putting new siding on her banya. P-1000-6-90.

the place, and she could not conceive of Dan ever wanting to leave here. So she signed over the hundred and sixty acres, forty acres apiece to her son and her three grandchildren, grandsons who all lived in Georgia, only one of whom had ever been up here, [...] and then like a few years later when Dan had married the Florida floozy, he wanted money and he tried to sell the place and realized he didn't own it. So he went to a free lawyer and he got eighty acres back. So Don and Ilva and I immediately bought these forty acres here. I've got twenty going up and the next one is twenty going up. I'll show you the map and then this forty acres next door. So the forty acres next door is the property that David [Little] has his house on and the old homestead. And then there's a piece up behind. And so Dan signed it over to us for a dollar so we pay the property taxes. And every year Ilva and I would go, "Oh, [why are we] paying property taxes on this? Geez, that Daniel Boone."

AG: And so you ended up getting this place for a dollar then in the end?

DH: It was so fun and after Daniel just had this little smile on his face. He didn't know. I mean both Dan and Chief were far enough back in Eskimo land that they did not understand. And Daniel, he didn't understand owning property. They did not understand owning property at all and so [...] Ilva and I arranged for [John] Finley to buy the old homestead part and then I'm, I don't remember what it was, Chief comes over, he goes, "Well, Finley's kicking me out." I went, "No, he's not. He came over and told you you could stay here until you die." [...] They couldn't comprehend that. And when Nan got cancer, [...] I think she went to California to check some naturopathic kind of treatment, but it was too late, and she came back and Dan had totally emptied the checkbook. And she was worried that Dan would not pay the property taxes and then lose



Blue Shoals, Dianne's home in Village Islands. P-1000-6-229.

DH: No, no, no. We paid him. [...] We paid three thousand an acre. So we paid him every year. And to me it was like paying social security to my father or something, you know, yeah. And then, oh I think we had one year left, and then Mindy, who worked at the Senior Citizens, calls up Ilva and goes, "You have to stop paying Daniel Boone." We're like, "What?" And she said, "He can't get Medicare if he has any income, so just quit paying him." So we did, but we only had like one year left.

AG: So when was it that you started living in Village Islands?

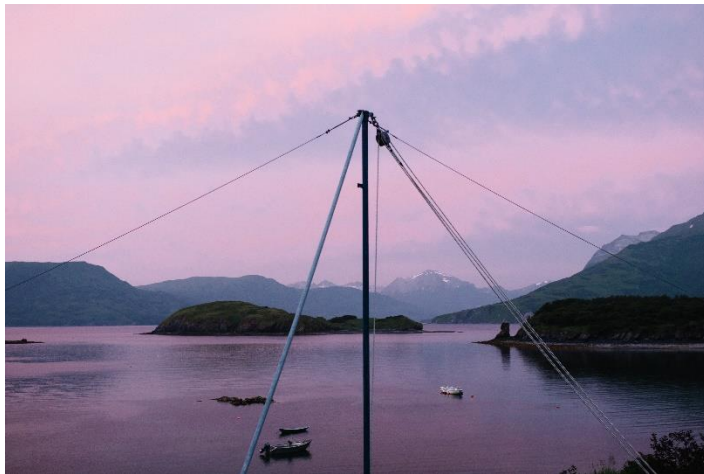
DH: '87.

AG: So we made it pretty much to like '83 or '84 it sounds like.

DH: No, we're up to '87.



Dianne prepares salmonberry pie. P-1000-6-208.



Summer sunset from Blue Shoals. P-1000-6-269.

AG: Oh, we did make it to '87. Okay. Okay.

DH: So '87 I was living in the little red house 'cause Chief was in the new house. I was living in the little red house which was a mess. I had to fix that up first. and then I started going to the old house and I would wear like one of Daniel Boone's full length outfits, you know, coveralls and a bill cap and safety glasses or dust mask because it was so dirty in there.

