

IDITAROD TRAIL INTERVIEW - EDGAR KALLAND

September 15, 1980
Kaltag, Alaska

BLM Interviewer:

Tom Beck

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INTRODUCTION

INTERVIEW:interview with Edgar Kalland of Kaltag, Alaska. The interview was conducted at Edgar's home in Kaltag on September 15th, 1980. The interview was conducted for the Bureau of Land Management by Tom Beck.

Edgar was born in 1904. Edgar's father came around the Horn from Newfoundland to Alaska and ran a small roadhouse and store on the Yukon River in what is now known as Kallands. In 1912, he traded the roadhouse in for a homestead in Tanana where Edgar grew up. Edgar ran the mail team from Tanana to Nenana for the NC Company. His primary responsibility was to carry around the NC auditor to the various stores. Edgar later worked on steamships for the NC Company as a deckhand and a fireman. Edgar worked for the NC Company until 1977 when he retired.

Edgar participated in the 1925 diphtheria serum run from Nenana to Nome. He ran in the first race and ran the segment from Talavana to Manley Hot Springs. Edgar is still active running a small store in Kaltag.

(Off record at Log No. 0140)

(On record at Log No. 0167)

INTERVIEW

Q How did you get that job with the NC Company?

A How?

Q Yeah. Do you remember how you first started?

A I was working -- well, it was in the fall of the year when a fellow by the name of Jerry Garth, who was the auditor in Tanana, and in charge of the store also, NC, and he told me to go out and get nine dogs out of this bunch of dogs out there. And Johnny Palm and I went out and I picked out the dogs for me, took nine dogs. And I trained them and worked those dogs and trained them. And then I had to take Jerry from Tanana, I had to take him all the way up to Nenana, and the we'd stop at the Hot Springs. He'd check the books at Hot Springs, the NC books, then went up to Nenana to check the books there. Of course, there was a good road (indiscernible - background noise). And got up to Nenana and checked the books there, and we'd leave and went into Fairbanks on the train. Fairbanks to Chatanika on the train, then we went on to Circle by trail. From Circle, went down to Fort Yukon 'cause we had -- that's how I got in on this here.

After we come back, we made the trip up down from Circle back to Tanana, got in there Christmas Eve. Then we went down, after New Year's, went down to Ruby, checked the books down there. And I come on back up in, it was 50, 60 below, so the horse teams weren't running at all, and they weren't taking the horse teams out of the barn. So then they'd call him and tell him that he could take the team and get the mail tomorrow morning at the post office and head up the river to Nenana, and just make the dog team -- or the horse team run

for 25, 26 miles a day. Well, that was an easy run, a roadhouse, two roadhouses a day. One roadhouse, rather, overnight, one in between.

Q Where were you going? You were going from Nenana.....

A I was going from Tanana to Nenana.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A I got up to Minto where Johnny Campbell's roadhouse, and about 5:00 o'clock in the evening, I got a telephone call. There's a telephone line all the way along from Tanana to Nenana, and from Tanana clean down to Unalakleet, maybe further, using the old telegraph line.

Q Mmmmm.

A Which was (indiscernible), if it's still in working order. And Johnny told me, he says well -- or not Johnny, but Earl Parsons told me -- wanting me to go back to Talavana. I thought it was Minto. I said, 'Gee, I just left there this morning. I'll be in Nenana tomorrow with the mail.' Then I says, 'I'm not going back tonight.' Then he told me what was wrong, or what was going on. I didn't know anything about this diphtheria or serum run. And then he told me about it. And I says, 'All right. Then what do I do with the mail?' He says, 'Just put it in the roadhouse, leave your mail bill. We'll take care of it from there.' I says, 'Okay. So I had something to eat, hooked up the dogs, and headed back to Talavana, 20 miles. Got back there, and Harry Martin and another man met me there, helped me unhook the dogs and put them away and feed them, water them. Went in and had a big supper again. Mrs. Martin had the best roadhouse on the run.

Q Where was that, at Talavana?

A Talavana, yep.

Q Why, did she had the best food?

A She had the best food, and she wanted to see you eat. She didn't want to see you nibble. If you were nibbling, she wanted to know what was wrong with her cooking.

Q Yeah.

A But she had a good meal. It was a dollar and a half a meal, but I didn't pay it; of course, the company was paying mine. And so I had something to eat, went out and looked at the dogs again, went in and went to bed. Got up the next morning and Shannon hadn't arrived yet, but he arrived just about noon, or a little after noon, it was around there, after I eat. Yeah, that's right, after we had dinner, he come in. I hooked up my dogs, then took this patch of serum, which had already been brought into the roadhouse and warmed up a little, and headed for Hot Springs. And that's how I got in on that serum run. Then I just, you might say, took my time from there back to Tanana, two days.

Q That was a cold night, huh?

A Yeah, but I didn't notice it. 50 below, 56 below, I didn't notice it.

Q You know, other people have said that too, that it wasn't -- it didn't seem like it was that cold. They weren't even dressed all that warm.

A Well, we were dressed. We dressed warm. But we didn't have the clothes we have now. Heck, I run around light now in the

wintertime; don't go out very long, but gee whiz, when we was going at that time, well, we were dressed up. At that time, we didn't have any feather jackets or down. But we had a parky, just a regular parky, that came down below our knees. That seemed to -- the heat couldn't get out. It stayed inside, the body heat stayed right inside of it.

Q Hmmm.

A They was real warm. You'd really be surprised.

Q How about your footwear?

A The footwear, oh, you was always running or moving, you know, your feet would never got cold.

Q What did you wear?

A I just wore moccasins. Moccasins, and I had about four pair of socks on, heavy socks, three pair, something like that. And insoles, sometimes grass. They're all good.

Q Hmmm.

A But then what the heck -- what do you notice when you're 20 years old? You don't notice a thing. I know I didn't. I never -- but I think about it now, gee whiz, how did I survive? I go out now in 25 below or 30 below and I'm cold. At that time I wasn't (laugh).

Q Yeah. So how long did you run the mail then?

A I just only -- you know, I made a trip or two after that too for them, but I didn't carry it too often. They had their regular mail carriers running, but I like -- I was just an extra team to carry -- really to carry the auditor around.

Q NC auditor?

A NC Stores, NC auditor, Jerry Gause (ph).

Q Tell me about Bill Shannon. Was he the manager at Tanana?

A Nope. He was just an ordinary trapper, I guess, and he had a dog team. That's how he got it, the first trip, first run. I knew him when he was in the army -- Tanana.

Q They called him Wild Bill?

A Yep, Wild Bill Shannon. Yeah, I knew him there.

Q Yeah, I was just up at Ruby. I saw Harry Pitka's grave up there.

