

Roy Madsen

Transcript of an Oral History Conducted by Anjuli Grantham at Kodiak, Alaska On June 11, 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.

This project is made possible due to the contributions of project partners and sponsors, including the Alaska Historical Society, Alaska Humanities Forum, Alaska State Council on the Arts, Kodiak Maritime Museum, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, Kodiak Public Broadcasting, Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council, and Salmon Project.

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 following transcript is nearly a word-for-word transcription of the oral history interview. 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.

Citation

Roy Madsen, interview P-1002-3 by Anjuli Grantham in Kodiak, Alaska, 11 June 2015, (Kodiak, Alaska: Kodiak Historical Society).

Key Words: Bear guiding, Mush Bay, Uganik Bay, Bristol Bay, Kanatak, Madsen family, salmon fishing, fish traps.

Cover photo: Roy Madsen, photographed in his home on June 11, 2015. Photography by Breanna Peterson for West Side Stories. P-1000-4-18.



Mush Bay's location within Uganik Bay.

Oral History of Roy Madsen

[... Brief conversation between AG, RM and Breanna Peterson (photographer for the project) about family photographs on the wall

AG: So today is June 11, 2015, and I am sitting here with Judge Roy Madsen and we are conducting this interview as part of the West Side Stories Project for the Baranov Museum. So, Judge Roy, I guess all interviews have to begin with, could you please tell me your name and when and where you were born?

RM: Yes. My name is Roy Madsen. I was born in the village of Kanatak on the Shelikof. It's on the peninsula opposite, approximately opposite, Karluk. It was abandoned about 1945. It no longer exists.

AG: And when were you born?

RM: March 15th of 1923.

AG: What was your family doing in Kanatak?

RM: Well, my father and mother and my older sisters moved from Kodiak. There was oil drilling going on there. They were exploring for oil and my dad opened up a general merchandise store, and he also had a trading post because he was buying furs from locals; and he had two four-horse teams that he leased to the oil companies that were drilling and they would use them hauling materials up over to Lake Becharof from Kanatak and they built a road up through there [...] I don't know what year he moved over there, but it was before I was born because my two sisters, or my three older sisters, were all born here in Kodiak and one of them was two years older than I and so we lived there until my mother became ill with tuberculosis and my dad moved the family back to Kodiak, and my mother died when I was about four years old. I think we moved back here when I was about three.

AG: So do you have any memories of Kanatak?

RM: No, I have none.

AG: Now I'm curious, if it was across from Karluk, it makes me wonder if the activity in Kanatak had any impact in Karluk. Do you think that there was?

RM: I don't know. I don't know.

AG: So when was it that your family first became engaged in work on the west side?

RM: Actually, probably about 1929.



Mush Bay bear camp, ca 1930. P-990-74.

AG: And what was that?

RM: That was bear guiding. My father established a bear camp in Mush Bay.

AG: Do you know how he selected that location?

RM: I have no idea.

AG: Any sense?

RM: We never talked about it.

AG: Were there a lot of bears there? Do you think that was the reason?

RM: Oh, very much so. The bear camp at that time we hunted, of course, Uganik Lake and the South Arm and the Northeast Arm and up by the Village Islands and going up into Little River. Up to Little River Lake and through there and that's the areas that we hunted. Never hunted Uganik Island, but all the other hillsides in the greater Uganik Bay and Uganik Lake.

AG: Did your father purchase the land from someone?

RM: No. He just established a camp there and, unfortunately, it was open. He could have filed on it, but he never did. Then twelve years later, I think the bear refuge was established and it became part of the bear refuge so he couldn't file on it anymore.

AG: I see.

RM: 1941, I think was it. [...]

AG: So when your family first started going out there, who was in the general area?

RM: The Danielsons had a saltery right about [...] a little less than a mile up the bay from where the bear camp is in Mush Bay, and it was Katie Danielson and her husband and her daughter, Margaret. Those were the only people in the Mush Bay area. Over in the Northeast Arm there were two canneries. One of them was up at the head of the bay and that was the San Juan Fishing and Packing Company and further out was a fish plant called Robert's that was also a salmon cannery. And I think there was one person that lived across from the canneries. I don't think I ever met him, but he was an old bachelor that lived there and I never saw him. And then over in the Village Islands there was nobody living on the Village Islands at that time. There was a cabin there that people used when they were trapping, but there was a small cannery that was called Josie's that was owned by Josie and her husband. [...] His last name was Sandvik and it was a hand-packed cannery where they put up the salmon in four-pound cans, hand-packed, and so it was operated by just the two of them and those were the only people that lived in the Uganik area at that time.

AG: Did you visit the Sandviks' much?

RM: Oh yes. We used to go by when we were going up into the Little River area. We'd stop in there and, of course, we'd go into the cannery and we went into the San Juan Cannery sometimes to pick up the hunters that were coming on the bear hunting trips and we'd picked up odds and ends when we needed groceries and things like that.

AG: So I'm curious of the hand-pack at the Sandvik cannery. Did they have fishermen or did they do the entire operation themselves?

RM: I think that the Danielsons had a setnet out on, was it Miners Point or East Point, I can't remember the name, but just outside of the Village Islands. So which one is that?

AG: [West Point]

RM: [...] Okay, I think the Danielsons had a setnet out there and they probably delivered to the Sandviks.

AG: [...] Did you go through the canning line? Did you see the operation as it took place out there?

RM: No, no we just went to shore. We were intent on getting our people up to where the bears were (*laughter*).

AG: No dilly dallying (laughter).

RM: No. No.

AG: Well, maybe backing up. Could you describe your first trip out to Mush Bay?



Roy, Thelma, Rose Elizabeth and Alf Madsen at Mush Bay in 1929. P-990-18.

RM: Yes. I was ten years old. That was probably in April of 1933.

(Phone rings and brief conversation follows regarding the interruption)

AG: Okay, please continue.

RM: Alright. It was April of 1933 and that's the first time that my dad took myself and my three older sisters and my brother, who is twenty at the time, so he had gone out with my father before. He'd been going out with him for the last four years I guess, but this was the first trip for myself and my sisters. And there was no boat harbor down here so [...] it was open beach and we had a twenty foot skiff that was built by my father's brother-in-law, John Hubley, and loaded all the tents and groceries and stoves and tent poles because there wasn't any spruce trees over on that side of the island so we had to cut 'em here. [...] Then we had a smaller skiff about a sixteen-foot and my brother ran that one. It had a ten-horse motor on it, outboard. The twenty-foot was rigged up with [one] fourteen-horse and two ten-horses on each side. Got that all loaded up and we took off and we had to time our arrival at Whale Pass to go through with a fair tide because this only thirty-four horse power couldn't go through bucking the tide and so we got everything loaded and my dad putmy sisters and I down with the groceries and everything else and put a tent over so that we wouldn't get wet going over. And my older brother ran the sixteen-foot and ran with us, and we started off from Kodiak and managed to get through Whale Pass, and we pulled into Dry Spruce Bay and to the Bare Island where the Lorenson family had a fox farm. That was probably the

halfway mark and we all stopped there and got out and Mrs. Lorenson gave us some hot soup and fresh bread and we stretched our legs for an hour or so and then we journeyed on around Outlet Cape and down into Terror Bay and through Uganik Passage to Mush Bay, about a seven and a half hour trip. And once we arrived there, beached the skiffs and started unloading, the first thing my dad and my brother did was put up the cook tent and put the stove in and got a fire going, and then my dad started to fix us a hot meal and the rest of us started unloading the boats and carrying stuff up to the camp site. And my dad use to fix what he called slumgullion and it was scrambled eggs with hamburger and beans. It got all mixed up together which was a nice nourishing hot meal, and then we'd proceed with putting up the other tents and had one for the girls, and the cook tent, and one for my dad and I, and one for the guides and took care of all of those things and that was our first day at the camp.

