

IDITAROD TRAIL INTERVIEW - CHARLIE CARLO

September 14, 1980
Ruby, Alaska

BLM Interviewer:

Tom Beck

SEPTEMBER 14, 1980 - CHARLIE CARLO

INTRODUCTION

INTERVIEWER:Historic Trail interview with Charlie Carlo of Ruby, Alaska. The interview was conducted at Charlie's home in Ruby on September 14th, 1980. The interview was conducted for the Bureau of Land Management by Tom Beck.

Charlie Carlo was born in Rampart, Alaska, in 1909. His father was from Italy and came to Alaska during the Klondike Gold Rush. His mother was half Native and half Russian.

Charlie's a former mail carrier and carried the last mail by dog sled between Tanana and Ruby during 1931 and 1930. Charlie earned \$5 a day carrying the mail for the NC Company. Charlie later worked for a transportation company driving a truck between Ruby and Poor Man. Charlie's lived in Ruby permanently since 1931.

(Off record at Log No. 0085)

(On record at Log No. 0158)

INTERVIEW

Q Ask you a little bit about just some of your background and stuff.

A Like?

Q Where were you born?

A Well, I was born in Rampart. Then I went to school in Nenana, Fairbanks, way back in '21 -- '22.

Q In '22 you went to?

A First year of high. And I thought I got too smart by then (laugh), and so I quit school, and of course, I've been working ever since. And I've done good all my life. Hell, I've worked all my goddamned life, I can tell you that. I was -- in fact, I was one of the park native boys that worked all my goddamned life. I worked -- I don't even remember, year end and year out, and I tell you, I made a lot of money in my time but I had a big family, see. That was one of the reasons why I was broke all the time. I raised nine kids, so they -- they've done all right. You got to make it.

Q Yeah.

A Goddamned a good many thousands of hours, you know.

Q That's right.

A Yeah. Although, by God, I have a wonderful family, all nice people.

Q Where are your folks from?

A My father came from Italy.....

Q Oh, is that right?

Aduring the Klondike Rush.

Q Hmm.

A And I'm the oldest brother; I'm 71 years old. That's a long time ago too. And my mother was a half-breed Russian.

Q Hmm.

A In the early days here, (indiscernible) were Pavaloffs.

Q Where was she raised?

A Just right here on the Yukon, you know, Rampart (indiscernible). Of course, they were always travelling back and forth.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A And I was small. Yeah.

Q Did your dad ever tell you any stories or tell (indiscernible - simultaneous speech)?

A Oh, my dad -- I was a little bit too young. I was probably about 9, 10 years old -- 10 years old anyway. Goddamn, he was teaching me Italian and other -- I said -- and, you know, sometimes it'll come out when I say something, you know. I had a little lingo or something. But every once in a while, I correct myself, you know. But my dad, I'll never forget it, he started teaching me Italian and I never would get it -- just had a little lingo, you know. I had a lot of guys tell me, you know, that were raised in a, you know, an Italian colony all over, you know, and hell, they said, 'Jesus Christ, you've got a little lingo there.' And I'd say it, you know, without even noticing it. I wish to Christ I'd have learned the language too. I had to suffer, you know, I had a lot of Italian friends, see, all over the country.

Q Really?

A Oh, yeah.

Q Where did you run into them?

A Hmm?

Q Where did you run into them?

A Oh, you'd be surprised how many is up in this country.

Q Really?

A Oh, yeah. There's a lot of them. Christ, I had (indiscernible) down here in Galena. She'd come and visit me all the time because I'm part Italian. I get a kick out of her. She was from Louisiana. Yeah.

Q So did you used to do any mail -- run the mail run at all?

A Hmm?

Q Did you run the mail run at all?

A Oh, yeah. Yeah. I -- well, the last mail -- I carried the last mail between Tanana and here. That was in '31. Of course, I carried mail '30, '31, see, in the winter, see.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A And I carried the last mail between Tanana and here.

Q Is that the route you used to go, Tanana to Ruby?

A Mm hmm (affirmative). Of course, you know, they had different drivers all along, but somebody would (indiscernible) up, you know, and saw. Most of the time I had to come through right from Tanana all the way through to Ruby. Usually my stop is at -- my turnaround point is Big Albert's. That's about half way -- no, it's a little farther down.

Q Yeah.