A Mm hmm (affirmative). Yep, old Harry.

Q Then you started on the rivers, or when did you freight on the river?

A Oh yeah, I worked on the steamboats from 1923, summertime. I was only about, what, 18 years old.

Q Did you pilot....

A No, I was decking, decking for quite a while, decking for about five summers before I went firing.

Q Was that a tough job, firing?

A No. And I fired for, what, 10 summers I guess. All with the same engineer.

Q Who was that?

A L.M. Dow, Leon M. Dow, D-o-w. He was a very good man to work with, or for, either way you want to say it. I was really his right-hand man. Yep.

Q Hmmm. Sure makes a difference, doesn't it, when you.....

A Oh, you bet. I know it was him that -- well, I wanted to please him, and he was good to work for, and he appreciated his workers. I wasn't the only fireman under him, but he

treated us all the same. He didn't play any favorites or nothing. If one man got out of line in some way or another, then all three firemen was called up and we got a -- we didn't get balled out, we just got a talking to. You know.

Q You had three on at once?

A No, there was three firemen; it was rotation. It was a staggered watch, six on and twelve off. And you have Tanana (indiscernible) and the Steamer Nenana. They had the oilers who always stood six-hour watches, six and six. The firemen was still three, six on and six off -- twelve off. So I fired the Steamer Nenana, fired the Steamer Jacobs, fired the Steamer Alice. So I had a lot of fun.

Q Yeah. What ever happened to those? I know I've heard about the Nenana. What ever happened to Alice? Do you remember?

A They just melted it and burned it up. And the other boats too. Oh, I got my license, I got my steam license while I was there, on account -- just all on account of Dow. I wasn't going to go after it, but he says, 'You'd better go after it.' 'No,' I says, 'no.' No, he says, 'You'd better. Who's going to take our place? You're most people's ticket up here.' So George and I took -- said, all right. We took the -- George Adams and I, we took the tests; we both passed. He got a -- he ended up with a chief engineer's license. I still have third assistant engineer's license, although I can go in any waters, any tonnage.

Q Is that a written test they give you?

A Written and oral.

Q Was it?

A Mm hmm (affirmative). But about roughly 250 questions. You have to write down the question, then answer it.

Q Is the Yukon difficult to navigating on?

A No, not too mu- -- well, I don't know. Of course, I've -- you might say I been raised on the Yukon, so (laugh).....

Q It doesn't seem hard to you.

A No (laugh). It seemed the same way Tanana River. I was up and down the Tanana River there for about four or five summers every week. So I didn't pay no attention before, and then all of a sudden, I began to think, 'Gee, I'd better see where I'm at.' Night time, even in the pitch dark, I got so's I could just about pinpoint where we were at. Just my own. It's like I went down to the N -- or worked for the NC Company in '47, and -- one summer. So 1948, Harold Stewart says, 'I got a raise for you.' And so I walked back. 1949, went back; spring I got another -- I got a letter from Harold, 'I got another raise for you.'

Q Hmmm.

A It wasn't much of a raise, but it was a raise. So, well, I says this'll be -- I'll be home now. This is the last time. So it wasn't the last time. When I got down there and I come on in July, Harold says, 'Well, I'm going to leave you in charge here in Marshall.' He says, 'I've got to go to St. Michael to see about the NSEE, N-S-E-E, that's the boat they had. He says, 'I'll be back in a couple of days. I'll leave you in charge here while I'm gone.'

About three days later he called me up, 'Ed, bring the

boat in; get supplies.' He said, 'Get the old lady and get her to go up and get supplies.' His wife was cooking. So I went and told her, 'Better go up and get some supplies. We're leaving tonight and we're going to catch the tide out tomorrow morning.

So we went up and she got what she wanted and we got it on the boat. We went on down to the mouth of the river and waited, waited for the tide to come in, and we got out that night. And we got over seeing Michael, and I didn't -- he never told me anything. Next thing I know, he says, 'Well, Ed, you'd better go to the post office and get the mail and make this Marshall trip. So I knew then I wasn't -- not going to go -- coming back -- not going to be left out for next year (laugh). So I worked right along, up until here three years ago I worked for them.

Q Yeah, that's really something.

A 1947. So about three years ago. They -- after five years, they insured my life, and now my -- the premium, I'm getting that every month.

Q Mmmm.

A So I can't complain.

Q Yeah. Did you run dogs from -- did your father run dogs?

A My dad had a team, but he didn't run too much, that I know of. I don't know; he never told me.

Q How did you learn? Did he teach you?

A No. Well, to a certain extent. He had a team before we moved to Tanana, yes, he had a team. They were really a good team; they were really a crazy team. All I knew was, 'Go.' But they under- -- they stopped. They took their time when he had -- when he stopped them or wanted them to slow down. All young dogs he raised. But there was just -- all I knew was, 'Go.' Well, challenged the Tanana, three hours and a half, with mother and I on the sled.

Q What kind of dogs were they? I know some people said they.....

A They were part hound.

Q Were they?

A Mm hmm (affirmative). Short-haired, part hound.

Q Were they big?

A Oh, they was about that high, I guess.

Q Yeah.

A Yeah, about 50, 60-pound dogs, I guess, 60 pounds.

Q Some people said they used bird dogs. Did you ever....

A They used every kind of dogs here. My dad had -- I know the dog that -- first dog I ever knew that he had -- well, I knew all the dogs all right, but this was a Newfoundland dog. I don't know where we got him, but he was my tail.

Q Boy, those are big.

A He was my tail, period. I couldn't go nowhere without him.

Q What was his name?

A Sport. Yeah, I couldn't get out of his sight.

Q You really seem like you like dogs.

A I do. I've had my own teams here, oh, from the '40s, I guess. Yeah, I had my own teams. The team that my wife was talking about tonight, that was really a good team, too, nice team,

all one color, outside of one little -- one dog of the bunch was a shaggy looking dog. But he was a good dog.

Q Where they all dark?

A Not too dark. Just kind of dark grey, yes. And they -- I had this one dog, he was off-color in that bunch, but I had five leaders in my team of seven dogs, as I knew.

Q What do you mean by that? How do you know they were leaders?

A They were leaders. They were my leaders. I could use any of the five as a leader.

Q How do you pick a leader? I've often wondered how.

A Well, they're natural-born if you know how to pick them.

Q Really?

A Mm hmm (affirmative). There's one thing about it. A dog that you -- that's natural, he'll never be stubborn on you. Never. He'll obey you right now. But some people -- a lot of people pick -- 'Well, gee, this is a nice looking dog. I think I'll make a leader out of him.' Sure, you can make a leader out of him with another leader, but maybe he gets cantankerous, too, and then you're stuck again.