AG: Could you maybe describe the Lorenson's fox farm?

RM: Not really. [...] They had pens. Of course, I can describe the Lorenson family, the parents. And then they had a son, Rudy, and two daughters. One of them was later, well, the son, Rudy, moved to Kodiak in later years after World War II and one of the daughters, Frieda, was married to Emil Norton, who was superintendent of King Crab, or not King Crab, but the processor the Kadiak Fisheries. He was the superintendent of their cannery and then I think in Alitak and then when they started doing King Crab here, he was located here. The other daughter I have no idea what happened to her. She probably got married and left. Moved out. But Rudy was about the same age as my brother. Frieda was my age and then the other daughter was about the same age as my two sisters, Rose and Thelma.



Rose, Charles, Alf and Elizabeth Madsen with Eli Metrokin and unidentified man. P-990-21.

AG: So you had established the camp. Could you maybe describe the appearance of the camp at Mush Bay?

RM: Well, we had graveled spaces where the tents were and everything was pretty much prepared for them. There's a small stream that came down and we got our water from there and also used it as a cooler for all of our things that had to be refrigerated, like meats and butter and things like that. I think we had two tents on the main part and then we had up on a hill, where we had an outhouse, we had two tents for the sportsmen that came and their wives, if they brought their wives, and across the creek on the other side we had a tent for the guides and packers and so we had probably five tents, at least.

AG: So did you have to bring out mattress pads and all of that?

RM: No, we had sleeping bags and we had cots that had canvas. You'd fold them out and they had canvas and so we just put our sleeping bags on those.

AG: Any other furniture in the cabins? No, not the cabins, the tents?

RM: I don't recall anything else. No.

AG: So maybe just a kerosene lamp and a bed, huh?

RM: Yes, a kerosene lamp. Um-huh, right, and the stove. Of course, they had stoves in all the tents. That was my job mainly keeping the stoves supplied with wood and kindling and keeping them going. The day after we arrived at the camp and got everything set up, my father and my brother and I would take off in one of the skiffs and we would cruise over into the South Arm and around there and pick up a log to use for firewood. In those days all the canneries had fish traps and they were made with pilings that were brought up from Washington. They were nice fir pilings, twenty, thirty feet high or long and made some wonderful firewood. [...] The canneries would at the end of the season would take the traps down they would pull the pilings and take them back to the cannery for storage, but during stormy weathers some of the pilings would pop up and drift away so there was quite a bit of driftwood around. And that's what we used for firewood. And we'd hook onto one of the logs and tow it back to the camp and saw it up and so that we had plenty and wouldn't have to take the time when the hunters arrived. This was all in preparation for the people that were coming on the bear hunts and we'd have everything ready for them when they arrived and then we would go into the cannery and then in early spring, the steamer, would come in there with supplies in preparation for the salmon season and the hunters would be on that and we'd pick 'em up and bring 'em back to the camp and that's when this hunt started.

AG: Could you maybe describe the division of labor?



Mush Bay cookhouse. P-990-17.

RM: Division of labor. Well, my oldest sister [Rose] was the head cook and next in line to her was her assistant and the younger one [Thelma] was a dishwasher. I was the person that chopped the kindling and carried the wood up and sometimes sand from the beach or gravel that needed to be replenished around the camp site and things like that and kept the water buckets full of water and, of course, my oldest brother was then either a guide or an assistant guide or a packer and [...] I had an uncle, Eli Metrokin, that also was a guide and one of my mother's cousins, Fred Kvasnikoff, was a guide and they would take the hunters out and be gone all day on the hunts.

AG: And you guys would guard the camp.

RM: We'd be in charge of the camp, right. And occasionally my sisters would walk down to the Danielson's. There was a trail down there from our camp to their place and visit Katie and Margaret.

AG: Could you describe the Danielson's place?

RM: It was, I think, like a shed-type building that was out over the water, just like a typical like cannery, but it was much smaller, of course. They had a very nice home there that was up on the shore and a huge, huge vegetable garden that they planted every year. Then they had a smaller cabin that they use to rent out to the stream watchman. In those days they had markers that were to prohibit fishing too close to the streams and they had a stream watchman that was there in the summertime to be sure that people didn't fish inside those markers and he lived in that cabin, but he wasn't there that early in the spring.

AG: Do you know what brought the Danielsons' out to Uganik to begin with? Do you have any idea?

RM: I have no idea. He was a Scandinavian or Norwegian, but just like my dad and a lot of other Scandinavians that settled around here. At that time there were quite a few canneries or salteries, you know. That was very common thing, I think, put up salt fish. There was one in Gibson Cove and there was one over in Monashka Bay [...] and I'm sure there's many others around the island that were.

AG: Do you know, were they cod or salmon salteries?

RM: They were, I think, cod, but mainly. Mr. Danielson also [...] had a large net and when the herring came in to spawn he would put the net out and circle a school of herring and it was kind of like a pen that he would pen them in. Then when the halibut schooners came up, he'd scoop out herring so that they had fresh bait.

AG: Wow!

RM: Of course, the penned-in herring also attracted a lot of cod fish so that they were around on the outside of the pen.

AG: What a smart idea!

RM: (laugher) Right!

AG: It's really interesting. So when you would visit the Danielsons' were they actively doing salt fish at that time?

RM: Not that I recall. No. No.

AG: [...] I'm really interested in the boats that your... was it your uncle?

RM: No, my father's brother-in-law.

AG: Okay. Okay. Could you describe him and his boat building enterprise?

RM: Well, he lived up near where the All-State Insurance, right behind there where Cactus Flats is, that was actually his property right there. And I don't know exactly where he built the boats, but of course, we didn't have a boat harbor in those times so the shore line, the beach, was not too far away. It would be down there where Sutliff's is and very close around there was all beach and I don't think I ever saw the place where the boats were built, but he built several for my father. He built... I don't know how many skiff's we had. When we'd start hunting Terror or Karluk Lake, we had at least three or four sixteen-foot skiffs there and then we had the ones in Uganik and in 1935 he built a thirty-two foot, like a cabin cruiser that had a gas engine in it and that replaced the open skiffs that we use to use. I was looking for a picture of that. I know I've got some around here somewhere. I hope I can put my hands on 'em.

AG: Were his boats distinctive from other Kodiak boats?

RM: I don't think I've ever compared them to the others. No.