You'd pick up something and the dust just flies, so I spent most of the summer cleaning that house up and making it so you could live in it, but I basically took all the insulation out 'cause they had so much stuff it was up to the walls. And then it would be cold in there, but so 'cause Finley gave me permission to live there until I had this house built. So I cleaned it up in '87 and then '88 I, what did I do in

'88? I was over at Ogg's for awhile and then I was over here, and my back was out so I couldn't get much done. And I started teaching that year, so I had to leave early anyway to start teaching. I was teaching in the bush. And then '89, the year of the oil spill, I was planning on building my house, but Chris and Lacey weren't really planning on building theirs, but they did because it was the oil spill and Dale was here. "Mule" is what we called him. And then this other guy. So there were like three guys on Chris's boat and he was anchored over there and there was Vern Berns who [...] had the carpentry know how. [...] My friend Pete and I lived in the old house. And there's a little trap shack right down from the lilacs kind of to the right of the old house there. Vern slept there. Chris and Lacey slept in the little red house, and they had a tent up for the kids and the babysitter. And we took turns 'cause they got up early. So they'd get up early and Pete and I would be upstairs in the loft, and they'd get up early, they'd come in boom-boom-boom, they'd make their breakfast, get out

of there by like nine o'clock. Then Pete and I would get up and we'd make our breakfast. Then we'd be over there working. And then meanwhile, they'd come in to make lunch at noon, and Pete and I would go over and make lunch at two o'clock, and the same with dinner. They'd make dinner at five and Pete and I would make dinner when we got there. And then Pete and I would sit up and play music and then Vern would come in and sing with us and drink R&R.

AG: So they were building their cabin at the same time you built your place?

DH: Yeah.

AG: Okay.

DH: And theirs was like boom-boom-boom and it was up really fast, but it was just Pete and I and we didn't really know what we were doing. So we were always jumping in our skiff going over to the cannery, talking to the cannery carpenter, a good friend of mine.

AG: Getting some advice.

DH: Yeah, yeah.

AG: I'm wondering, [...] did you participate in any of the strikes in the '80s?

DH: Seemed like I did, but I can't remember. I'm sorry.

AG: And what would you do in the winter?

DH: Well, when I first started coming up here, I was going to Mexico. I'd go to Minnesota and I'd work. I had this job at a really fancy restaurant, so I'd go to work and make a whole bunch of money ('cause I didn't make any money fishing) and then I'd go to Mexico for the winter and then I'd come back in May and go fishing. [...] I started living in Juneau in the winter and working in restaurants, and then my back went out fishing, and then I went back to Juneau, got my teaching certificate.

Took two years.

AG: And then?

DH: And then I started teaching in the Bush. So I'd teach in the Bush and then I'd come here.

AG: Where at?

DH: I taught in Sheldon Point out in the end of the Yukon Delta. There's Sheldon Point, which is going back to the Eskimo name which is Nunam Iqua, and then there's another little branch where Alakanuk is and then I taught in Emmonak. And then it was so flat there I couldn't stand it 'cause



Tollef Monson. P-1000-8-200.

I'd lived in Juneau and Kodiak. And one day I was just like, "I can't handle this flatness," and I quit. And it was a really good job and I shouldn't have quit. [...] The other teachers were great, but I quit and I took a year off and then I ended up in King Cove, which is interesting, but it was too "white" for me after being in Eskimo land. I mean, you know, a bunch of Ballard fishermen that came up and married Russian-Aleut women. [...] Then I went and got my early childhood certificate, so I spent a year in Juneau. And then I went to the job fair and I ended up in Kaltag, which is Athabaskan land, and "I am Eskimo in my soul," and Athabaskans and Eskimos really don't get along and I understand why after—. [...] Kaltag's a rough village. And then I, luckily, went over the hill to Koyuk in Norton Bay. [...] I only taught there for two years and moved to Anchorage, and taught in Anchorage, but I'd go back and work Iditarod every year, so Koyuk is another one of my homes.

AG: When did you start doing that? With the Iditarod?

DH: '97.

AG: Okay. That's interesting. There's the Iditarod connection with Uganik with Tollef.

DH: Yeah.

AG: Is there other people that are involved?