So I had five leaders out of that team of seven dogs, one that was an old leader. So I was hunting hula grouse (sic), and this dog decides -- this black, kind of off-colored dog, by God, he seemed to be doing what I wanted him to do, but what I'd like the other dogs to do. So I said, 'By golly, I'm going to try him, and I did. I put him in the lead, and there was just one word to him -- either gee or haw, or whistle. And he answered to any -- each one of the three different commands just right now.

And one thing about that dog -- his name was Rover -- he was my dog and my dog alone. I'd walk away from the sled, he stayed right there. He stayed right there. I didn't have to tie him to the sleigh. When I said gee one time, that's all. Or haw, that's all. And nobody could drive him, only me. I'd walk away from the sled, that was it. You didn't have to tie the sled. I'd go away and come back two hours later, the team was still there waiting for me.

Q And he wouldn't go with anybody else.

A Nobody else could drive him, and even dog teams go by him, he wouldn't get up. No, he wouldn't move. I -- once while I was in Unalakleet, Leo Novoska (ph), somebody come in and said, 'Well, Leo is leaving.' And he's behind me quite a ways; you know, he was staying at another house, so he had to go by me, go by my dog team. He said, 'Your dogs are going to be passed right by.' I said, 'That's all right.' He said, 'Ain't you going to tie them up?' I say, 'No.' 'They won't start?' I says, 'No. They'll be there. They'll stay right there.' He didn't believe me. And soon Leo come, and I was standing looking out the window. Leo come;; the dogs stood up, but that was it. That's as far as they'd get. And they got up, then they sit down right away. Leo was gone, and then they all laid down till I come out.

Q You never taught them that, did you?

A No. Well, in a way, yes. In a way. I was hunting, you know, and I'd see a little grouse or a chicken out there, and I'd shoot it, or a ptarmigan, something, a rabbit. I'd walk away

over there and get it. They didn't bother it. It seemed second nature to them.

Q Do you suppose it's kind bred into a mean dog, sort of instinctive or.....

A I think so. It's like this little pup now. He don't bite me as hard as he tries -- you think he does. He's just -- but his teeth are needle sharp all right, but he don't bite me hardly. Now, after a while, he won't either. Now, when I was rubbing his foot, you know, he started -- he was hollering, but he was licking my hand at the same time.

Q Huh.

A I don't know how far he got his foot stepped on, poor thing.

Q Now, do you think he'd have a -- be a possible lead dog?

A I don't know. It's hard to say. I'd have to see first, but I wouldn't be able to tell you either unless I had a dog team. My way of finding them is when I drive my dogs and I got pups that's, oh, four or five months old. If they want to run ahead of the team and stay ahead of the team, that's the ones that'll make leaders. The ones that don't stay ahead, or stay behind the team, they won't make a leader. That's the way I look at it. And I've had no trouble.

Q That's interesting. I often wonder because looking over some of Redington's puppies, you know, there's just a couple a hundred puppies there, and the healthy ones, you know, you -- how do you make the decision? You just have to know them, I guess.

A It's going to be -- it's going to cost him a little money up there. I don't know how much they charge for these shots. There's a new disease out, you know, another virus. It's only about a week after the dogs get it, and they're gone.

Q Hmmm.

A It's very contagious, but I don't know whether it's traveling yet or no, in the air. You see, distemper, you can get distemper. There's some dogs down right here in the right direction the virus is coming from, some contaminated -- or dogs that has the disease of distemper will get it 'cause it's in the air.

INTERVIEWER: Let me just turn this thing over.

(Off record)

(Tape Change - Tape No. 1, Side B)

(On record)

Q I've had them down -- well, in Ohio, I had a lot of dogs. I haven't had any up here, but I'd like to get some.

A Well, you can see what I do with the little pups, how quick I calmed him down right away.

Q Oh, I know.

A Because he knows I feel sorry for him.

Q Yeah, he was squealing for sympathy there, I think.

A Yeah. I come right in here and took care of him right away, and he just quit. And I was feeling this to see if there was any -- if I could feel any broken bones, and he was licking my hand. He wouldn't bite it; he was just licking my hand. Oh,

he's over there underneath the.....

Q Yeah, look at him lying there. Did you know the other serum runners? Or did you know -- before you ran the thing, did you know Charlie Evans and Edgar and.....

A No, I didn't know them too well, I'd heard their names. The only one that I knew real well was like Dan Green, Bill Shannon, Johnny Folger, Sam Joseph, and Harry Pitka, Titus Nikolai. See, they're all around Tanana.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A All except Dan Green, who was at Hot Springs. Incidentally, his name isn't in the first of the serum runners either.

Q Oh, really?

A No. They didn't know who carried it from Hot Springs to Fish Lake.

Q That's who you gave it to then?

A I gave it to Dan Green at Hot Springs.

Q Mmmm.

A And he carried it to Fish Lake and gave it to Johnny Folger. But I told Ethan Wendall about that in Nome, and in his -- he's right up the roadway, he's got that down.

Q So you've spent some time in Talavana, is that -- but you were living in Talavana?

A No, I was in Tanana.

Q Tanana?

A Mm hmm (affirmative). I was working out of Tanana for the NC.

Q Who did they call Talavana Jim?

A (Laugh) That was me. Talon. Talavana Jim Talon, that's me.

Q Where does the Jim come from?

A I don't know where the Talavana come from either. I don't know how they put that on my moniker. I'm sure I don't.

Q Is that just from the serum run or.....

A Yeah. Yeah, that's all it was.

Q Did you ever think when you were doing that everyone would be so interested in that one event?

A No. No.

Q You've done so many.....

A In fact, I made a phrase that they're copying now, "all in a day's work," because I was working for the NC Company and they asked me all about this and that there, you know. And I said, 'Well, it was, as far as I was concerned, all in a day's work,' because I was working for the NC Company, and I was getting \$5 a day, room and board, and they told me to go here or go there. That's it, so it's all in a day's work, at that time for me. And I was happy to have a job. I was really glad. I don't know. I've always been semi-independent. I always wanted to have -- like my dad used to say, 'You've only got one friend in this world.' I said, 'Who's that?' He says, 'That's the almighty dollar. You got that, you always got a friend.' Yeah. And I've been trying to keep it that way.

Q Where was your dad from?

A Well, he wouldn't be able to drive dogs from where he come from (laugh). Newfoundland.

Q Is that right?

A Yeah. Yeah. And he come a way -- come around here by the

hard way.

Q Hmm, boy, that must have been quite a trip.

A I don't know how long it took him, but he sailed around the Horn.

Q He was a Newfoundlander then?

A Yeah. He renounced his papers here. I got it. I got it all in there somewhere. He renounced his papers or allegiance to the King of England, and he never did get to be an American citizen. He died before he had a chance. But he renou- -- I got the papers where he renounced his allegiance to the King of England. He made that and got that, and he registered for the first World War, although he was never called.