Watercraft used at Mush Bay and elsewhere by Madsen Bear Camp. P-990-20.

AG: [...] Was he a local man? Did he learn to build them locally?

RM: Oh, yes. Actually, I don't know when he married my stepmother's sister, but he originally lived in Unga, or their family moved here from Unga, but she was a local. She was a Chernoff like my stepmother was and one of her sisters and I don't know too much about him. Though I did grow up with the rest of the family. I knew his widow very well for many years.

AG: And who was that?

RM: I can't think of her name, but they had a number of wives and a couple of them were about my age and so I used to spend a lot of time [...].

AG: You mentioned that there was a trapper's cabin in Village Islands.

RM: Yes.

AG: I'm curious about were there a lot of people that were trapping on the west side when you were younger?

RM: Course I wasn't there during the winter seasons so I don't know who occupied that, but I enjoyed when we'd go ashore there. That's a beautiful place, and I always was taken by the beauty of the Village Islands. I forgot to mention that I think I mentioned to you before that occasionally we would stop at Packer's Spit and course there we could sometimes see bear up on that point there between Mush Bay and Northeast Arm and there was one cabin or one building, small building left from the APA cannery out on the spit and when we'd go ashore there I enjoyed walking up and

going into this building and it had been, I think they'd used newspapers for insulation I guess and there were still newspapers from the 1890's on the walls of this building like from the San Francisco newspapers and I enjoyed going up there and looking at those and reading about the things that were taking place at that time.

AG: Do you remember anything else about Packer's Spit?

RM: No.

AG: What can you tell me about the San Juan Cannery? What was it like when you would visit?

RM: Well,in those days they didn't have very mature refrigeration so they would bring in sheep and chickens and things like that so they could slaughter for their meat and so they had them penned off, and every once in awhile a bear would come down and snatch some of the sheep or lambs or something like that and so the cannery's superintendents were always happy to see us come around. They appreciated bear hunters to keep the bears in control. (*laughter*)

AG: I bet. Were there a lot of people around?

RM: Not really that early in the season. There's a few that, you know, well they'd bring in the crews like the pile drivers and they would take the pile drivers out to the fish trap to pound the pilings in and that was a long tedious process. and so that kinda crew was there and of course their maintenance and getting the cannery prepared for the salmon season. By the time the salmon season opened up the hunting season was over and we'd be gone. So it was just the crews like that. And I might say that every cannery had a fish trap and I think there was one on Uganik Island and I don't know where else. Many, many others all over. Every cannery had fish traps in those days and they were scattered all over on the capes just about everywhere.

AG: Could you maybe describe one that you saw when you were younger?

RM: I've got a picture of one that I actually when I was seventeen years old I was employed by the San Juan Fishing and Packing Company as a trap watchman and I have a picture of that. That one was done at Perenosa on Afognak.

AG: Tell me about that summer.

RM: Well, this was years later. I had wanted to be a deckhand on a cannery tender and so when I was seventeen I asked my dad to contact Mr. Henderson who was the superintendent of the San Juan Fishing and Packing Company. I asked him if he could get me a job on a cannery tender and so my dad did and I was employed and I took the mail boat to Uganik after school's out and arrived there and worked in the cannery and the general maintenance painting, preparing everything, and then while they're building the fish traps [...] after they got all done, instead of being put on a salmon cannery tender I was sent out to the fish trap with an older man who knew what he was doing because obviously I didn't (*chuckling*), never having I been exposed to one before. And so much to my disappointment that's how I started my summer job. I'll give you a picture of the trap. It had a little cabin that's smaller than this room. Maybe sixteen by eighteen or sixteen by twenty with two bunks in it and a stove and this is thirty feet off the water and fifteen hundred feet from the shore and our job was to keep the lead, which ran from the shore out to the fish trap, clear of

debris like kelp and driftwood and things like that and, of course, not only that, but the seals and sea lions would sometimes come in and so we were issued an old blunderbuss called a .45-70 which was a pretty hefty weapon and one of us would have to go out, and this might be thirty feet off the ground, over the water, and I'd sit down, put my legs under one of the piling that on the walkway and shoot the sea lion or the seal. Of course, we couldn't get to 'em before they sank so we'd have to wait until they floated and came back to the surface. Then we'd have to go down, get in, we had a skiff, a codfish dory, that was tied to and there was a ladder that went down to it and we'd get into that and tow it out to sea and release it [...] I know the cannery tender came out and brailed the trap once or twice and then eventually I was replaced and I did get on a cannery tender after all. It was about a fifty-five foot boat and we traveled around from Uganik to Karluk and picked up the fish from the setnetters in Uyak and way places between there.

AG: What was the name of the tender?

RM: Sonia.

AG: And that was a San Juan?

RM: Yes.

AG: When I think of fish traps and the watchmen I always thought I was because they had to protect them from fish trap pirates stealing the fish. That was not the case, huh?

RM: (laughter) No, we didn't have any problems with those.

AG: I'm curious because...

RM: Those were floating traps I think in southeastern.

AG: Okay. I'm curious because at this point when you were working on the trap, how did you feel about that because I know a lot of Alaskans were very much against fish traps.

RM: Well, that's long before the... This was the cannery owned. The canneries owned a lot of the boats that the fishermen fished on and it was like the company store. You know that was employment and didn't see any reason to criticize. The people that fished independently were satisfied and you didn't hear too much about that, but I think the human cry arose because of conservation. [...] Of course the cannery were making the money and it was all going outside of Alaska because they were all owned by outside interest. Of course, they were not concerned with conservation. By that time, you know, the fishery on Karluk which had been one of the world's greatest was totally depleted.

AG: So when you were a watchman then it was not really a political issue at that point?

RM: No, no. It wasn't.

AG: How long did you end up spending out there as a watchman?

RM: Probably, maybe a month.





Roy holding the same photo in 2015. P-1004-21.

Roy, Elizabeth and Alf Madsen at Mush Bay in 1929. P-990-57.

AG: [...] Would you walk to shore?

RM: No.

AG: Oh my goodness.

RM: Never got ashore. No. We had that codfish dory in case a storm came up. Sometimes if the pilings weren't secure they could pop up and be washed away. That's where we got our firewood from, you know, for the bear camp. And if it got too, well we could always take the dory and row ashore and there's a little cabin there that we could stay in until the storm abated, but we never had to do that.

AG: Would they have to then rebuild the cabin every year or would they just lower it down and store those too?

RM: No. No, they could just pick it up, you know, when they pile driver was there. It was like a crane. It was a permanent structure that was stored at the cannery during the winter time and just bring it back and put it on after the trap had been built.

AG: Wow. So you spent a lot of time reading?

RM: No, actually I don't think I had anything to read, but the gentleman who I was with taught me how to play two-handed Pinochle. So I did learn something.

AG: Lots of cards, huh?

RM: Right. (laughter) Card playing. right.

AG: Well I, I would love to get back to hearing about the season when you were tendering. Maybe we should return to Mush Bay first. Could you maybe just tell me what you remember about when you were ten that first season after you set up? Do you remember some of the people that were out there or some of the hunts that transpired?