DH: David's wife, Lisa [Frederic], worked for Jeff King and ran the Iditarod once. And Tollef came up when he was like nineteen, eighteen, nineteen to work for the Osmars. Dean Osmar. Timmy Osmar. They're on the Kenai. So he worked for them and then he wrote a letter to David [Little] asking for a job and David was impressed with his articulation or whatever; he was impressed with the letter and Dean was leaning hard on David to hire him so David hired him and he was wet behind the ears back then, but it's so cool because I've watched Tollef become a man out here and he's—, I just adore him, yeah. So then Tollef went to work for Ed Iten in Kotzebue and Ed has a

place in town and a place twenty five miles out, which is really pretty. They call it Camp. And so he worked for Ed for like five years. He went back to visit this year. They're like really good pals and Ed Iten ran Iditarod, too.

[...]

DH: Yeah, and so Tollef ran Ed's puppy team twice, but when you run a puppy team you have to go slow and then he's like, "I want to be competitive." 'Cause he's really a good musher and so he went to work for Johnny Baker who's a total asshole, but Johnny Baker said, "Just run them," you know, "do your best," and Tollef came in tenth. And the next year he went back to work for Johnny Baker and he quit. And in fact, he like snuck out of town because he was afraid John was gonna beat him up. And that's a whole Iditarod story that's totally not connected to here. [...] I had a boyfriend [...] who I met in Koyuk. So I had this boyfriend for I don't know six, seven years named Terry and he was an Iditarod volunteer, so he got me into it, he got Lisa into it, and Tollef was already in it.

AG: It's a unexpected connection.

DH: Yeah. Yeah.

AG: Tell me, when you first started coming to Village Islands, were any of the canneries within Village Islands still operating at that point or had the Owens operation shut down?

DH: The Owens were just doing home pack 'cause it hadn't burnt down yet. So they were just doing home pack, but they'd had all the stainless steal in there and everything, but they weren't selling anymore. They were fishing for NEFCO.

AG: Tell me about your first experiences with the Uganik cannery?

DH: Oh the first experience was landing there with Fat Ray on the mail plane and Cue Ball showing up and me getting hip boots from him somehow. So I mean it was all foggy, but everybody was always helpful and then when I'd go in there then I got to know people, and Bud, Bud was the boss of the beach gang. He's this big tall kind of guy.

AG: Bud who?

DH: Bud Johnson? No. Ask Ken Reinke 'cause Ken worked for him. Yeah. I mean you can get Uganik cannery stories out of Ken.

AG: Great.

DH: And Dave Shuckman. They both were [...] on the beach gang. And oh, there was this guy named Buck Wheat that had worked there forever and Dean, Ivan Fox's brother, was in charge of the machine shop, and there were all these machinists and there was, you know, we'd try and get over there for mug up 'cause you go in and there'd be all sorts of pastry and coffee and we'd go in for mug up and the fishermen were always welcome. Ivan was wonderful at running that cannery.

He was fantastic and his wife, Jody, worked in the office. Yeah. I mean there were people that came back every year that worked there and then there was the Filipino bunkhouse and they had really good food.

AG: Like what?



Uganik Cannery in operation. P-986-45.

DH: Well, they had Filipino food. [*Speaking to someone else in the room*]: Thank you. Could you get me a cup of tea? Thanks. With two spoons of milk, please?

AG: I'm fine, thank you.

DH: They were just super helpful.

AG: Tell me about Ivan [Fox].

DH: Ivan Fox? Ivan Fox. He was a ball of fire. He directed things in such a straight forward way. Everybody loved him, but you listen to him and he was a little guy, you know. I mean a lot of his employees towered over him, but he was extremely sharp and he could figure things out really quickly. Oh and there was Hal. Hal was the company pilot and he did crash. I can't remember when that was. [...] Hal was always flying people in and out and sometimes he'd take off so loaded with like, "Oh my God. He's not gonna get off the water," but he did. [...] I mean we had what four or five or six tenders coming into that cannery and it was a popping, buzzing place, and Ivan would be everywhere, here, there, and everything. He'd always be calm. He would never get— [*DH speaks to someone else in the room*]. He wouldn't get upset about things. He wouldn't scream and yell. He was just like the perfect boss and he had all the statistics in his head. He died like about a year and a half ago. He was ninety-two. His eyesight was going and he was getting kind of weak, but his family was like, "If Grandpa could have only lived for another so many mouths he would have seen the Sea Hawks win the Super Bowl. He would have been so happy!" But you could ask him about, "Well, what about, you know, 1972?" And he'd go, "1972. We packed so many cases of reds and so many cases of dogs and we packed so many cases of humpies and that was the year that this boat sunk and..." I mean, he had it all in his head. I mean his body was going, but his brain was not going at all. And in fact, I did a paper on him. God knows where those tapes are, but I did a paper on him, and he tells all about his life and he tells all about the herring plant. And there's tapes some place in my garage in Anchorage and I will try and find them. In fact, I think Christy [Allen] might possibly have them, and those guys are gonna be out here soon.

