

Peterson's Tape #6, Side A

T = Tony Gulartie, S = Steve Peterson, X = unknown

AT IDITAROD, ALASKA.

T. Sal Wood was the manager and he had a couple of children. I used to play upstairs with them all the time. Romp all through these rooms.

IN NIC STORE.

S. What was this room?

T. This was the office. This was the main office. Then there was a bank up the street, they tore the building down but they left the old VAULT is still there yet. It was all _____. See up in the aft. They used to come right up, see this is a slough down here. Before the river cut in over there and the river went down the other way, they used to come right in here. See this is the big bend that Johnny Beaton was looking at, so that was why he dropped his boat down here because it been making about four miles shorter than going down that Otter Creek flats you know, to walk in them swamps. See, he followed the ridge like you did. Followed the ridge over here, see.

S. So this is based this front was just the store area, grocery and then the back was more mechanical.

T. There was, eh, warehouses were in the back and the warm storage was on this side here.

S. Oh, in the ____ building or the tin one next to the _____.

T. The one next to here. That was the warm storage where they kept all their vegetables and eggs and stuff for the weather. See you had to ship everything in in August and then that had to last until June because there was no other way to get into _____ so you had to get that big inventory in.

S. There's an upstairs to it too back here, isn't there. Where the heck is it? Where is the stairway at up there? Where did they bring all this lumber in from?

- T. From the states. There was a sawmill up the river here but it was made of lumber but mostly all this here was all brought in from the states. My uncle had a saloon down on the next, on this street, the same street as here but over across. The Iditarod Saloon. And I can, I can show you a picture of that one when we get to Anchorage. Then there was a woman's clothing store right here on the corner. Then there was a drug store right up the street here.
- S. The woman's clothing was right next door.
- T. No, no. Across the street. See there was a street going up here. And the telephone exchange was right up the street. And then this was a street here, see. And then right across there was the woman's shop right up that street there, there was the drug store. Then right across the corner here there was a saloon.
- S. What direction was that. That's north right?
- T. I would think so. See this is all, hell, this was all leveled, that was warehouses out there, out there on the riverbank. All along the riverbank, you know, where the boats could pull up and they pull all their freight up by ants(?) see on trucks them days. But this is all sunk down now.
- S. It wasn't sunk before that.
- T. No, no, hell it was all level with the street you know.
- S. Amazing.
- T. And then there was a restaurant over there. Oh, hell there was all businesses on both, the whole street on this side was all business and warehouses. And we lived up there by the graveyard. This side of the graveyard on that knoll.

S. This street ran straight?

T. Right straight for the graveyard.

S. Is that right. And the graveyard was on the end

T. I think they call this Gold Street if I remember right.

S. It runs right in front of the ^{N.C.} MC here.

T. That's right and runs right down to the corner down there then where the road takes off to Gold Kaplatt(?). Then beyond that

S. An L shaped road then.

T. And then beyond that there was a, Ire Woods had a barn and big home there and he had boats on the Iditarod. Then when the river cut through and then they extended the road down to the beach on the river and Glen Day had a big outfit after that. Oh, a prosperous town.

S. Yeah, a big town.

T. Oh, well a lot of money you know. A lot of gold went through here.

S. It actually served as just more of a commercial supply

T. Right, for the mines. That's all Iditarod was.

S. Not just Flat Creek but

T. Flat Creek and Otter

S. Moore Creek?

- T. Yes, oh sure. And Julian Creek.
- S. Here's the upstairs. Let's go upstairs in thing.
- T. Ten thousand people here in 19___. Yup, that's where they used to line their houses. With the logs and then they would put the cheesecloths they called it and then they would put paper on it.
- S. They just use regular wallpaper paste.
- T. Make it up with floor and water.
- S. A little hardware there. Must have been painted. I've seen that thing all the way up to Eagle, must have been a standard MC ^{NC}_____.
- T. This was the living quarters.
- S. See, now the first room on the left here up the stairs in what, two or three apartments up here?
- T. No, no. There was just the living quarters. You know, it changed a lot since I was here. Guys have been sleeping here, cooking you know. No, it was just a one family, Sal Wood and his family, had two kids, him and his wife. An old catalogue.
- S. In the 40s or something. Another bedroom here.
- T. Here's a kitchen in the back.
- S. And what was this room off the kitchen? A pantry of sorts.
- T. A pantry I imagine. And then there was a store room.
- S. Was this for private or for stuff downstairs, this back room?