Q When did he come up? Do you know?

A I know exactly -- I can't tell you exactly, but it must have been about '98 or '99. Maybe '99 or maybe in there 100, 101. It was somewhere around in there, 100, 1900.

Q Was it the gold fever that -- was he looking for gold or.....

A Well, he didn't come in as a stamper, I don't think. Now, I don't know. He sailed up -- the first year, he was down around Blackburn, I guess, there, digging coal for the boats. The second year, he was down here below Kaltag. That's when he met my mother, I guess, at Kaltag here.

Q That's where she was from?

A She was from in this vicinity. No specific place where she was born, just in the vicinity of Kaltag or Nulato. Yeah, I just lost a cousin, I just got word that I -- or I seen the paper where I lost my cousin that was born here 74 years ago.

Q Hmmm. And he moved up to where they call Kallands now.

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q Of course, he -- was anyone -- he must have started that village then.

A Well, it was a roadhouse. Yeah, he got married in Nulato. Yeah, I got their marriage license, mother's marriage license, all handwritten.

Q Do you?

A Yeah.

Q I wonder who that was given by.

A Father A. A. Ragarou (ph).

Q Huh.

A I'll show it to you.

Q All right.

(Off record)

(On record)

Q That's something, though, a certificate of baptism.

A Mm hmm (affirmative). I'm going to give that to Bishop, the Catholic Bishop.

Q The eleventh day of December 1904.

A I was baptized.

Q Yep. At Fairy Land (ph).

A Mm hmm (affirmative).

Q Hmmm. Your father was Harry Kalland and your mother Angeline Titi, T-i-t-i.

A Yeah. Mm hmm (affirmative). This is my uncle.

Q Alexander.

A Kwesniut. They -- 'cause he was Aleut, they kicked me out. That's Indian word.

Q Is it?

A Kwesniut. Yeah, they kicked me out.

Q That's what it means?

A Yeah.

Q How did he get that?

A That's in Aleut. Well, that was -- that's what they wrote. They -- that's the way 'cause it -- they had Indian names.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Another name too, you see, Alex Lakha, tall or long.

Q Hmm.

A He died about 10, 12, 15 years maybe ago, here.

Q Hmm. Here at.....

A He died right here in Kaltag.

Q Hmm. The Reverend A. A.

A Ragarou (ph).

Q Ragarou (ph).

A Mm hmm (affirmative).

Q I wonder what ever became of him. Did you ever find out?

A No, well, he died, but I don't know where.

Q Hmm. How long did your father run that roadhouse there at Kallands?

A Well, he ran it till 1912, then he traded the roadhouse for a homestead in Tanana.

Q Hmm.

A A fellow by the name of Ed Grider (ph). And that's where I went to school, and my mother died in 1914.

Q Were there roadhouses all the way along, like all the way to Kaltag?

A Every 30-some miles -- 30-some odd miles apart, and in between.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative). Hmm.

A There was -- now, like you left -- you got on the -- as you leave Nenana, your first stop out of Nenana was, oh, about -- what was it? -- 16 miles, I guess. Then you changed horse teams there and went the other 14 that afternoon. And then the next day, why, it was -- from Johnny Campbell's to Talavana there was no stop in between; it was only 20 miles. Then from Talavana -- or Hot Springs to Tanana -- or Hot Springs to Fish Lake, you'd stop at -- oh what the heck is it? -- Woodcather, and you put the horse in the barn. You put your horse in the barn during the middle of the day.

Q Oh, really?

A When you stopped, yeah, put them in the barn and fed them, then you'd take them back, hook up, when you were ready for the next stop. Then overnight, why, had the barn -- warm barn to go into, too. Warm barn all along for the horses. You know, and then you left Fish Lake, why you stopped at Long Lake, take the horses in the barn then. Took them on in the barn. There was a roadhouse there too, you see. And then I come on into Tanana. Well, then they laid over one day in Tanana and then headed back. But there was four teams of horses.

Q Hmm.

A So there was teams on the road all the time.

Q Now, did they use horses whenever they could?

A Well, that was between Tanana and Nenana because they had a 1,200-pound limit (indiscernible) for the mail. Then down -- from Tanana down, it was all dog teams, 800 pound. So we had -- we left Tanana in the morning, why we went to Old Station; it was 18 miles, and there was a place to stop and eat there, feed our dogs, then go on into Kallands and stayed overnight. But I'd say it was the shortest run of the bunch; why, we used to go straight through to 9-Mile Point. But it was 16, 17 miles. Then the next day, it was 9-Mile Point to MacAntee's was 15 miles, and MacAntee's to Ruby was about 14, I guess, something like that.

Q MacAntee's was.....

A Or, no, wait a minute. From 9-Mile Point we went to Big Albert's. Big Albert's, and then went into -- go to Big Albert's, then you went into Cutgrimes. Cutgrimes we left in the morning and we'd go to MacAntee's and eat and then go on into Ruby. Now, Ruby I don't know any of those stops down, but there was always a place to stop to eat dinner and overnight.

Q In Ruby?

A Yeah. No, all along.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative). Did you ever go up past Ruby towards Galena and -- on dog team or anything?

A No, I've never. That's one part of the river I haven't driven dogs in, between Koyukuk and Ruby. Otherwise, I've covered from Unalakleet to Circle.

Q Have you?

A By (laugh) dog team.

Q Did you ever go south from Ruby at all, down that -- towards DeLong and Poorman?

A No. No. I drove from Nenana by dog team to over to Lone Star, towards McGrath.

Q Where was Lone Star?

A Well, it's a stop before you get to McGrath, between Nenana and McGrath, Lone Star. I think it's about halfway between Nenana and Ophir, or over in there somewhere. And I made -- and I run that run for Fred Milligan.

Q Did you stop in Tolida on that one or something?

A No, I didn't see that. Didn't get into -- let's see, Tolida. Yeah, that's between Nenana and.....

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Yeah, I stopped. I had an awful time in there. Gosh, one day I was working all day, then I didn't make it to -- I didn't make my run that day between Lake Montumna (ph) and Cannisguard's Roadhouse. I didn't make it. Or Cannisguard's (ph) to -- what was that? That other roadhouse. I didn't make it that day. I had to stay overnight in a cabin. I had an awful time that day. The wind was so strong, I just couldn't keep my sled right-side up -- my sleds, two of them.

Q You had them hooked together, you said.

A Yeah. Yes. No chance. Fastest way to carry the mail between Tanana and Ruby, too, is all hooked together, two sleds.