AG: Great.

[...]

AG: [...] When NEFCO sold out how did things change from cannery manager to cannery manager? Or owner to owner?

DH: Oh when NEFCO? You've gotta talk to Deedie about that. Yeah.

AG: For you though was there really any impact?

DH: Well, there was a bunch of fishermen led by Ole. What's Christine's father's name? Ula, Christine?



Uganik Cannery, closed. P-1000-8-168.

UNKNOWN: Christine Harder.

DH: Harder. Ole Harder. Yes, thank you. Christine lives in Juneau. Ole Harder. He was an old fart. When I was fishing over at Trap Six in '81, he came over and he's being real friendly to me, he came over in his boat and he goes, "I'm gonna cork you, Dianne." And I'm like, "Oh yeah, right." I drive my skiff away and he corks me. Set right in front of my net! Shithead. [...] And then his boat caught on fire and they all escaped in their underwear, and I thought that was the funniest thing. And his son, Paul, was always like really sweet. Paul had the *Little Raven* and [I would tell Paul], "I don't care if you set off my king keg. Just don't go cork me," you know. So Paul was like nice and the daughter [...], Christine [was] kind of, I don't know, more like her father.

AG: But he was involved in the cannery at some point?

DH: Yeah, when the cannery closed for a year and then a bunch of fishermen took over the cannery and they ran the cannery and they were all arguing with each other and it didn't work and that fell flat. And then Ocean Beauty took over and then closed it. And now it belongs to some old fart who owns the bicycle shop in Anchorage. And it's like sinking into the ground and it's so sad because that's a bit of history there. I mean it was thriving. It would be so much fun to go to the cannery

when I was just a crew member. It's like, "Oh boy, we're at the cannery. We're gonna go up and get ice cream." It had an ice cream machine and the people that worked in the store were super nice and you know I'd go into the boat locker. I'd always go to the carpenter shop and visit my friend Doug and yeah. It was great when Ivan ran it and then yeah. Then there was the other guy that was there whose name I can't remember right now. He didn't like me 'cause I was going over to talk to Doug and, you know, and he thought I was keeping Doug from working. What he didn't realize is that Doug talks all the time anyway and he still works. Talks to whoever's there, and he talks to himself if nobody's there.

AG: Who was buying the fish when you first started in the '70s?

DH: NEFCO.

AG: Always? Were there?



The *Tidings*. P-995-15.

DH: There was this scab cannery that came in when Keith Moore and I were fishing in this big blue boat and they were giving away Labatt's beer, so we went and delivered to them and that was [APS].

AG: But it was always really the Uganik cannery was the main market for everyone out here, huh?

DH: Yeah. Well, we had two tenders when I was out at the Foxhole and Cape Ugat, and they always gave away beer. So in 1980 when I fished for Don, [...] NEFCO would come out and it was the *Flying Tiger* and it was Christy Allen's husband, Bob, who was running the *Flying Tiger*. And then the guys in the *Flying Tiger* were always just the best, you know. And we had two permits so we'd get two six packs, and then the [APS] tender would come out and then we'd get two six packs from them. So we delivered to two different tenders, and it was Paul and the *Tidings* who was our tender. It was [the APS] cannery in town, so he'd have to go back and forth to town.

AG: So you'd get multiple six packs, huh?

