

Peterson Tape #7, Side A

(Uncertain of people talking. May have some listed incorrectly)

CHARLIE RAINWATER, ALASKA P.R., 1980

_____ section house located at Girdwood on highway. First gravel road passed the townsite of Girdwood going to Anchorage. Up the gravel road, tool shed on left and old section house on right.

- A. Section house, fed the train crew.
- S. Like a mess hall, huh?
- C. This was a construction camp here?
- A. Well, I don't think it was; I think it was just, well it could have been but I don't know but when I came here it was a closing station, kind of a yard because they had just finished the branched end to Whittier and were using it so this was kind of like a terminal point.
- S. Staging area like?
- C. When did you come here Charlie.
- A. 1948.
- C. Working on the railroad?
- A. Yes.
- C. Was this the original route that we are on now?
- A. Right.
- S. Has the bed changed that much over the years? Do you know if there has been a lot of straightening to it?

- A. Well, not a lot but we have had to raise it a lot you know.
- C. Because of the earthquake?
- A. Yes, would'd be right down in the mud here you know so as years _____ we keep raising it a little bit.
- T. Somehow this doesn't even seem natural.
- C. One of the laws of nature.
- S. A camper or something?
- A. That's a rail saw. Lots of fishermen come here and catch rainbows, dolley, and _____ with those poles. But there was a crew in there that were building concrete culverts and they built 24 inch up to 5 foot diameter and they were used all along the railroad and replacing old wooden structures that were rotten out and finally they got the authority or saw it was more economical to buy corrugated metal pipe so they started buying those and they shut this pipe making operation down.
- S. Pipe, round, regular, round concrete pipe, huh?
- A. Yes, just like the, just like drain tile or you know.
- S. Like two foot stuff or
- A. Or these were four foot diameter, they were four foot long.
- S. Great big stuff.
- A. Or five foot long or so forth.
- T. There never was like a roadhouse site or anything. We don't have any information at all on Spencer.

- A. No, I don't ever remember being a roadhouse there or not even a section house.
- T. Is this, former water supplies _____ 1919.
- S. What was the section house actually, just housed the railroad crews.
- A. When I first came here there was a section foreman, usually his wife or the main occupants of the house, she cooked for the section crew and they raised anywhere from two extra men to four extra men and sometimes in the bigger ones like where there were lots of problems there would be five or six men. But she was the cook and he was the section foreman and the section foreman and his wife usually had a bedroom and a livingroom and then the kitchen was more or less theirs unless she left there sometimes. Prepared the meals and fed the crew and she worked seven days a weeks _____ in these isolated places these people appear all the time so it was a real good job, you know, man and wife both making money.
- S. Did they, then there was a bunkhouse separate or something for the people?
- A. Oh, sometimes there were, like when they had the big crews. There was an extra house or bunkhouse that a lot of the cases like Kern, Girdwood, Indian, Potter, they lived in the house, the same house.
- C. Oh is that right, this is a permit area?
- S. Are there really old-timers yet that know a lot about this stretch of trail, the railroad?
- A. I was kind of locating someone the other day that knew something about the Matanuska _____. There's one guy there in Anchorage that was working on that crew but he must be on vacation because I tried three or four days to get him at home you know. No one ever answered the telephone.

S. _____

A. This is the gravel pit.

S. Where was the section house and such?

A. I don't ever remember there ever being a section house.

S. Oh, the, just the construction site only, huh?

T. Water supply and construction site.

C. When was this used, do you recall?

A. It's been off and on. It was really in use in 1948 when I came here. It was the main source _____ southend.

S. Never had like a site engineer shed or anything like that, huh?

A. No, not really. They had shovels and things for loading _____ cars. I think that the fellows that were working these, building these pipe, they had outfit cars.

S. Oh, I see. Just pull off and live in those. Terry do you have any idea how they used to, you know when they would come in off the Iditarod how they made the connection here, would they just load everything on the train and go, or would they actually run the track.