Q How many dogs?
A Pardon?
Q How many dogs?
A Seventeen average. Yeah. I guess mostly 16 or -- well, 16, 17 dogs.
Q So you went on down to Ophir. Do you remember where you stayed down there?
A Nah, I can't remember those places. I only made one -- two trips all up. I didn't pay too much attention either. All I know is I had to stay at Roosevelt Jones' cabin all the night, and I didn't have nothing, only just about four pounds of rice to feed the dogs, maybe more than that. Anyhow, I fed the dogs, ate a little treat myself, got into Nenana, I told Fred Mulligan, I says, 'You better get some rice for Roosevelt Jones. I used up all his rice (laugh).'

Q Where was his place?
A Who?
Q Roosevelt Jones.
A Right at Roosevelt River there at the -- they call it Roosevelt anyhow. He wasn't there. but I -- there was nobody there, but I had to stay there.
Q Yeah, I guess you could do that back in those days.
A Oh, yeah.
Q Did you ever cover your dogs feet? Did you get.....
A Oh, yes. You have to do that. You have to do that in the spring of the year, on your dogs' cut-up feet. This is a copy of the Congressional Record.
Q Oh, is it? Hmmm.
A Yeah. And I can't figure out why they give tribute to Balto since he was not the only dog. He was not the only dog team -- or leader to be on that run.
Q Was that Seppala's dog?
A No, that was Gunnar Kassen's.
Q Oh.
A Excuse me.

(Pause - Interruption)

(Off record)

(On record)

Q Is that a picture of some of the.....
A No, that's Colonel Vaughn.
Q Oh, is it?
A And.....
Q Is he in the middle there?
A This is Colonel Vaughn.
Q Oh.
A And this is, oh, the fellow that wrote about Fat Albert. That's his dad.
Q Oh.
A Gosh darn. What's his name? Perry?
Q Oh.
A Old man Perry. Yeah. I didn't even know they were taking pictures.

Q That's a good picture.
A We were talking.
Q Where was that taken?
A Nome. And this is my.....
Q Was that your Pilots or your.....
A My -- one was Pilots, yes. (Indiscernible) pilot license.
Q What, you have to renew this, Edgar, every now and then or what?
A Every five years
Q Five years?
A Mm hmm (affirmative). It's about -- it's run out now.
Q Yeah.
A Seventeenth. Two more days. But it's still got one-year's grace.
Q Oh, do you?
A To renew it in, yeah. That one's the same.
Q Hmm.
A But I'm not going to renew it.
Q And you have to have one of these to haul any kind of freight, or just to be -- oh, I see. Assistant engineer on a steam vessel.
A Yeah, that one there, you have to.....

(Pause - Dog whimpering)

(Off record)

(On record)

Q You like that, huh? You like that microphone. We could get her to -- get him to bark or something.
A No, he won't bark. He very seldom barks.
Q Really?
A Even the very first night he was alone here, he never even howled.
A No, don't chew on that cord. Don't chew on that cord.
Q Tippy?
A He's all tangled up now (laugh).
Q Okay. Don't play with that cord. Huh-uh-uh-uh.
A Here.
Q Just got to get him -- there.
A Geez.
Q Boy, you're into trouble, aren't you, huh?
A You're just no good. You hear me?
Q Chew on that.
A You're no good, huh?
Q Yeah, he can't hurt that.
A You're no good. Hear me? (Laugh.)
Q He's got a little expression on his face too.

(Pause)

Q What'd you used to feed the dogs? Fish, basically?
A Fish. All the time.
Q Did you have to fancy -- these race runners now, get real fancy.....
A Yeah, and it's really (indiscernible). It's a street dog.
Q Really?

A Too dry.

Q You need that oil from the.....

A Yeah, he's got to have something different. You know, a year ago -- two years -- a year ago last spring, I guess it was, there was some boys come up that put up some fish at Russian Mission.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A And they had dogs, they picked up dogs at Russian Mission, Marshall, down there that people didn't want; they was going to kill them.

Q Hmm.

A 'Take them. Just pick them up and take them. I don't want them.' They had three kings, about 30 dogs or more, 40 dogs. They come up river here, and they had no trail from Akolmuit -- this side of -- just below Marshall.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A They had no trail, and they come on up the Yukon River. And they come in here after the Nome racers, the racers going by. And they stopped down here about 20 miles, I guess, down here, and they come out here in the morning, and no leader. No leaders. In all the dogs they had.

Q Hmm.

A But they'd go ahead. They'd go anywhere you point them, it just seems like. And they stopped down here and they taking pictures out here on the river, right up here. And them dogs had already made 20 miles, I guess, and they were just a barking and a barking and barking, and they had to hold the brakes while they were taking pictures. They had -- there was many -- there was -- somebody had to hold the brakes to hold the dogs while the others were taking -- a couple of the others was taking pictures. Those dogs was just wild. And they had fish that they put up themselves, dog salmon, down at Russian Mission, Akolmuit.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Just below this side of the Russian Mission. And that fish was just poisonous. And I don't mean maybe. Because it come up here, post office, and it said, "Hold until asked for." You know. So we had it in the store then. Boy, that fish was smelling. So I took the fish and put it out in the warehouse. Well, when they come here, I went and dug it out, and I wanted to see because the fish was in gunny sacks, and it didn't feel like it was bailed. You know, what the heck's wrong?

They had that fish cut up in two-inch pieces about. They'd cut these slices across, you know, and cut the slice and make nice bits of them. And that fish, you pinch it, and your hands just got oily from them, right now, just like that, just picking that piece up. And those dogs were in good shape. Now, you take those racers, when they come in here, their dogs -- them dogs are tired. You know it. And that's a hard run, just -- it isn't as long a run between Akolmuit and here, but in one sense, it is just as hard because there's no trail either.

Q Yeah.

A And they had a big load.

Q Did they?

A They had -- the trouble was, their sleds was too short. Their sleds was -- what was it? -- eight foot? Eight-foot baskets, I guess it was. And they were piled up at least that high above the stanchions, or the bed of the sleds, since it -- I think the sleds was about this high sitting on the trail. Overloaded the sleds, you'd put, I would say. The load wasn't -- you know, if it was a longer sled, it'd be distributed better.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A But it was -- hey, what you chewing on? Tippy? Come here. Here. Come here. You leave that alone. Come here. Come on (laugh). You're just a monkey, just a little monkey. Yes, you are. He won't bark (laugh).

Q It's not fair, is it?

A It's not fair. Yeah. I don't know where the mother -- mother, I think she got some pictures of him, I don't know. But they stayed here a couple of days with us. And when they started out going across Unalakleet, they hit it bad. They hit a storm. Took them three days to get to Unalakleet.

Q Really?

A I think it was three days.

Q Was that a bad stretch between here and Unalakleet?