- T. I don't know. I can't tell you that. I don't know, I can't remember. I imagine they had a lot of stuff up here for the store.
- S. It's awful sooty in here. I wonder if they had a fire or something in here. Oh, no not really.
- T. A pound of butter, no a keg of butter I guess. 35.50 _____
- S. An old stamp pad. Looks like it might, almost like their record storage area or something.
- T. No, this is quite a place.
- S. Mustler?
- T. Yes, Jack Mustler, Jimmy Farrell, I knew him. Baker, Mrs. Claude Baker, eggs, \$2.00, two dozen. Dollar a dozen in them days. I imagine that was 6/8/17, 1917. Two pound can of Crisco, _____. One Eagle Brand milk, two bits. Towns, these three towns they would, like Iditarod, they put up _____, you know put hay in the sleds and the horses. There might be six or seven of them. People sitting around in these sleds and then the driver and a couple of guys up on the seat and they would go to Flat and then they would dance there that night. The next night they would go to Discovery and dance there and then come back to Flat, dance there and then come back to Iditarod. Flat would do the same thing. Drove to the town. And then Otter Creek would do the same thing.
- X. Where would they hold the dances?
- T. Oh, they had a big A. B. Hall up here. Arctic Brotherhood Hall. It's back on that other street. See there was this street and then there was another street back of this place here, there was another street where the A. B. Hall and a lot of people there. Yes, they had a great big hall. They tore that down years ago.

S. Remember what the name of this other street was?

T. No. That one there I'm pretty sure they called Gold Street. I'm not positive either.

S. Fantastic how good a shape that

T. Oh, yeah.

S. Frank Walkerson?

T. Walkerson. And I'll ask him. Burt, oh good Lord, yes. Oh hell yes. Hamilton. He had a tent shop here. I tell you there was everything here. Sawmill, tent shop, oh Han made all the stovepipe, that stovepipe you see. Han made all that, yes. Then he moved to Ketchikan after he left here. Sure.

S. A blacksmith and all that.

T. Oh, sure. A blacksmith shop, yes. It was a regular little town you know, everything. Now Tootsie had that bathhouse down there. And she just died here just a few years back and she was 96 years old or 94. And we had Inigie(?) _____ just died this summer. She was 96 years old from Flat. I've got a list of eight people that are between 85 and 96 that, right from here.

S. Is that right?

T. Yes, and then I don't know how many that are all ready gone. But between 85 and 90. A lot of people live in the real old ages from this part of the country. My uncle was 88 when he died. There is a fellow named George Matheson down in Los Angeles, he's 90 years old and his brother ran that dredge that you took a picture of.

- S. Right there at Flat.
- T. Yeah, Alex Matheson. And Alex left there as a millionaire after the camp died out.
- S. A living room, they didn't have any indoor plumbing or anything?
- T. Oh, I imagine _____ in bedrooms I guess. And they had inside _____ but they emptied the honey bucket everyday. They had a man go around every day to empty the honey buckets. Dan Hartlett. Yeah, he had two barrels on the sled and every, he'd start out early in the morning and go to all the business places and empty the honey buckets.
- S. Is that right. When was this? 15?
- T. In the teens, you know, until the town died out and then he used all the water. Ten cents a bucket.
- S. Where would he get his water? Right out of the river right here, a well?
- T. No, across the river. They had a well and then the summertime, old man Pringle, was before him, and he used to boat across and pack it. Yeah, old man Pringle, he used to boat across and pack it. They had the well across the river. And then they had a cart too that he was to build up, a two-wheel cart with a tank on it and he had a dog pulling it and it left up the back end you know, and big two wheels and he had an old Malamute dog that used to pull it from home. Used to pack water clean up to our place up there all around town, 10¢ a bucket.
- S. Anybody have any, like farm animals around here, milk cows.
- T. In Flat they had a couple. Yeah, there was a couple of holsteins and that. I can't remember of any them here.
- S. Too bad your memory's no good anymore. I can't remember the name of people I met last week, I don't know how you can remember that far back.

- T. Well, damn it to hell you get old. That's one thing I don't know why the good Lord made _____. Why in the hell didn't he make us able, we'll keep you at 40 years old and you stay that way until I take you. That's the way you should.
- S. Maybe he didn't intend for us to get older than 40.
- T. Well maybe he didn't.
- S. This old building here that's down.
- T. That's part of the warehouse.
- S. Looks like it was built like in the third stage here.
- T. It could be the warm storage. You see all them tank stoves.
- S. Oh, I see. Yeah, it's like a plumbing outfit in that corner of that room.
- T. Why, I can't remember. You see, that is an old whiskey barrel over there, 50-gallon barrel. Do you know how they used to use saw dust?
- S. It was all insulated.
- T. Then they tore out the walls now. See they use the lumber. And that was how they used to insulate. They filled them up with saw dust from the saw mill.
- S. What is this hole in the floor? Any idea?
- T. I don't know. I imagine there was a stove in there. You see the stove pipe up above you there, the _____. This might have been the warm storage, I don't know. But look at that lumber. That is all native lumber.