RM: Yes, as a matter of fact, one of the pictures that I have given you is a picture of myself, my sister, Elizabeth, and my brother standing in front of the bear that was shot in Terror Bay by a Dr. Moore from Louisville, Kentucky and he kept in contact with our family up until I think my father died in 1954. This was what, '33 to '54, twenty-one years. Something like that. That was a huge bear. I can't remember. I have no recollection of the others. That one I do.

AG: What sort of people would come up and participate in these hunts?

RM: Of course, this was the doctor. One of the people that came up had a tool & dye factory in Detroit and his name was Coslin. And then there was a banker from Joliet. I think Joliet, Illinois that came up and I have a funny story about that one. That was probably seven years after my first trip. My father had also camps and took hunts up to the interior of Alaska, Rainy Pass, and on one of the occasions he brought back a Siberian husky for me. And it was pure white with blue eyes, and of course, it was a sled dog because it belonged to one of the people that trapped up there in the area so we lived in town and our fence was made of cordwood, stacked cordwood, that was drying all around our backyard and this dog having been raised in the wild. Our neighbors had chickens and cats. Every once in a while a chicken would come into our yard and the dog would grab it and kill it or the neighbor's cat. He'd kill that and so it got to the point where the neighbors weren't too happy, but the dog was perfectly gentle, but having been raised in the wild. So this banker came up for a hunt and my dad was telling him about the dog and the problem and he said, "Oh, well, I've got a huge estate and I'd like to take the dog back to my daughter and it can have chicken anytime it wants (laughter) and so when he left he took the dog with him. And years later [...] I'd come back to Kodiak and established my law practice and I was appointed to the Board of Regents to the University and [...] I was at a meeting in Anchorage and we were selecting a new president for the University and we had reception and the lady who was a publisher of the Anchorage Daily News at the time, I was introduced to her, and she said she happened to be from Joliet and I said, "Well the

only thing I know about Joliet is..." and I explained this, about this, and she said, " That was my dog (*laughter*). That was my father and that was my dog." (*laughter*)



AG: My gosh. What was the name of the dog? Do you remember?

RM: Bilco.

AG: Bilco.

RM: Right.

AG: You must have been quite upset that your dad gave you dog away, huh?

The Kodiak Bear in front of Griffin Memorial Hospital, Kodiak. P-990-54.

RM: Well, I understood. We always had dogs and we usually had Chesapeakes because they were retrievers and my brother was a great duck hunter so had to have a retriever. This was not a retriever.

AG: That is quite a coincidence. (*laughter*) So then, how long would the season last when you first were out there and what happened at the end?

RM: Usually the hunts lasted for three weeks and we'd go from about tenth or eleventh of April until about the first of June because by that time the bears were starting to lose their hip, their heavy winter coat, and they have a tendency to rub against the alder bushes and everything gets spots where there's big patches where there's no fur and so they were not really trophies anymore after that so by the end of May we were usually through.

AG: How would you break everything down and get back to town?

RM: We just put down the tents and pack up everything and just head back. You didn't have to take the tent poles apart, but we didn't have any place to store, you know, the camp stoves and the utensils and the tents and things like that so we usually brought those back.

AG: For how long did your family have the Mush Bay Camp?

RM: My father had it until World War II and then the guiding ceased during the war, and after the war was over he-I told you that we had this thirty-two foot little cabin cruiser that John Hubley had built. My dad bought a forty-two foot Chris Craft cruiser after World War II and used that for traveling back and forth and he still had the Uganik camp and then he bought a larger boat, a sixty-five foot. That was a nice little yacht and used that for I guess up until about 1949. Then he bought the ninety-two foot yacht, the *Kodiak Bear*, the III, and he didn't have to have the camps anymore because the yacht could sleep twenty-two people. So there's plenty of room for the sportsmen and the guides and everybody on that and so then my brother took over the camp. He had his own business and he took over the the Uganik camp and the Uganik Lake and the Karluk Lake camp and my dad moved his operation over to Uyak and so he hunted Uyak and Zacher Bay and Spiridon Bay and I think around that area.



Fred Kvasnikoff fleshing a hide. P-990-49.

AG: Was there any competition among guides for territories?

RM: Some. Once in a while. But there were a few people. [...] a couple locals that use to take guided hunts out, but they had smaller boats and it was really not competition as such until I had come back and I started. I got my guide's license about 1947, and I guided with my dad until 1949 and that's about the time that Pinnell and Talifson moved into the Southend, and we were at that time we were also hunting Karluk Lake and they started to come up into the Karluk Lake area so that was a little a bit of like infringing on what normally had been open, but there's no restriction like there are nowadays so you could hunt anywhere. Anybody could hunt wherever they wanted without permits or anything like that. You just had to have a license to guide.

AG: Did anything change when the refuge was established?

RM: Just prohibiting filing on any land within the refuge.

AG: What did people think about that?

RM: It was quite a controversial thing because back in those days we had several people that were trying to get into the cattle raising business and course there was a conflict between the ranchers and shooting bears and wanting to protect their cattle, and I think that was the controversy not so much about... At one time they even talked about building a fence across (*chuckle*) to fence off one end of the refuge and let the ranchers have the other side. Of course, that was probably not practical by any means.



The bear trap. P- 990-8.

AG: I'm curious. So once a bear was killed, what happened to the hide when it came back to camp or the animal I should say 'cause at that point it's the whole thing, huh?

RM: Oh, we'd skin 'em out in the field.

AG: Okay.

RM: And we'd skin 'em right down to... so we'd cut off the knuckles and so leave the claws in there and skin out up to the nose and then we'd take the skull and, well, that's another thing I didn't mention to you, [...] but that was my job when I was a youngster. They called me the "headman" because my job was to take all the flesh off of the skulls. That meant scraping and went down to the bone taking out the tongue and the eyes and everything and it was a tedious job that I'd scrape, scrape, scrape, but sit there hour after hours scraping those things off. And then the guides had to flesh the hide which meant that you had to take all the fat off right down to. You couldn't get too close because then the hair would start falling off. You had to get the fat off and take the ears right up to the tip. Had to turn them inside out and the nose and the claws right down. And after all that was done they'd stretch

the hide out and put salt, rock salt, all over it to draw out the moisture and roll 'em up and keep them that way for, you know, until we're ready to take off. And then just before we'd take off we'd take them up and shake off the moisture, the liquids and salt, and put fine salt down and then roll them back up [...] We'd have to bring them back to town and take a month for them to get to the taxidermy so they wouldn't spoil. Of course if they did then the hair would start falling off and it would be ruined.

AG: Could you share the story with me again about when you trapped the live bear?

RM: (*laughter*) Yeah. Kodiak was really just a village in those days and in the winter times there wasn't much to do in between the vessels that came only once a month. So there wasn't too much excitement around town, but the big meeting place was the barber shop downtown. And he had a big coal stove in the barber shop and my father and other local men would gather there to talk and during one of those occasions they got to debating whether or not a mature bear could be trapped alive and, of course, the consensus was that would be impossible. It couldn't happen. But my dad said, "Oh, sure. It could happen. It could be done." And they'd pooh pooh that idea and so when this fellow from Detroit, Coslin, that had the tool and dye business, came up and my dad broached the subject with him and he built a trap out of steel bars and shipped it up to Kodiak. And so we



The bear within the trap. P 990-12.