T. (Cannot understand most of what was said.)

S. Just wondering if like they had corrals or anything at the other end where they keep the horses, dog barns or anything.

T. _____

- A. Fellow that used to work on the bridge crew, name was Jim Larson, he used to drive a dog team on the Iditarod back when he was a kid. He's retired and moved to Redding, California, I don't know, he was pretty old. They made him retire at 72 and that was 20 years ago so I imagine he's passed away by now.
- S. Saw the Rainy Pass section.
- A. I don't really remember where but I'll _____.
- S. _____ bridge. You have the made here. Is it located on there? Cast iron bridge.
- A. Glaciologist, biologist, anthropologist, whole group up here studying this area.
- S. Pictures of snow shed and glacier, mile 53.
- A. This one fellow brought an orchid from off of this terrain down here showed, never dreamed there were orchids in Alaska but there are.
- S. Want to get a picture in here.
- A. I got one real good one that, one of these here with icicles hanging _____.
- S. Now which tunnel is this.
- A. I think #7.
- S. Tunnels between #5 and #4.
- A. _____ we went over from steam to diesel which were able to make the grades and the glacier receded so it gave you more room to _____.

- S. So about that time they also put the bridge improvement in. Are there any old wooden left on the railroad at all?
- A. Yes, but they're not, they're not old any more, there is no bridges; they have been replaced with creosote treated pilings and we're still in the process of changing some of them out, but even the oldest we have are in the early 50s any part of
- S. Is that right, so you have wooden bridges from the 50s and you also have the steel bridges from 51, huh?
- A. Go over to Cotter and help engines up the hill and go down to Spencer and come up this way. They had a coaling station here and the water was suppose to be going around the corner there were they could take water but they had a 2-story kind of a hotel _____ as you can see here.
- S. Had a regular roadhouse thing here, huh?
- A. Section foreman and section crew they used to have a big _____, cook, meals seven days a week, three times a day. When the train crews came she cooked extra meals. She usually had a helper.
- S. It was all owned by the railroad at that time. Was it open to the general public too then when they came through. I mean they ran passed here.
- A. I don't remember how they, the passenger train didn't usually, the only reason that it stopped here would just to be, let a passenger off that was on. I don't think they took coal and water because they were pretty, you know, it was a small train and they would come out on over. They used to stop up here on the loop and let the people take pictures.
- S. Or the loop.
- A. But they waited till they got to Portage to take on coal and water.

- S. I suppose the loop there's probably pictures of that over at the museum do you suppose?
- A. Oh, yes.
- S. Let's take a look at them.
- A. I tore it down.
- S. You tore it down, huh?
- T. Well I won't tell anybody that.
- A. We've got a pretty good one in that railroad calendar this year too.
- S. Shows a picture of it, huh?
- A. They were afraid of liability. You know, the people could get off the train you know, and go out and walk on these old trestles, but they were real rotten. They appear to be real rotten. Some of the parts were but when I went to tear it down they weren't that easy to tear down I'll tell you.
 CHARLIE RAINWATER
- S. Yes, most of those things are pretty well built, you know.
- A. Big old house _____ just meticulously built, excellent timber carpentry. Every joint just perfect. Most of your, where the tress came together they were iron shod, steel plates or cast iron or wrought iron, I'd suppose wrought iron plates that say _____ and these post come down and set on this steel plate, _____ big old rods _____. You can still see some of them in the river _____ used to be some you could see over this bridge here.
- S. When did you tear the loop down? That must have been after 48.

A. 58.

JIM FLOOD

S. Can't get that kind of work these days. Yeah, he was out of Alaska Brick and such at one time wasn't he. What was he going to do, build his causeway with that or something?

A. No there's lots of good timber in there. New stuff because we kept reinforcing them all the time so he, maybe someone else got him to bid on it and they brought a sawmill in here and they were going to salvage all that material and saw it up into boards and sell it in Anchorage. Well they got the easiest to get stuff and then they _____.