DH: We'd get a case of beer a day out there, but then the guy I had fishing for me in 1980, his wife had told me he was alcoholic and I'm like, "No, no. He just likes to drink beer." Well, he was drinking—. We kept the beer. We were saving it for the Fourth of July. We'd have, you know, maybe a couple, the other three of us that were working there. And then we'd like, "Where's the other beer? We stashed it up here in the creek." And Phillip had been drinking it.

AG: So how did drugs and alcohol impact life out here?

DH: Oh, man, that's a question. I think it was just alcohol back in the early days. I don't think it was drugs. I think maybe marijuana with these younger people, it just kind of like mellowed things out, out here because people used to get like super drunk and trying to shoot each other, knife each other, and stuff, and that doesn't happen anymore. I mean it's so mellow now. The [Solstice] party is just so mellow. I don't mind having it at all. It's like, "What? You smoke? Here's the butt can." I mean there were two people that smoked here. Yeah. Back then everybody smoked [cigarettes]. And I remember being at Floyd's with this guy from Juneau. He came to visit me, Roger Poppy, and we were, I don't know, we—. Oh, I was at Trap Six that year and it was closed and we went over to Bartenders for a party and he used to be married to Nancy. And, you know, I was a skipper, but there weren't other female skippers at the time. So I was there with Roger and Andy and Kay [Povelite who] were fishing with me. I don't know where they were, but Roger and I went to the party and Cue Ball and his wife were there, somebody else and their wife, you know, but I'm talking to the guys because I want to talk about fishing, too. I'm talking to the guys and Roger's like watching what's going on. "We're getting out of here, Dianne." "What? No." And he goes, "We're getting out of here. Those women are ready to beat you up." Yeah, I mean and the Spit was quite a drinking place. I mean there could've been a little bit of pot back then, but I don't know. I mean Val, Mick's wife, that first summer I was here, Val, Mick's wife, and this crazy little Native woman named Margie, who was Lindberg's girlfriend at the time, they decided to beat me up one night after drinking a lot at the bonfire. And I had gone to bed. I'm on the top bunk in this, I mean the Big Timber, there was just a little [shack] when I lived there with Coyote. I mean, he added onto it over the years, but it was just that one little [room], about as big as this. And there were two bunks. Like you walk in and there was kind of like a little desk thing and a wood stove over there and two bunks. I'm up in the top bunk. They came in, pulled me out of the bunk, and started beating on me, and luckily, Coyote showed up. And he, as little as he was, he was really strong. He was really wiry. He

put one arm around each of them and he had a bottle of whiskey and he pulls them down into his bunk with him, and I escaped and ran down the beach and went, I don't know where I slept. Somewhere else.

AG: Wow.

DH: Yeah, yeah and then there was Zing. Zing who— where did Zing fish? Oh, he was fishing with Martha and Johnny Chilliak, [...] [Johnny] was fishing at East Point and he prospected Eskimo Pie. So Johnny Chilliak was an Eskimo from Emmonak and I taught in Emmonak and I met his sister-in-law, and it was like shortly after I'd gotten there and I'm like walking back and forth to school. This woman comes along so I'm like introducing myself to her and she goes, "I'm Linda, and I'm the permit holder" I'm like, cool, you know, and I went, "So you have so and so who's in fourth grade," and I went, "So who else do you have?" She goes, "I might have had more if he'd stayed around." I went, "Who's he?" And she goes, "Well, he got killed in a dumpster in Anchorage." And I'm like, "Is that Xavier Chilliak?" And she goes, "Yeah, how did you know?" I went, "It's Johnny Chilliak's brother." And Johnny died. Johnny was wonderful, but he drank a bit and he was coming back home one day and he fell out of his skiff. They found his skiff going round and round. I don't think they ever found him. He was a really good fisherman, too.

AG: When was that, that he died?

DH: Oh, I got here in '76. It was probably like maybe '79. Yeah.

AG: [...] I know that there were a couple of people that were killed out here. Do you wanna talk about that at all?