A A little farther down, by Bircherson (ph). Then I turned around. See, halfway we meet each other, see, and finally these guys saying, oh, man, you know, they'd bug off and so I'd have to come through -- come down here -- well,

practically all that winter I had come through every route.

Q Did you make the run once a week, is that what you did?

A No. They took two days off a week, and I'm on the go all the time. And we were making goddamned big money, \$5 a day. (Laughter.) That was big money then.

Q I'll bet.

A And you weren't kidding about -- just think that \$5 would mean something like, oh, \$100 right now today. I was making big money. In fact, all of us made big money anyway. So right after I got through carrying mail, you know, I'd come to Ruby. Well, I stayed permanently in Ruby to '31. I stayed permanently. That's the best thing I ever did too. I was making more money than I ever did -- well, for that time, you know, not year, but that's a bunch of years there. And there was nobody in this country that was making \$10 a day. They were making \$5 and \$6, but I was getting \$10 every day, and that was big money. And I don't mean maybe. And I was making it all summer long, just day in and day out, you know. That's goddamned big money in them days.

Q You did.....

A I was trucking then, see. I got in with a transportation outfit here and I was driving trucks, and I was on the go practically night and day.

Q Between where, here and.....

A Poorman.

Q So you took the mail by dog sled there in the winter, or did you?

A Well, of course, on this Yukon run, yeah.

Q Then later on you worked trading?

A Mm hmm (affirmative). Yeah, I worked -- trading, yeah. And of course, airplanes took over the, you know, the mail route. In fact, in the wintertime I was -- oh, what do you call -- a travelling mechanic for them airplanes -- for them airlines like Pacific Alaska. I believe that was Pan American when they originally started here. And I've flown a lot of old Pan American fliers, good old friends of mine, they're right now, they're practically all dead.

Q Sure.

A Yeah.

Q Well, tell me about training. Who'd you drive for when you drove between here and.....

A (Indiscernible) between here and Pullman, an old-timer. Of course, he's dead now too. He died somewhere around San Francisco or somewhere in there. Yeah, I used to know the whole family here.

Q And he had a store or something?

A No, just a clothing outfit, and he really done good too. Yeah.

Q What kind of trucks did they have?

A Oh, we had a ton and a half, two-ton trucks, but we were on the road every day. Of course, there was a lot of mining in them days, you know, they were drift-mining, and we were on the go all the time. You'd be surprised. Of course, them days, heck, there was 500 people here. You just can't believe it, you know?

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A And now, you're lucky if there's 250 right now. Yeah. That drift-mining, you know, of course we had to have a lot of people, you know, to drift-mine. Most of them, they had six, seven guys working in their drift-mine. I did it myself. I was underground for seven months one winter.

Q Were you?

A Pushing on a wheelbarrow.

Q Where was this?

A That was in Poorman. Then I got promoted. I was horseman. That was a pretty snappy little deal.

Q Who were you working for there?

A Oh, I was working for shops here, and of course, (indiscernible). They got to know I was mechanically inclined, and it got -- I was running everything. So I really got along good out here.

Q What kind of stuff were you hauling back and forth?

A Well, mostly groceries and fuel and mail. They had the mail too, see. From here to Poorman, they had to take it out there, and of course you'd get, you know, just going out there practically empty, and you get paid for the mail, see. I was the only one with a job all the time. We made good there.

Q How long did it take you to get down to Poorman in a truck?

A In them days, oh, five or six hours, you know, because you had Long Creek and you got the mining camps all along, you know, you got to stop and unload groceries and everything. But I seen the time it took me 25 hours to make one round-trip. I'd just get stuck all the way home -- tough routes them days.

Q Is it better now?

A Oh, godly, yeah, I mean, what road we got left, you know?

Q Yeah.

A We've had only 42 miles of road now -- no, 41 now. You can't even get down to Mining Creek there. Now it's -- they got it all chewed up. They were trying to improve the road this year and there was so much rain and, oh, they just bugger all up, so they're going at it next spring and straighten it out. This was a good road. For three men, you can't beat this road.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A The three men, you know, once you put in good ditches and everything else, well, that's all -- it'll take care of itself. Yeah. It's that rain that buggers up the road. But they've had good ditches now, and they're really doing good. Next year they plan on putting on about six men out there. They got so many miners coming in here.

Q Yeah.

A It's really something. God, there was a million-dollar outfit that came in here this year.

Q Who was that?