- S. The other warehouse between here and the one at the _____, maybe that one was cold storage there.
- T. Well the cold storage was a barn where the meat came up from Saint Michaels. There was a cold storage barge and it was parked down on the river and they, the cold storage man, he lived right on the barge. Jim and his wife.
- S. What was his name? Test you here.
- T. Nope, I can't remember his name right now.
- S. They brought in actual beef, they didn't rely on any type of game really for meat or
- T. I don't think
- S. Towards the river here.
- T. Right out there see, right in front of the store.
- S. Looks like the L street here in front of the building. Is this where it turned?
- T. There, that's the _____ isn't it? Yeah.
- S. Did the street not turn here and go straight in front of these buildings? Capt. Lamont, now who's he?
- T. He used to run the St. Joseph here. Yeah, that was the steamboat.
- S. And the Ira One.
- T. Ira Wood, he owns a boat. _____ boat was left. Miner's Merchant Bank. _____ See the Miner's Merchant Bank, Iditarod Lodge.

S. Why the two doors I wonder?

T. I don't know.

S. That goes to the outside there and goes to the outside.

T. There was a lot of gold storage here. See, after the freezeup, then they still mined you know, then there was a fellow named Bob Griffith that used to take the gold out by dog team over the Iditarod Trail.

S. He must have been pretty trustworthy.

T. Oh, yeah. Oh, hell, them days, there was no way to get away with anything. Hell there's no place for you to go.

S. That's what's funny about Shermeir's you know. The mail robbery.

T. Well, yeah. But they couldn't go no place with that.

S. Now what's this old shed here?

T. That, I don't know.

S. A secondary shed.

T. Somebody had it for a store room because look at the furniture. See all the old beds in there.

S. All these old beds look the same. Where they cat walk bed or something.

T. Yeah, I imagine they bought them from, see that was an old oil stove. Old card table there.

S. Looks like a poker table there, _____ top on it. Why do you suppose this is the only one standing yet? Any speculation? You lived here in _____, you lived in here.

- T. Captain Lamont. Well somebody else had it after that you know. You see all them old safeties, how they hold up. Old, old what's his name, he made all that.
- S. Whiskey bottles.
- T. But you know there's a lot of people who lived here after these guys all went you know. Capt. was buried out over there at Flat.
- S. When was Capt. in here? In the teens?
- T. In the teens. Oh, yeah, he lived way up into the 30s. Oh, yes.
- S. He was an old captain, huh. Did he have a family?
- T. No, he was single. St. Joseph. And then there used to be a boom bridge across the lake up here and that was were welder's station was.
- S. Oh, they had a wireless here.
- T. Oh, yeah, sure the Signal Corp was here. And these were all homes back in here, you know. And all the way over that way was homes and back that way was homes you know. And there were streets to them you know, sidewalks. And then out that way was the horse barn, Ira Wood had, and he had, oh, seven or eight head of horses and they used to haul freight to Iditarod or to Flat and haul wood you know. Thousands and thousands and thousands of cords of wood had been cut up the Iditarod, and up out of Creek the same way. If Otter Creek was worked again I don't know how many boilers they would dig up. You know, they just left them and they fell in and covered up you know. And they drug all them boilers right from Iditarod all over that flat with horse teams and they had to build Deadman with block and tackle to pull them because there was no road, see. Oh, you, man don't realize the activity that was in this country back in them teens you know, 12, 13, 14, 11. Just thousands, well I'll gamble, I'll say there were 10,000 people in this country then in them first few years until they finally found where all the pay was. And then after that, well then they began drifting away.

- S. Where they kind of drift away to, do you know?
- T. Well, they went to, let's see after the Iditarod stampede there was 1917, I think the Livengood stampede. Yeah, then down at Marshall was a stampede after that. But they were small, not compared like, this was a big last stampede, like Fairbanks and Nome and Dawson. This was the last stampede that I can recall that was any size. Oh, you take a flat man, you know, it was a rich camp only nine creeks and a 1,300,000 ounces, that was up to 1966. _____ last year. 2,000 ounces the year before.
- S. Not bad, a \$800 an ounce.
- T. Well, I don't know, I imagine they get it at the going price you know.
- X. Do you have pictures of all these structures, Steve?
- S. No, I've got to do that. Well, I think it is going to take a day back here just doing what I want to do. As far as measuring. Is the old roadhouse still there at Flat?
- T. Yeah, Mrs. Lawrence's place, the hotel? She's still alive. She's 90 some odd years old, Mrs. Lawrence.
- S. _____ placer here?
- T. Oh, Tootsie's, oh, no, that's all tore down. That's pretty well dilapidated.