The bear, released from the trap, running away. Note the men on top of the trap. P-990-75.

took it out to the Uganik and put it up at the Uganik River at the outlet of the river and it was there. And there was a little space where you could put a sheep and so I got one of the sheep from the cannery and put it in there and the bears never came near that thing so it just didn't work and it sat there for quite a few years and three or four, five years, I don't know. Eventually they decided it wasn't gonna work. So one winter my dad decided he'd build his own trap and so he got some timbers that were probably ten by tens and some steel pipe, one-inch pipe, and drilled holes in the bottom of one of the timbers and put the pipes down and built a trap with a door and it had a door you could lift up and it had, what do you call... you put the...

AG: A latch?

RM: No, not latch. It was something like a... I can't think of a word to use it, but it had little holes and put the-

AG: Like a pin?

RM: Yeah, like a pin [at the bottom of the door] and that was attached to a wire and the wire went back down and into the trap at the back end of the trap. And so that winter

after the trap was built. We used to get bacon in slabs and we had 'em hanging in our attic. [...] We we had lots of bacon rinds, not that we didn't use those, but we saved and all the grease. In those days we could use bacon grease to cook with [...] We had so much of it that must have had at least a five gallon or more bucket full with some bacon rinds and everything. That spring we took the trap out to Uganik and we put it over across the bay from the camp in Mush Bay and the bacon rinds were attached to the trigger of the trap and smeared bacon grease on all the bars and a few days later, what was not days, but in the middle of the night, we heard this horrible roaring sound and when we got up in the morning there was a. This was about two miles across the bay. I don't know I've never measured it, but it was on the opposite side of the bay. There was a bear in that trap, a full grown female with three cubs on the outside and that was one mad bear. And so we went over there and the cubs, of course, didn't pay too much attention. They were more concerned about their mother and so we got up on top the trap with our guns ready, then lifted up the door, and the female had been gouging the timbers, and just right down there were forty-penny spikes or something, ripped right down to those things



Roy as "Head Man" at Mush Bay. P-990-56.

were exposed eight inches. She'd been chewing on the wood. The female [...] was on her belly and she start crawling and she got to the door of the trap and finally realized that she was out and took off and it was a steep mountain, went up there, and she took off like a shot going up that mountain and the cubs right behind her and we took pictures and she was out of sight in ten minutes and over that mountain, gone, and so my father's point was proven and we had pictures to show it. (*laughter*)

AG: I can imagine bacon grease. You're lucky some hungry fisherman didn't end up in there, huh? (*laughter*)

RM: Right. Yeah. (laughter)

AG: So when was it that you first started guiding?

RM: After I got out of this Navy in 1947. I came back to Kodiak. I got out in '46. I just got out a year after the war was over. I had enlisted for six years. I still had time to serve when the war was over, but when I got out I came back to Kodiak and got my guide's license and started guiding.

AG: And did you guide then from the Uganik camp or from Karluk or all over?

RM: From Uganik and then Karluk and Uyak.

AG: Was there any question in your mind about that or did you always want to? Is that something you always wanted to do?

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REGISTERED-GUIDE LICENSE				
THIS IS TO CERTIFY that ROY H. MADSEN of Kodiak, Alaska , is hereby licensed as a registered guide and is authorized to guide nonresidents in hunting game animals Alaska Guide Districts No. 2-3-4 , Alaska, for the period ending June 30, 19.50 Description: Age, 26 years; height, 5 ft. 6 is other distinguishing characteristics, *(1) Resident citizen by *(a) birth, *(b) KARMARKANAK *(2) MAGNA FARAMAR *(3) MAGNA *(3)				
	Juneau July 1 Z. Z. J.		Countersigned by L CLARENCE J. CLARENCE J.	Issuing Officer Officer

Roy's registered guide license from 1950. P-990-24.

RM: Well, definitely. I enjoyed the lifestyle [...].

AG: What about it?

RM: Just the freedom and, of course, from the time I was just a young teenager I used to walk all the time and climb Pillar Mountain just for pleasure. You know, there weren't any roads at that time. And so you know where the ravine is down where that comes right the middle of town, I'd go up one side, down the other. Course I wasn't the only one. Friends of mine would also do the same thing that we did. Hike, hike, hike all the time and [...] we'd hike up to here, Mill Bay, which is three miles from town and I never thought anything of it, of hike over to Monashka. There wasn't any road. We'd go over the mountain and on up the other side and it was what we did, you know, for entertainment and pleasure and so I enjoyed that lifestyle.

AG: And decided that bear guiding was a good way to?

RM: Well, yeah. My father was in it and my brother was in and I was just following in their footsteps, but, unfortunately, it didn't go very well with my then wife who, I had gotten married when I was in the service and she [...] was from a big city, Philadelphia, and Kodiak had a population of about fifteen hundred by then, but it was still pretty remote. [...] Instead of once a month, we had a ship every three weeks. That was improvement. But we didn't have any paved roads. Yeah, and so I'd take off for guiding in April and come back towards the end of May Then I'd go up to Bristol Bay where I had an uncle and I fished up in Bristol Bay in the summertime and then I'd come back to town and I'd longshore for a month or so. Then I'd be going on the fall hunts and that lasted until the end of October. Then I'd be back in town from November until April, something like that, and she got to the point where she just when I took off for the spring hunts she'd go back to Philadelphia to be with her family. Then that went on for about three years

and got to the point where she decided she wasn't gonna come back at all and so I had to make some changes in my life. That's when I decided to give up guiding.

AG: I see.

RM: I went to law school.

AG: Because it was difficult for the family life, huh?

RM: Yes. I had two children and there she was left alone with them. Course that's the same thing as a fisherman's life I guess. Pretty much like that.

AG: Yeah. I was thinking earlier that the timing of the spring hunt is so well suited for salmon fishing.

RM: Not for salmon. No, it's too early.

AG: Well, because you could finish and then come out.

RM: Oh right. Right. Well I did. But I had grown up at a time when Bristol Bay was the big money fishery, you know, and I'd see the guys come back from Bristol Bay just loaded with dough and of course I had the family. That's where the money was so I decided I'd fish out there.

AG: And [...] at that point then, they were still sailing?

RM: Yes, yes. Right.

AG: Who did you work for?

RM: Well, [...] I had an uncle here and he would go up to Bristol Bay to fish with his brother and so he hooked me up with a man who lived up there and trapped in the wintertime and fished in the summertime and I was what, twenty-three at the time, and he was about seventy, but he was an old sailor that had [...] a master's license both in sail and steam so he was well-qualified on the water and so I fished with him.

AG: What was his name?

RM: John Idavan. He was Estonian, but he had little bit of problem with alcohol and he always had a fifth with him when we'd be going out, you know.

AG: And who was your uncle that set you up?

RM: My uncle was Walter Metrokin. And he was married to a gal from Naknek and so they lived up there and he was a winter watchman at the cannery called Pederson Point and so that's where we fished out of.