DH: Coyote's brother, Danny. So Martha ended up marrying [Ron] Dunlap and after she married him he went to jail for two years for stealing a kicker from the barber in Kodiak, but he was already a felon so they just put him away for two years. And then Martha was like, "Oh, I can't chop wood. Oh, Chief, will you come help me?" And Chief made me go over there a couple of times. It's like, "Grrrr." I hated Martha. And so anyway, Dunlap came back and Dunlap, you know, he is a felon, but he's a really nice guy when he's sober. And he was in the house. Martha was, I don't know, she was already in long term care or something in Kodiak, and he's living out here in the pink house that Johnny built. And Coyote's brother, Danny, came over from, I don't know where he was, if he was at Lindbergs and Dave kicked him out, but he comes over and he's knocking on the door, and Ron's like, "Go away. I don't want you here." And then he found an axe, he started chopping the door

down. So Dunlap shot him through the door and then the troopers came and took Dunlap away and he told the story and they went, “Pfft. Self defense.” So he's back here the next day.

AG: What did you think about all that?

DH: What did I think about it? Oh Uganik, you just never know. You know? I mean, when I first got here, I'm not sure if I you know- I'm sure I had some relatives that had died, but when I first got here and the *Deep Sea* went down it's like, “Whoa!” People my age and younger, you know. [...] This is a tough country. People can die up here. Yeah. I mean it wasn't going to keep me away from this place. It's just something to—. And then the Nickerson's. Nan would always like drive people off the beach if they'd been drinking and I was living in the old house and the Nickersons came over and Robbie, he was like a little puppy dog. He was really sweet. And Danny was a nice guy except when he was drinking. And they came in and they had that, what was his name? The guy that killed him, with them. He was their crewmember and they pulled in on the running line. And you can't really see from that house, so I come down from the house to the beach and I take one look at them and Robbie's like, "Oh Dianne. Oh, can we come in?" and I go, in my best Nan voice, I went, "Not if you've been drinking. You boys come back when you're not drinking.” And yeah, that was scary. Right after that they got murdered.

AG: Did you suspect that something was wrong when they went missing?

DH: Oh yeah. Figured they were murdered.

AG: Why?

DH: ‘Cause that guy was so weird. Yeah, and their mom came out. I was over at Dan [Ogg] and Sue's [Jeffrey]. Have you talked to Dan? Sue would love to talk. I don't know about Dan, but [...] I was over there in ‘88 and here comes the skiff with this young couple and Nickersons' mom, and they'd just been killed. And she's like, “I know they're here. I know I'm gonna find them. The permit's in my name, so I'm here and [...] this young couple's gonna fish.” And then Cue Ball went out there and he went right to it. [...] I don't think he knew, that the guy told him or anything, I think he just [...] it was an intuitive thing to go look in this kind of big hole in the rocks on the cliff and there they were stuffed down there with a sleeping bag on top of them. They were wild. Yeah. Keith Moore took me. Yeah, I saw a lot of wild things with Keith Moore. Yeah my first two years, they were pretty wild. And I hooked up with the Foxes and, you know, Don and I like to drink beer,

but we don't wanna—. You know, we give each other shit verbally, but we're not about to hit each other or anything.

AG: Yeah. David Little said that he tried to avoid places where he might get stabbed or shot.

DH: Yeah, that's good.

AG: What was it like to be a female skipper? Of course, it's not like you can compare it to being a male skipper, but were there—?

DH: Well, my first year was—. Oh well, I wasn't a skipper with Sammy. We were partners. [...] So I had the permit in '78. Chief and I were partners. '79, Sam and I were partners. '80, Don was—, it was his site. So he just told me where to fish and by that time I knew you tied to the rock and put it out, you know. I knew how to do it. So that was fine. And Philip was fine 'cause he'd never been up here before. So he was fine. [...] He would stand in the door of the tent frame and go, "It's the thirty-eighth day of the gillnet hostages," because it was Iran Contra hostage year, and we'd be listening on the radio and they're talking about the hostages. [...] The season was open for forty days straight, yeah. So that was fine. I think the only person I ever had trouble with is Andy Povelite [...]. Kay and Andy I hired. I said, "I'm giving you one crew share," because I was renting Trap Six from John and Vann. Seventeen and a half percent. Fifteen percent to Roger for the permit, and then I went, "I really can't, you know. I'm paying for everything, so I really can't afford to pay more than one of you." So I was paying them fifteen percent together, but they weren't there in June and there were only two openings in June and Karapinsky came and fished those with me. And you heard about Karpinsky, right? Oh, you have Chris tell you about Karapinsky. And then Andy and Kay came out and fishing usually didn't start till like July. July sixth it would start and then it would be, you know, five day openings, and so Andy and Kay came out and I went, "Okay, I'm the boss so I will go out every morning and we get up at five." And [...] one of them was supposed to come in from their, whatever they were sleeping in. I think it was a tent. And Kay would come in and I'd go, "It's Andy's turn." She goes, "You go wake him up." And he had those big blue eyes. Did you know Andy? Oh he had these giant blue eyes and this mop of blonde hair and he just rolled those eyes. I was like, "Asshole." So Kay and I would go out, you know, five, six in the morning. We'd come in at