S. And left you with the salvage.

A. God you never really knew when we were building this new section house here, there was a building over on this side and we stayed in it. _____ . I think it was probably where the section home _____ when they had the big _____.

S. Is this mile 51 in here then?

A. Yeah.

S. Picture of the loop at Talkeetna Railroad station. _____ between mile 47 and 48. Grandview no remains evident exception of a small shelter cabin post 25. Grandview site down approximately one-half mile from existing relief cabin in ruin. Evidence of milled lumber built and planed, screening. Structure _____ slight grade. Beyond recognition. Structure seems to sit on slight rise approximately 40 yards from railroad track. Evident fire damage. Evidence of creosoted pilings. According to Charlie, the Road Commission, the railroad didn't start driving pilings until the 40s.

A. The railroad was buying.

- S. It was all white spruce I suppose.
- A. They wanted hemlock also.
- S. Is that right?
- A. Hemlock and, I've forgotten when we pulled the last ones up but some have been in here 40 years.
- S. They hewed them at Portage and at Moose Pass?
- A. Well, I don't know. I guess they must have, they may have hewed some at Portage but the biggest, hewed over here at Moose Pass. They were still buying it when I came to work here in 48.
- S. Snoring-In Roadhouse site located. Site in poor condition, typical roadhouse construction. Series of smaller structures, log, all in a row. Log sizes smaller than typical roadhouse. Six to eight inch logs with bark approximately one, two, three, four, four to five separate structures in a row. Some in a total state of collapse, some falling in, one section with roof in tact. Site has a lot artifactual remains, bottles, cardboards boxes, information dealing with food, bottles, vegetables, Alaska Railroad Serial AAA, P.O. Box. Structure all lumber, circular sawn. Structure is board and batten-type roof with tarpaper over, no evidence of galvanized metal. Outside structure's log with lathing chinking, over chinking. One small structural component frame the rest log. Name on the box looks like S G B A H I G N E R. Box with Puget Sound painted on it. Far-most unit appears to have been a bunkhouse of a sort. Two old tubular steel beds, table. Evidence inside of tarpaper and wallpaper in some sections. No insulated roof, plank floor. Hide stretcher board onsite. Sign at site says Snoring-In. Snoring-In significant site in the aspect that it, cultural remains, artifacts of the period to determine the earliest date at site. It looks like it, according the Charlie Rainwater, this site was occupied 30 something years ago. Last occupied, significant site perhaps in discussing the railroad and understand the railroad at the period of the Iditarod Trail. All roofs on Snoring-In board and batten,

roofing paper, intermediate evidence of structure been built in several sections over numerous years. Evidence of pastel green paint on a small Wanigan that seems to connect two major roadhouses that are approximately 20 foot by 14 foot high pitched steeped roof, pitched roof. Probably 12 and 12. Evidence of rabbit cages, numerous alcoholic bottles, girlie pictures from the 40s. Some of the plank used on the ceiling is all circular cut. It's large approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 inch, heavy, extremely heavy structure for the type of building. On the other hand, on the other side of the same roof, one by eight, one by ten scrap, salvage construction for the most part. Conjecture that it was a trapper's cabin to start with and served as some sort of a roadhouse. Doesn't seem that it was, well it probably was used during the winter, lighter construction although in log then others along Iditarod. Galvanized roofing and safeties.

- C. Shutter speed? What's this thing?
- S. This is your film speed. That's your focus.
- C. What is this number here?
- S. I don't know. You just set it on where you're at, I guess some kind of filter maybe. I don't really know what the hell it does.
- A. An engine down here. _____ back here and hook onto the front of the train taking up the hill, get up to Grandview or he would go in the hole there and let the train go on down and then he would go on down the tunnel and
- C. Where does this go here?
- A. This, just down there. See the engine sign. Yeah that just turn the engine around.