AG: Your partner was the watchman at Pederson Point?

RM: Yeah.

AG: Okay. Or Walter Metrokin?

RM: What?

AG: Who was the watchman? Was it Walter that was?

RM: My uncle, yeah. Right.

AG: I see. [...] What cannery did you fish for in Bristol Bay?

RM: It was called Hungry Pederson's. That was the name of the cannery because it was at Pederson Point.

AG: Was it Libby-McNeill-Libby or?

RM: No. Libby's had their cannery. Alaska Packers had theirs. There was one called Red Salmon. This was in Kvichak Bay. There were canneries all over the place. It wasn't any of those. It was just called Hungry Pedersons and was at Pederson Point.

AG: And you were in one of the double-enders fishing?

RM: Yes. Right. I'd go up there before the season started and, of course, the ships couldn't come into the canneries because the water's too shallow and so they had to lighter everything ashore. And so I'd longshore when they were bringing all the provisions and everything, the cans and whatever they needed ashore. I'd longshore before the season opened [...], and then when [...] the fishing was over I'd longshore again when they were loading the steamers with the pack, the season's pack. So I'd do that and then I'd come back to Kodiak and longshore here.

AG: So maybe we can talk about when you worked on the tender. Was that just one season that you?

RM: Just one season.

AG: Okay.

RM: Yeah, because the next year I graduated from high school and I got a job as a deckhand on a tug boat. They were building the Navy Base at the time and so I worked on the tug boat.

AG: So tell me about your season aboard the Sonia then?



The Sonia. P-990-7.

(laughter) to their disappointment. (laughter)

AG: I could imagine.

RM: I really enjoyed that. Going out to pick up the fish from the setnetters and I got to meet people from the villages like from Karluk. In fact, one of the persons that I met later married my aunt and that's the one that lived in Karluk. So it was kind of a life long association with that. It was great and other people that lived in the villages I got to know after I came back to Kodiak and opened my law practice, I still got connections there. Enjoyed it and at the end of the season, the crews taking the boat back to Seattle, they didn't keep 'em up here for the winter, and so I asked the superintendent if I could go. My job was done. I asked him if I could go south with the tender and I had never been out of Alaska and I was seventeen years old. The crew were all pretty young. They were University of Washington students and so it was a young crew and that was my first experience going across the Gulf of Alaska down to the states.

AG: What was your first impression?

RM: The crew was real interested in how I would react when we got into Puget Sound and they were all watching me to see how I would react [to it]. Was just like I expected

RM: Yeah, here's a small town boy, never been out of Alaska before. I wasn't impressed. And then I got on a bus. I took a bus to Portland and checked into a hotel and then the next day I went out to visit my sister who was in treatment for tuberculosis about seven miles out of Portland in Milwaukie, and so I managed to get around by myself without (*chuckle*)... I don't know how I figured out how to do these things, but I did.

AG: Resourceful.

RM: I guess. [...] I think I made like four hundred dollars that summer and I went down on the tender and went down visit my sister for a couple of weeks and back to Seattle and took the steamer back home and spent all my summer's earnings.

AG: So not much different than today?

RM: (laughter) That's right.

AG: I'm wondering before you said that Bristol Bay was a place where people came back with a whole lot of dough. What was considered to be a good season back then?

RM: I have no idea. All I know is that I remember as a kid seeing the Bristol Bay fishermen. [...] The B&B Bar was down about just across the street from the Baranov Museum now on Mission Road, and then right across the street from the B&B Bar was the Belmont Bar, and I remember guys coming back from Bristol Bay and they'd be in one bar going to the other. Money falling out their pockets, totally oblivious to everything. [...] By then, in those days, they had to go by ship from Kodiak. We didn't have airplanes, of course, and so they'd take a ship from Kodiak to Bristol Bay. It was called the *Star* was the boat that use to go from Seward to Kodiak with the mail run and freight and sometimes, and not only sometimes, but I think quite often, there'd be card sharks that would be on that and go up there and the fishermen were coming back, a lot of them would come back broke. They'd lose all their earnings [...] playing poker.

AG: Do you remember any cannery workers?

RM: No.

AG: Okay.

RM: No.

AG: I'm curious, onboard the Sonia...

RM: Yeah?

AG: Where was your territory for picking up fish?

RM: From Mush Bay to Karluk.

AG: And I thought that most Karluk fishing was APA. Is that true?

RM: Well, it wasn't at that time. No. That wasn't, no. I guess the APA boats were obligated to deliver to the cannery. These were the orange and black boats. They're all distinctive in color. Just like they were up in Bristol Bay, they had their distinctive colors. But I guess [...] setnetters were free to deliver.

AG: What year was that?

RM: 1940.

AG: And who was setnetting? Who would you pick up fish from?

RM: Well, Gus Reft.

AG: Where was he?

RM: Karluk. He was from Karluk, but it was in Uyak. Actually, it wasn't in Karluk. It was in Uyak and other people from Karluk that [...] I can't remember the names of.

AG: 'Cause I'm curious in finding out more about what places and who was setnetting that long ago. 'Cause I know that it became much more popular in the sixties and seventies. So it'd be interesting to maybe next time I come, I can come with a map and you can kind of show me what you remember of places.

RM: I really can't. I don't have any recollection. I know that Gus had beach seine at Karluk for the canneries there and I think when they were doing that they probably delivered, too. So Alaska Packers and Larsen Bay, but this was setnetting in Uyak area.

AG: And did you also pick up seine fish? Seine like from purse seiners?

RM: I can't remember. I think we probably did. Yeah.

AG: [...] The San Juan boats. Were they green, or I don't remember. Someone told me before, but.

RM: I can't remember. [...] I don't think they had a fleet that they had fishermen fish, but Port Bailey did and Alaska Packers did and I think Grimes over in Ouzinkie had some boats that they had owned and let people fish, but those were the only three that I can think of.

AG: [...] Could you kind of just describe what you would do on the tender? What's the day in the life of a tenderer in 1940?

RM: Well, traveling. A lot of it was traveling, of course, and picking up the fish in those days. Things have changed considerably since then, but both the fishermen and us on the tender used... You know what a fish pew is?

RM: Okay, they pick up the fish by poking it through the head and throwing it on and course we didn't have any refrigeration and we didn't have any water or anything like that so it was loading the fish into the hold of the tender and my job when we got back was pewing the fish out into the receptacle for the cannery and generally tying up the boat and untying things. I didn't do too much of the wheel watches or anything like that.

AG: Because there wasn't the hydraulics and so now all of the fish is loaded in a little net in front.

RM: Right. Yeah.

AG: [...] How did you keep track of the number of fish?

RM: Well, we counted them.

AG: You just count one by one, huh?

RM: Right. Yeah, they had a counters and they kept track. Then my job, of course, was to clean up all the slime, wash it down and clean it up.

AG: I've been wanting a pew for the museum's collection.

RM: Oh. Oh.

AG: So if you know of one let me know.

RM: (laughter) There must be one around here somewhere.

AG: There must be.

RM: It seems like it hasn't been that long ago.