A If the trail's good, like last year it was fine, be fine. They made it -- some of them made it in one day, nine miles. I flew over it, and oh, my gosh, you could see the runner marks yet.

Q Really?

A Glassy runner marks on the trail.

Q Hmmm.

A It was a hard trail.

Q How do they have that staked? Do they have it staked there?

A It's not too good. That's why I -- I asked -- I forget who I asked. If I couldn't get a chance to break that trail and stake it so that the racers that's going through, they leave here at nighttime, you know, and it's dark. Well, they got to have something in order to pick up that trail. And some dogs, sometimes they got some of the leaders have been gone -- or gone through there already. And once you get a leader through a trail, he can't miss it too far. They won't miss it, and as long as there's any timber, he won't miss it. He'll find it. He'll recognize it. 'Cause I found that out with -- going out there trapping myself. I had a dog that wasn't working when I was walking ahead, so I took him off the team and I drove him ahead of me. And by golly, is she going right? I don't know. Pretty soon, why, I come to getting into the little trees, and she was right.

Q Hmm.

A And (laugh) my blaze was on the trees. Young man, I don't want you to chew that. What are you chewing? Well, he won't.....

(Tape Change - Tape No. 2, Side A)

INTRODUCTION (CONTINUATION)

INTERVIEWER:interview for the Iditarod National Historic Trail Project Office of Edgar Kalland of Kaltag, Alaska. The interview was conducted at Edgar's home in Kaltag on September 15th, 1980. The interview was conducted for the Bureau of Land Management by Tom Beck.

Edgar participated in the 1925 diphtheria serum run from Nenana to Nome. Edgar is still active, running a small store in Kaltag.

(Off record at Log No. 0063)

(On record at Log No. 0718)

INTERVIEW

Q You ever down that way? This is Kaltag here.
A Mm hmm (affirmative).
Q Coming down towards -- what? -- I guess, Tishkakit (ph) or something?
A I've never been on that road.
Q Haven't you?
A But that's one of the major trails?
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A That's the one that comes out down here eight miles down below here -- or 15 miles. Comes out on the Yukon about 15 miles down here.
Q I guess -- what? -- Billy McCarty's dad used to run one of these -- or a roadhouse in here. I think they called it the Slough Roadhouse.
A Well, I seen it right in there, yeah.
Q I'm not quite sure where it was, but I've been calling it the Lake Shore Roadhouse.
A Yeah, that'd be more like it here.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A This would be Slough Roadhouse right here.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A Yeah.
Q Okay. I guess they just used to run this pretty much right on the river down here.
A Well, that's the way the serum run was run.
Q Was it? Yeah.
A Right down the Yukon.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative). Yeah, here's Galena.
A Mm hmm (affirmative).
Q Koyukuk.
A Yeah. Yeah.
Q Let me just get that. Here's the Unalakleet map.
A I know that trail.
Q Do you?
A I've walked it (laugh).
Q You've walked it, huh? Do you know -- we're not sure where Eatons and where the Whaleback were.
A Let's see.
Q This isn't a complete -- this is Unalakleet here.
A Okay. You've got to figure the miles out. Let's see now. What's this one here?

Q Well, we think that's where Eatons was, but we're not sure. See, we have Eatons -- one map in 1910 said Eatons was there, and another one in 1920 said Eatons was there. Here's -- we have an old village site here, and we think Whaleback was also called Eatons in the 1920 map. So we're kind of unsure.

A Whaleback is 25 miles out of here.

Q Out of Unalakleet?

A On our way to Unalakleet.

Q Oh, 25 miles out of Kaltag?

A Out of Unalakleet.

Q Oh.

A So this would be Unalakleet.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Now, I'd say 25 miles up and you'll get to Whaleback.

Q Okay. There's the scale there.

A There's Stovegood (ph).

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Okay. I don't know about -- I don't know anything, but that's Whaleback.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Yeah. That's the mountains. That's these mountains here, where -- these big mountains back in there.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Yeah.

Q So that's about right in there where this arrow is.

A Yeah. Now, this one here Eaton Station. That looks to me like Whaleback. I don't know what.....

Q Here's the scale there. This is -- it's five miles on those.

A That's only, well, five -- that's five miles this way, but not this way.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Right?

Q Right.

A Now, let's see. One, two, three, four, five. This is it, roughly.

Q Yeah.

A Five.

Q Right.

A Nine.

Q Here's Rabbit Creek, and then Tee Creek there.

A Now, I'm trying to find the river.

Q Yeah, this is a blue-line map, so I guess this river is.....

A This is Whaleback, or should be. Five? That's only about five miles, huh?

Q No, it's.....

A No.

Q No.

A It doesn't look that way. It looks different.

Q Each one of those is about five miles, wouldn't you say? Each one of these blocks here?

A Yeah.

Q It's about five miles, ten? How far out was -- it was about 25 miles out?

A To Whaleback about.....

Q To Whaleback?

Aabout. You make a part of that. Where is.....
 Q Here's Old Woman River here, going up to there.
 A Old Woman River is 20 miles out of Unalakleet.
 Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
 A Stoker's is a.....
 Q Yeah, that's right here.
 A Let's see. Where is Old Woman?
 Q Here. Old Woman.
 A Oh, yeah.
 Q Old Woman River. Goes right up in the.....
 A I think it's five miles from Stoker's to Old Woman, so that
 would be right about in here.
 Q That'd be about right, yeah.
 A Yeah. Yes. But that's awful hard to read.
 Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
 A Yeah.
 Q Let's see whether I have that.
 A Well, Eaton is -- should be right about here, I guess.
 Q How far out is it?
 A Thirteen miles.
 Q Eaton's was 13 miles.
 A Yeah. That's about it here.
 Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
 A Well, there's the river, huh?
 Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
 A See my eyesight is no good.
 Q Well, it's -- this is a blue-line map; it's kind of hard to
 read. That's what I was going to say. See, and that's Tee
 Creek there.
 A I don't exactly know where Tee Creek is.
 Q Mmmmm.
 A But.....
 Q It's hard to -- kind of hard to tell, isn't it?
 A Yeah.

(Inaudible background comment)

Mr. Kalland: Huh? Nobody.

A Old Village.
 Q Yeah, we've got an Old Village site there that it's on the
 other side of the river.
 A That's old winter trail. Oh, I see where it is. This is
 coming down. Yeah. Okay. That's the winter trail into
 Unalakleet.
 Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
 A There's another one right in here too, comes -- cuts across
 here too. This isn't worth too much either.
 Q Yeah. This one's just Old Woman going up and off the map
 right up there.
 A What's this one here supposed to be?
 Q Well, we think that's.....
 A Oh, it's Eaton's.
 QEaton's. We've got that marked Eaton's. See, that's
 right here where we have these two village sites and Eaton's.