- C. Now what _____
- A. They had a roadhouse. There were several buildings right back in here. I think they're still see some remnants of them.
- S. There's one right there. Stop and take a peek at these too.
- A. Section house. They operated a coaling station _____ operate _____ lives in the section complex here. There was other things besides the railroad here. There's always been _____ and I don't anything about _____.
- S. Private land?
- A. Yes, at least privately, railings and things like that _____.
- S. But it looks like there are things all over here. Do you have any idea how old the site is, do you know?
- A. It's probably _____.
- S. Well, now Hunter, was this just a good place to turn around because it was relatively flat here?
- A. Water was available.
- C. _____
- S. Makes some nice ones wouldn't they?
- A. A big struggle to get over the hill and some engines _____.
- S. Gravel bench right here. Almost a foundation of some.
- S. Hunter site located to the west of Y-section at Hunter as Charlie says the Y-section was used for turning around trains coming from Seward north

and from Portage south. In the center of the Y was a major coaling and water section that was used to refuel and water the locomotives. Remains of three or four contemporary structures at old Hunter site. Charlie alleges private in holdings of land. Structure's contemporary, probably from the last 20 years. Evidence of depressions in possible building sites of others. No historic structures onsite.

Johnson site, four cabins all of which seem to be rather contemporary. Substantial two-story log structure. Does not appear to be that old based on the condition of log ends and such. Portland cement, chinking, evidence of staining of logs and painting. Roof, aluminum siding, plank-ing roof underneath G-pole, primary ridge with two intermediate purlins. Site is wired with a generator site. The roof's structure is planking. Evidence of some rock, locate estimated date of site perhaps 1940 or later. Sign on door, Fred Delaney, according to Charlie Rainwater, was an old engineer. Another fellow by the name of Togan was supposedly a conductor for the Alaska Railroad. Johnson Pass takes off directly behind the structure. The trail is evident; well, occupation of site was recent from the relative cleanliness of the site appears to be perhaps just a seasonal or recreational cabin by the owners.

PROBABLY
 Crownpoint Railroad station, no remains, like the railroad used. No site of Lawlin. Second stop sign left side after you pass Ptarmigan Creek. Remains of Nellie Lawlin's residence. Another single sloping shed, an old cabin structure. Site appears to be old and taken care of; however, it doesn't appear to be occupied. Rough sawn, batten board siding, older than what I suspected. It's probably a log structure under. Lawlin, no evidence of railroad structures remaining. Structures of Nellie Lawlin's cabin National Register site here appears to be a log structure, perhaps three or four of them butted together with some rough sawn board and batten siding. Green felt roof on roof. Site obviously maintained, good condition. Evidence of need for foundation work. Level and raise the structure on beach in front of the cabin on the other side of the lake. Evidence of hand hewn logs laying on beach. Probably from original site. Speculated that the roadbed, according to Charlie Rainwater was at the existing beach, dropped approximately five feet with the earthquake.

Therefore a structure that was located near the river probably went into the river in part. An old log structure located at the Lawlin site two-story, obvious age unknown. Good condition. Appears to be partially used and maintained for periodic use.

LAKEVIEW { Stopped at a site, Charlie contends is Victor Creek. Notes here Victor Creek prospect. Find no remains of the early railroad period. Presently a site resident, several gardens. Remains of several structures, frame. May or may not have been associated with the railroad at some time. One structure approximately 24 by 14 frame structure, two foot on center, simple frame construction. Log structure probably from the early 50s. _____ sign evident.

- C. A lot of these coming into Seward and unload at Seward didn't get as good a rate as they did _____. Seward would come out here with a truck and unload them (end of tape).

Peterson Tape #7, Side B

- S. Seward Railroad station, opportunity for interpretive center. Interpretive sign each, good location given its convenience with the ocean, think about a landmarked small park dedication point or monument point located right at the Sound or at the office. Small park directly to the south. _____ office in recently good condition; however, seems to, could need some basic session mill work. Seems to be on a good foundation, sizing, scraping and painting. Minor repair, existing fabric.