AG: It's true. So would you then [...] go back to the cannery every night or did you?

RM: No, no. No, I'd be gone two or three days.

AG: And would you go back to the cannery and eat after a couple of days or did you?

RM: No, no. We had a cook on the boat and we ate our meals on the boat. I never had to. Maybe when a [...] shower or something like that or wash clothes. That's it.

AG: I'm curious because I think it's really interesting that canneries were segregated, and so I'm wondering if you have any memories of the Filipino mess halls or the white mess halls and how that worked out?

RM: I do recall in Larsen Bay, they had the Filipinos and Orientals. They even have an Oriental graveyard you probably know there, and it was true up in Bristol Bay. They had a Filipino mess hall. They even had an Italian mess hall. They had a lot of Italian fishermen from the Bay area, and they had their own.

AG: And I could imagine that it was just so normal. No one had any problem with it or?

RM: No, no, no, no.

AG: What did you think of it?

RM: Never thought about it. [...] The one thing that sticks in my mind though is that all the Alaska fishermen, if you were an Alaskan and you're fishing a boat, it had a big A on the bow. So we were segregated from all the rest of the fishermen. They could spot you and know that you were from Alaska.

AG: Why do you think that was the case?

RM: (*laughter*) Because at one time they didn't allow Alaskans to fish. The canneries didn't allow them to. It wasn't till sometime much later. It was all Sicilians, Finns and people from San Francisco, Astoria, places like that and they didn't permit the native people to fish, but when they did then we were targets. Yes, it never happened to me, but I heard stories about the outside

fishermen setting and so that they would drift across the Alaskan person's nets and tangle them up and things like that. Sometimes that got pretty nasty.

AG: [...] It sounds like, if my timing is right in my mind, that you might have been doing the guiding and the fishing around the time when the Karluk Reservation started to be established. Do you remember that at all?

RM: No, I don't.

AG: 'Cause I know that that was a big problem down there, the fishermen kept on corking the Karluk Natives. They would just pretty much set their purse seines from the beach almost in the area that was usually for native beach seining. It's a good method to make people angry, huh?

RM: That's right. Yes. Yeah. (laughter)

AG: (laughter) So you mentioned that your mother died of TB and then your sister was sick with TB.

RM: Yes.

AG: Could you maybe talk about that problem in Alaska?

RM: Well, my mother died when I was four. My older sister became ill when she was probably about twenty or so. I don't know. My other two sisters and myself all had tuberculosis when were kids. I didn't know it because we outgrew ours, but I was tested and tested positive for it and have scars on my lungs from tuberculosis. So it was pretty prevalent in those days when I was growing up.

AG: What other illnesses where common?

RM:. Drowning, if you call it an illness. And I think infantile paralysis.

AG: Yeah, seems that TB was a very big problem in Alaska.

RM: Very big. Yes. Right.

AG: How would you deal with medical concerns out at Mush Bay?

RM: We didn't have any. The same thing when I was growing up. We didn't have a doctor here in Kodiak. [...] If you got sick you had to go to Seward and if you were real lucky you got there before you died. And we had a dentist that used to come once a year and that was it.

AG: So you would just deal with any first aid issue in the field and hope that it was okay, huh?

RM: That's right. Yeah.

AG: Where there any injuries or deaths that took place when you were out at Mush Bay or Uganik Lake or?



Charles Madsen with bear cubs. P-990-43.

RM: No. No. Oh, this gentlemen I told you about that built the bear trap, he was gone out years later went out on another trip. I wasn't with him, but they had just got out. He came back for a second trip and died of a heart attack before they got to the camp. Other than that there were no illnesses.

AG: How lucky.

RM: Yeah, right.

AG: I'm wondering if you could maybe describe the character of your father?

RM: [...] He was a typical old country Scandinavian. I grew up with old country Scandinavians. The fathers of some of my friends were also Scandinavians and they had left home when they were quite young like my father did. He left home when he was fourteen and sailed before the mast, you know, for a couple of years and they eventually made their way up to Alaska and he was a tough person having, you know, survived on a sailing ship. [...] Then when he came to Alaska he actually had a cousin that was up in Nome, so he went to Nome and got involved in the fur trading business instead of the- he got there after the gold rush was over so he got involved in the fur trading business and he sailed [...]. He leased a sail, a boat, and he use to sail over to Siberia and trade with the Chuckchi Eskimos and up and down the

Siberian coast and he married an Eskimo gal up there. Learned to speak the Eskimo language and he lived up there for something like thirteen years I guess and made quite a bit of money. [...] hunted walrus and polar bear and he took a Austrian nobleman out on a hunt up there for what were some polar bear and took them over to Siberia and this gentlemen had his own yacht and he brought his own personal attendants with him and then after they got through there and came back down to- he wanted to hunt on the Kenai peninsula, so my dad guided him down there, did that, and that's how he really got into the guiding business. [...] He had a contract with some company down in Seattle to provide walrus hides and I think they were getting something like seven cents a pound for walrus hides so he used to go out, kill, just like the buffalo, and kill the walrus, take the tusks and the hides. And he had a number of Eskimo hunters that he employed to work with him, but he was old country, stern, very proud to be an American. He did speak Danish and German and seven Eskimo

dialects and my mother spoke Russian and Aleut but he did not permit anybody to speak anything except English in our house 'cause he had a very strong accent and he didn't want us to have that and so I have a mental block as far as learning any foreign language. I've never been able to even though I would go with my step-mother to visit her families, you know, and they'd speak Russian and I could pick up a word here and there, but I never was able to speak it or understand it really. I know just a few words. Probably most of them that you're not supposed to know. Like most kids. (*laughter*)



AG: It seemed that he did so much to promote Kodiak as a place of tourism, huh?

The Erskine dock in Kodiak, with the sign that Roy describes to the left of the photo. P-990-34.

RM: He was a one-man Chamber of Commerce for Kodiak. He's the one that dubbed it the "Emerald Island" and "Home of the World's Largest Bear." Those were his descriptions of Kodiak, and he had a huge sign down there where the ferry terminal is. It used to be the WJ Erskine Company, a big, big sign there displaying Kodiak bear and things like that when the passenger ships would come in.

AG: So he must have had a bit of showman in him?

RM: Oh, he did. He did, right. [...] During the winter time he'd travel to sportsmen's clubs and associations all from the west coast to the east coast of Chicago, New York and things like that to show movies of the bear hunting and things like that to promote the business.

AG: You know when we were talking last time, I was struck that in the end I guess there's not that much of a difference between the reality TV, bear shows of today and the way that Kodiak was promoted in your father's time.

RM: (laughter) Right. True.



Eli Metrokin with Charles Madsen. P-990-52.

AG: (*laughter*) It's almost a continuation.

RM: Only it's true reality instead of phony like so many other reality shows that you see are about Alaska. I can't stand to watch 'em.

AG: I'm wondering could you describe your uncle, Eli Metrokin?