A Oh. Supposed to be Eaton Station, as far as I know, where you hit the Unalakleet River. Where you leave the Unalakleet River it's 13 miles out of Unalakleet.

Q Is it?

A Yeah. That's where you leave the Unalakleet River and cut across country from there.

Q And then Whaleback is.....

A And Whaleback is right on the river.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Right on the edge of the river.

Q About 20.....

A Twenty-five miles

Q25 miles, yeah. Okay.

A And then the next stop is -- well, you pass over Sow (ph) Creek and into Old Woman.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Old Woman -- Stovepick is six miles from Old Woman.

Q It's funny that they had on this 1910 map, they had Eaton's about -- what is this, about eight or ten miles from....

A There could be two different Eaton Stations, too, but I know it's at a.....

Q Hmm.

A What the heck was that?

Q Something fell over, I think, a box.

A (Indiscernible) laying there.

Q He likes that spot underneath that....

A He does. Maybe there's just some cool air coming from the kitchen probably.

Q Could be, yeah.

A Yeah. He gets that cold air. He's not allowed in the kitchen.

Q Yeah, I had an Airedale, and I had a -- when she was a puppy, I had a barrier up like that, and.....

A Mm hmm (affirmative).

Qshe tried to jump over it one day and caught her leg and fell, and she got -- never was the same. She was all right, but she got arthritis in that leg. And you got to make sure they're high enough that -- when she seeing -- well, getting -- jumping over it on me.

A Yeah. No, that's.....

Q You think maybe there are two different Eatons?

A There could be. You could find out maybe from -- I'd say, oh, there's quite a few old people over there, but, oh, they all -- they know more about it than I do.

Q Yeah.

A But Pete Katumin knows too.

Q Is he still over there?

A Yeah. You know him?

Q I've -- yeah, I have a friend who knows him pretty well.

A Yeah, Pete Katumin is over there, yeah.

Q Somebody's allotment is in the Whaleback cabin area, too.

A Mm hmm (affirmative). That's my home when I go over in Unalakleet.

Q Is it?

A Pete Katumin's.

Q Is it?

A Yeah. When I stay over there.

Q Had another friend who I guess he was staying in Unalakleet for a summer a couple years ago and stayed with Pete. Boy, he thought a lot of him.

A Well, Pete's doing good. He don't drink, and I don't think he smokes either. No, he don't smoke. His wife doesn't smoke either. He chews, but I don't think she has any use for tobacco herself.

Q Yeah. Well, that's good. Honeymoon Slough; right?

A He's got a pacer.

Q Does he?

A Yeah. I don't know where it is on his body.

Q Hmmmm.

A I haven't got one yet.

Q Yeah, you're in.....

A But I'm taking enough pills.

Q Are you? Well, you look like you are in good shape though.

A Well, I was up to Tanana here, well, about eight, nine days ago now, and the doctor says he can't find anything wrong with my breathing or my heart.

Q Well, that's.....

A I'm taking heart medicines. Taking the rest of them pills; I -- two of the pills I took today, I just take them every six hours. Then I have to take one in the morning -- two in the morning rather.

Q Hmm.

A One is for heart, and one is for water.

Q Yeah. It's always something though, I mean.....

A Yes.

Qit could be a lot worse.

A Yes, it is.

Q I mean, like Billy, you feel sorry for him.

A Yes, I do. Yeah.

Q I guess his grandkids take him around pretty well, but still, it's.....

A Yeah.

QI guess, a lot. Yeah, but.....

A Yeah, I grabbed a hold of his hand and shook hands with him. I told him I was his friend in need. He couldn't figure me out. I thought he recognized my voice, but then I had to tell him (indiscernible - laugh).

Q How long has he been blind, do you know?

A Oh, I guess about 15, 20 years.

Q Really?

A Mm hmm (affirmative). I'm not sure. I didn't know he was blind till here about four or five years ago. Nobody told me.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A That's like I didn't know that Edgar Nollner was having trouble too with his heart until this winter.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A This spring.

Q Yeah.

A Well, I guess we're all in the same boat, getting along in years.

Q Yeah. Billy was saying he'd like to get up to Nome one more time for the finish of the race.

A Well, he's -- I believe they're going to bring all of them in this year.

Q Are they?

A Bring all of us.

Q You going to go?

A Well, I go every year anyhow.

Q Do you?

A Regardless. I charter to get out of here. I pay my own fare; it cost me, what, about \$130 to go to Nome.

Q Hmmm.

A But I figure it's well worth it. The people have a good time over there. I got a place to stay over there anyhow. It don't cost me anything. Oh, I give the chick \$50 for staying three, four, or five nights, you know. I get a place to sleep, I don't care. Just a place to sleep is all I'm happy with. I take my sleeping bag and I go over there, and I go down to Catholic Church and they give me the key, and.....

Q Oh, that's nice.

Atell me where I can go to sleep. So that's it. I can eat there, or I can go and eat somewhere else.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Come and go when I please. And the volunteers, 'Ed, what's the matter with you? Why don't you come and eat?' Well, I have to go and eat. 'Come on. Come on. We got to eat supper, dinner' or something.

Q Yeah, there's some -- I spent quite a bit of time there this summer, and there's some nice people up there.

A Yeah, well, I'm a Catholic too, you know, and they treat me real nice. The only thing Father Pool said to me was, 'Ed, be careful with cigarettes.' I says, 'Father don't worry. I don't even have a match on me or I don't smoke either one' (laugh).

Q Boy, that makes a lot of difference.

A Oh, you bet. Yeah, I quit smoking. God, I got -- I was smoking three packs a day, and I said, 'Oh my gosh. Three o'clock in the afternoon and my third package already?' I was going on my third package and third cigarette. I said, 'The hell with it,' and I just threw the damned thing away just like that.

Q Really?

A Yeah. Never missed them. Just like that. I never missed them. From that day to this, and that was -- where was that? Nulato, I think it was, third of January. And I just -- 1940. Geez, that's pretty near 40 years ago.

Q Well, you remember the day huh?

A Yeah, third of January. Third cigarette and third of January, third package. And I just quit right there.

Q Boy, that's terrific.

A Yeah. It's like my wife got a -- she gets pleurisy, and she can't smoke, and she'll be in bed here in three or four days.

Q Hmmm.

A And I says, 'Geez, just forget it know, Mona,' 'No, I can't forget it.' And the first cigarette's going to make her sick,

I know, but she still stays with them (laugh).

Q Some people just can't shake it.

A But she don't smoke much. She don't smoke after she goes to bed. She'll smoke before she goes to bed, but not after she's in bed, no. And she doesn't smoke too much; a package lasts her about four days. That isn't too bad, after all.