two in the afternoon, no lunch made for us, and we'd be exhausted and he'd go, "I think we should change the setline and we should move it over here," and let's do this and let's do that. I was like,



Reed homestead in Village Islands. P-776-57.

"Oh, I could just kill you, you asshole. You slept till eleven. We've been out here busting our balls." Yeah. [...] He was resentful of me as a woman being in charge. [...] And then the next year I was back to no permit.

AG: Do you sense that that's changed?

DH: People are pretty mellow now. Yeah. I mean, you know

Adelia [Myrick] runs a site. She was so worried about it. She was like, "I can't do this." And Bryan [Ellsworth] had, I don't know how long Bryan had been out here, 'cause he bought Daylight [Harbor] from David Little and he was just a cute little twenty year old at the time, but he'd been fishing for a few years and he and Adelia are like really good friends and we're both telling her, it's like, "You can do it." I'm like, "Adelia, I did it before there were like rollers." I mean that's why I have a bad back because I was always being macho and busting my back. I mean I'm trying to carry two hundred pound anchors when I weighed a hundred and twenty, you know. And Adelia's great. She's so wonderful, yeah, and Tollef hired two girls this year.

AG: [...] Tell me about the inspiration to purchase and to live at Village Islands.

DH: Oh, this was my home with Nan and Dan. They were like my parents [...]. I guess Nan had died and my boyfriend, Russell, who had fished out here a few years with me and who I went sailing with, he was out here and we came up to the barn. I got all my stuff out of the barn because we were having to leave here because the place was gonna get divided up with these relatives from Georgia and we loaded all this stuff in my skiff and we're going out of here and I am crying. And Russell goes, "If it means that much to you, we've gotta buy this." [...] I mean Nan and Dan were like my parents and this was my home and I didn't wanna leave.

AG: And so you made it happen, purchased the land slowly and—?

DH: Well, that was when Dan went to the free lawyer. Dan went to the free lawyer and got this land back. Yeah.

AG: From who would've been his stepchildren?

DH: Yeah, yeah, but he didn't know them. It's just the one grandson who came up.

AG: [...] What do you see as being some sort of major events that have shaped Uganik over the past decades that you've lived here?

DH: Maybe the kids growing up and taking over from their parents and keeping it a family affair and it being more of like family sites. Yeah. Way more family sites than a bunch of guys that Slim found in the bar sending out here to fish, a bunch of bachelors. I think that's what's changed it, so it's a nicer place.

AG: Any other major kind of events that you can remember that does stand out?

DH: Well, the cannery closing. Deedie and Jim had two crew member die. Did you hear about that?

DH: You should ask Tom Kouremetis. Tom Kouremetis can tell you that story if he'll talk about it. Brook will.

AG: Okay.

DH: Yeah. Brook will tell you about it. They went out there. There was like a big focus on safety after that.

AG: And what changed?

DH: Coast Guard came out here and made sure everybody's got the proper equipment in their boat and life jackets and flares and a buoy you can throw out to rescue somebody because those guys went down. Nobody had ever died setnetting before and they weren't even drunk. I mean there's so many drunk setnetters that have cruised around this bay and never died.

AG: Yeah.

DH: I'm getting tired of this.

AG: Oh yeah that's fine. This has been great. Thank you. Is there something else you want to share before we turn this off?

DH: No, but if I think of something I'll let you know.

AG: Oh good. Thank you.