RM: He was really something. [...] He must have been very much like his father. My grandfather, Walter, was on one of the first trips into Katmai after the eruption and Novarupta. [...] I guess it was called the Griggs Expedition that went in about 1916. They came to Kodiak and they were trying to get somebody to go with them as a packer. And my grandfather had shot off one of his arms at the elbow one time on a hunting accident [...] So he had just half an arm and they employed him as a packer and guide. The other locals were afraid to go. They wouldn't go, but he agreed to go with them and there's a book that was published called *The Valley* Of Ten Thousand Smokes. I don't know if you've seen that or not, but there are pictures of him in that and he's got a

backpack on his back and they're going up into the valley and one of the authors of the book, I guess, was talking about Walter. He was called a Creole, I think, in that 'cause of his native blood, and he said that he kept them in stitches with his stories talking about his bear hunting and [...] one of the things that I thought was the most amusing when they were talking about him he said that one time he was asked to take [...] a party out guiding to run after a bear and he said, "It was two white guys and an Englishman." (*laughter*) But my uncle was quite a bit like that because he was a jokester, and he always had something to say that would make you laugh and I really enjoyed being around him. And years later when I came back and opened up my law office I used to go down to his house every Friday afternoon after I got off work and have steam baths with him. For years I did that. I just enjoyed his company so much he was just a great person.

AG: What a lovely tradition.

RM: Yeah. It was.

AG: That's really nice. Did you know the Helgasons'?

RM: Oh definitely. As a matter of fact, you know, we used to stop occasionally at their place in Terror Bay and then in later years after I left, my dad had wanted me to take over the business for him and he thought that this would be the thing, you know, to set me up in business, and I instead went down to Oregon. And in later years he had more business than he could handle, so he set Clara's husband up in the guiding business and referred business to him and them, and then so that's how he really got started in the guiding business.

AG: [...] What is the story about the murder that took place at their house?

RM: I don't know anything about that.

AG: [...] Maybe it was Clara's parents that were killed because they were gold miners in the early forty's, but it's one of the stories that I've been meaning to research some more.

RM: I've never heard that. I know that there's a gold mine shaft there, but I've never heard anything about a murder. There's also a shaft where the Munsey's Camp is, so something like that in Uyak Passage and in there. If you've been there.

AG: Uh-um. I'd like to go. Do you remember much about [...] people gold mining when you were younger and heading out?

RM: Just beach mining. I used to hear about some beach mining on Seven-mile Beach, you know where that is just [...] inside of Harvester Island,[...] but apparently it wasn't enough to make a living off of or anything like that. And course there's one down the Ayakulik, [...] there's a mine shaft there and the one in Amook Passage and the one in Terror Bay where Helgasons' are. Those are about the only three actually excavations that I know of. Otherwise, it was beach mining. But back in the sixties and seventies there was a couple of people that were almost always prospecting and filing claims, but I didn't think anything ever came of those.

AG: Yeah, I think it's one of the persistent hopes. (laughter)

RM: Yeah, right. Right.

AG: I'm curious, also, were there any other guides that you worked with that really standout clearly in your memory as being some remarkable characters? Or maybe you could describe your brother, Alf.



Alf Madsen with his first bear. P-990-30.

RM: Well, Alf was actually a half-brother. He was born in Denmark and raised by his grandparents until he was about twelve and then he became of age and so they sent him to this country to his father and so he started off with my dad and got his own guide's license and then went off on his own and was very successful. And I think one of the pictures in there's a record bear that was hanging on the Uganik camp when he took it over. And he also had the camp up in Ugashik between the upper and lower Ugashik Lakes. [...] He had a camp there where he took people out for moose and caribou, and they had a camp up in Uganik Lake. He had a cabin there. He had one in Mush Bay. He had a cabin on Little River Lake, and he had one on the Sturgeon River outside of Karluk. So he was very successful, dedicated, enjoyed the lifestyle very much. [...] Learned how to fly and so he had his own planes. He had two. He had a Piper Super Cub and a Cessna 180, and unfortunately, well that was what killed him. He was killed in his Super Cub. [...] When I came back I'd go with him up to Uganik Lake or Little River or over to Ugashik and just to go fishing and spend time with him, and we really enjoyed each other's company.

AG: Now we're living in this era in which people always are talking about sustainability and conservation and I'm really curious, back in the thirties and forties and when you were really working in the guiding industry, was there any sort of conversation about such things or any sort of awareness about issues of conservation?

RM: Oh, definitely. When my dad first started in the guiding business here on Kodiak, the people that he took out were entitled to shoot two bear. By the time I got involved in it, it was limited to one, and unfortunately, I think there was a time, also, I told you about the conflict between ranchers and the conservationists, but the state hired, you know, pilots to go out and kill bears that they

thought were, you know, killing cattle and I don't know much about that. That was quite a controversy. They'd fly through and just shoot the bears. So there's been two sides of the conservation issue. The state was involved in one. Course now it's pretty much the federal government that controls it, at least on the Refuge. And I think it's way, way too restrictive now. I mean [...] on Refuge land, I don't try to keep up with it anymore, but I understand that [...] you can't even shoot deer in the Refuge. I don't know [...]. I'm not in those things anymore.

AG: Well is there anything else that we have not spoken about yet that you'd like to mention? 'Cause I know there's probably some questions that I have not asked.

RM: One of the pictures that's in there, I think, is gathering sea gull eggs, and I'm sure you're familiar with the little islands just towards the South Arm. There's a couple little islands there where the gulls nest. I use to enjoy going over there because we'd go for the spring time, April, May, and collect seagull eggs. And there's lots of sand dollars on those beaches of the river. I use to collect those things by the dozen, and course we used the seagull eggs in hot cakes and cakes. I don't think I ever ate 'em like we eat chicken eggs, but I enjoyed it and at one time [...] one of the people that went out with my dad, I wasn't here at the time, it was during the time I was living in Oregon, but on one of the trips he took a fellow that was, I guess, running the Kodiak Baptist Mission on this trip and it happened to be the time of the nesting and I, somewhere, I haven't seen it for a long time, but there's a picture of they had a wash tub full of seagull eggs that they brought back for the Mission.

AG: I was going to ask you about camp food. You mentioned the slumgullion. Is that what it was called?



Gathering sea gull eggs in Uganik Bay. P-990-50.



Judge Roy Madsen in June, 2015. P-1000-4-6.

confidence in banks after the crash. [...]

AG: [...] Okay, is there anything else that you would like to share right now?

RM: I can't think of anything else.

AG: Okay. Well, thank you. I'm going to turn this off.

[End of Transcript]

RM: Right.

AG: Were there any other favorite foods that you would have?

RM: No, no. It was great clam digging right there at the camp. You'd just walk down at low tide and collect all the clams you wanted, and of course, with Mr. Danielson's net out there it was easy to catch halibut. And use to go up into the Uganik River and fish dollies, and there's supposed to be steelhead. I never caught a steelhead in the Uganik River, but many people have floated the river have said that it was excellent steelhead fishing. I use to fish for dollies in the river and enjoyed that very much.

AG: Was Mr. Danielson alive when you were first going out there?

RM: Yes, Yes.

AG: Okay.

RM: Yes, he was.

AG: What sort of man was he?

RM: Well, Old World Scandinavian who survived World War I and had no