Q Hmm mm (negative).

A Just think, I quit smoking when it was three packages for 50 cents.

Q It's expensive now.

A Yes, when you're selling them for 70 cents a pack. But I -- and I have trouble holding a case of cigarettes here.

Q Do you?

A Good God. 'I want four packages.' Well, gee whiz, you know, four packages, a carton don't last very long.

Q Yeah. Yeah.

A You go out there, and gee whiz, what, four cartons of cigarettes this morning? Just like that?

Q I hate to see the young kids doing it, you know.

A And snuff, gosh.

Q A lot of snuff?

A Boy, oh boy, they're wild right now. I have no snuff, and I have no cigarettes. Or I have no cigarettes, they're wild. But the snuff is going. Snuff goes fast enough anyhow, even from darned kids that big that's chewing.

Q Really?

A Yes. Yes. Their parents is giving them snuff.

Q Holy smokes.

A And here I wasn't even allowed to touch a cigarette or tobacco. I went behind my dad's back when I was 13 years old. Fourteen years old, I didn't smoke all winter. Fourteen years old, I went -- was going to smoke again in the summer -- whew. The first one, I got sick. Said the heck with it. So I just left it. I haven't smoked any more till I was 20 years old, I guess, somewhere around there. Then I won a nice cigarette holder, and it was priced at \$2. I spent 50 cents on it. I tried to get \$2 for it, and the boys wouldn't sell it. 'Nope, you only paid 50 cents for it.' 'Well,' I says, 'I don't care. It's worth \$2.' So I started smoking (laugh).

Q Huh. What a reason, huh? When I was staying over at the -- in Galena, the Yukon Inn, the guy that runs that, I mean, he's smoking just one after another.

A Yeah, I know.

Q Yeah, and the worst cough. I had the room next to his, and he coughed and coughed. He'd coughed about a dozen times in a row, you know, just so you thought he was going to die. And yet the next day there he'd be smoking all day long.

A Well, you know what I'm taking now -- or what I took, in a swallow? A shot.

Q Oh, really?

A Mm hmm (affirmative). A flu shot. I had one three years ago. I never had a cold all winter. I never had a cold the following winter. Then I got a little cold the next winter. Then I got one this -- I got a shot this summer, or last fall.

Q Hmmm.

A I get a cough once in a while, but that's all. I don't catch a cold like I used to.

Q Hmmm.

A So I told my wife about it. I says, this won't bother -- this is nothing. There's nothing to it. So she took a cold -- flu shot. So far, she's -- she did get a cold once this winter, or this fall here, rather, but not much.

Q Someday they'll have that licked.

A (Indiscernible.)

Q Yeah, cold and flu both, I suppose.

A Yeah. And I think they're going to get cancer licked too.

Q Oh, yeah.

A They're making strides.

Q That'd be great. That'd be wonderful.

A It sure will be. Well, this predicament -- there's predictions, rather, that they will before 1980 is over, I guess, or between now and next year, why, they'll have it. They're making strides on it now. They're getting -- what is it? -- some cases of leukemia they're getting.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Right now. So they ought to -- evidently getting on the right track.

Q Yeah, and, you know, it can happen just like that.

A Sure. Well, look at what's happened to TV. God, when I was growing up, TV was (whistle). If you had TV, that was it. And that was no lie about it either, you know. God, I remember the winter I put into Stevens Village. I'd seen one girl up there in Stevens Village; she looked really healthy and all just like that, and Christmastime and New Year's, danced like mad, you know. So I left Stevens Village -- my Dad and I, we left Stevens Village. I come back -- I had to come back in March to get my dad back into Stevens Village. He had pleurisy.

And I got him in, and I couldn't -- he wouldn't go any further. And I wanted -- I says, 'Dad, we can't -- I want to get in before that, three weeks before that. If he'd have listened to me, probably I'd have him alive for along while. But he said, 'No, we haven't got the money.' I says, 'Dad, that don't make any difference. If the doctor'll take care of you, I'll make sure that he gets paid because I'll try and get work right now, do anything to get the money to pay for your hospital. No. And I brought -- got -- finally got him into Stevens Village, and he died three days later.

Ah, it put me back, but I'll always remember him. He never licked me once. Talked a lot of times, got a lot of scoldings, but I never got a licking from him. And he treated me nice. I made money, sure but I didn't keep the money I made; I give it to him. I'd get two bits at a time from him, or a dollar, whenever I wanted it. That's all there was to it. Then he was working on -- like working on the -- making the mail run with one of the gas boats; he'd be gone four or five days, maybe a week, maybe a little longer. I was all alone at home. 'Well, Ed, better hoe the garden day after tomorrow, or before I get back.' 'Well, okay.'

So I'd tell an old fellow by the name of John St. Pierre

at Tanana, 'Well, I'm going to hoe the garden tomorrow.' 'Okay, I'll be over.' So I'd get up at about 6:00 in the morning and build a fire in the stove and put on a pot of beans. By the time Pete come over, the beans was all cooked, so we'd sit down and we'd eat some beans (laugh). That's how much work he did with me (laugh). But I didn't care. I was glad that he come around, really, and hoe the potatoes and hoe the cabbage, weed the garden. Yeah, I was the only kid, too, in town that was doing that. All the rest of the kids was -- well, I don't know about most of the children, but the other boys that I went to school -- or the half-breed children that I went to school with, they didn't touch any garden at all.

Q Hmmm.

A Well, I know the other girls, too, the white girls, too, and white boys, because they were transients. They were in the army, the soldiers' children, you know, so they didn't have a garden.

Q What are the kids doing around here now? Are they.....

A They do nothing. Completely nothing. All summer long. All night long. Kill birds, that's what they do.

Q Just shoot them for the fun of it?

A Just for the fun of it. They get slingshots, and their parents too. The heck of it is the parents buy them BB guns. They know they're going to shoot -- kill birds; that's all they want the BB guns for. But they don't care, I guess.

A year ago we had this here -- something for the youth, Youth Corps, was in here, and I put a bug in the two people's ear, a man and a woman. I says, 'If you can, you tell those children to leave the swallows and birds alone. Tell them not to kill them with their new slingshots or BB guns.' And, you know, we had a lot of swallows in here in the fall. Swallows, yeah, I never seen them that way for a long while. This year there was no swallows.

Q Hmmm.

A Yeah.

Q What's going to happen to those kids? I mean.....

A I don't know. Those kids are living just for today. They don't think about tomorrow. It's like I said before, I used to work on the steamboat, and I'd put in my order for our groceries in July, and I'd never see that check. I wouldn't see the August check, never seen anything in September, but if I did, it was very small.

(Off record at Log No. 3289)

(Interview concluded)

(Tape No. 2 Side B inaudible)