A Bob Beck and Haglands (ph) from Fairbanks -- Nenana.

Q I guess there was Anaconda along.....

A Boy, Anaconda was here all summer long flying helicopters. They were here, had a lot of fuel up on the field, and

practically all that winter I had come through every route.

Q Did you make the run once a week, is that what you did?

A No. They took two days off a week, and I'm on the go all the time. And we were making goddamned big money, \$5 a day. (Laughter.) That was big money then.

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Q And he had a store or something?

A No, just a clothing outfit, and he really done good too. Yeah.

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A Oh, we had a ton and a half, two-ton trucks, but we were on the road every day. Of course, there was a lot of mining in them days, you know, they were drift-mining, and we were on the go all the time. You'd be surprised. Of course, them days, heck, there was 500 people here. You just can't believe it, you know?

they'd stop in here every day and fuel up and keep going.

Q When you were running the mail in the winter with a dog team, how'd you get that job, do you remember?

A Hmm?

Q How'd you get that job running the mail with a dog team?

A I don't know. I was just so -- just fortunate. I didn't drink them days, you know, I was a young man, and I'm always full of ambition. A guy come up, he didn't have nobody to drive and he couldn't get nobody to drive, so he asked me if I wanted to drive. I said, 'Okay, I'll drive.' And there was this goddamned (indiscernible).

Q Did you have your own team or did they.....

A No, no. This is their own, you know. All they did was just hire me.

Q Is that the NC Company?

A NC Company was really the -- well, they were the -- I don't know what you'd say -- the contractors.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Yeah, but they subcontracted, so I got the job and I stayed on all winter. When I got through I just -- we ride down here.

Q Why did you pick Ruby?

A Well, I had some relatives here, an aunt and uncle. They were -- Martha, she was here. He was from Mount Vernon, Washington, and he said, 'Just move right down here.' He said, 'We'll keep busy.' And we did too, we kept busy.

Q He was right.

A First thing we did, we went fishing and we made money. Oh, God, yeah.

Q Who'd you sell the fish to?

A Everybody. We were making salmon strips and eating fish and stuff like that, you know, and he was about the best, you know, around here. Every salmon strip you eat, there isn't a bone in it, you know. He was awful careful, he just boned everything, so you had the best of strips, same way with the scored fish, you know. There were no bones in it. We did a good job. And of course, we did a little bootlegging on the side.

Q Sure.

A And we made the best whiskey.

Q Did you ever go down river on the dogs, down the -- like towards (indiscernible) or something like that?

A No. I'd never been down (indiscernible).

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Just from here to the fish camp, it's eight miles. That's where we used to camp, eight miles down here. That was a good fishing spot. So I stayed there just all summer.

Q Was it -- go ahead.

A Until I got this job here I was trucking, like, it was '33, '34, '35, almost up to the 40s, I was trucking out here on the road here all the time, and I tell you, I made good money at a dollar an hour -- dollar an hour. And I made more money than anybody that was working for wages, at a dollar an hour. Can you imagine that? Yeah. Heck, I was making sometimes \$450, \$500 a month working overtime. And I

got just straight time. There was no overtime, double-time or time-and-a-half -- double-team -- there was none in them days. And I was making goddamned good.

Q Were there several roadhouses here in Ruby?

A There was one -- yeah, one.

Q The one that's down here now?

A Yeah, this log cabin here. That's called the Fisher House.

Q Where is that?

A Just right straight down the street there. Of course they knocked it down. It was a three-story building. Of course, that other roadhouse over there, boy, that was just a telegraph station when I came here. And what's his name? Bill Browden (ph). Of course, he was a sergeant. But he was here since World War I. Imagine that? They left him right here since World War I. They left him right here and he stayed here until World War II. I got a kick out of that. And they transported him to Fairbanks and made him a first sergeant, you know, he was just a buck sergeant, see. But they kept him right here and he raised a family and everything -- took the (indiscernible). He made first sergeant and he retired as first sergeant. I got a kick out of that.

I know all the kids, you know, they're in Valdez and Anchorage and Fairbanks. They're scattered all over. In fact, one of their sons and his two kids got swallowed up there in Valdez when they had that big earthquake. It just opened up and it swallowed them right up. They were practically right on the dock there, you know, it swallowed them up.

Q So it was just a telegraph station back then?

A Mm hmm (affirmative). Yeah. You can still see some of the old fittings in the ceiling there.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Yeah, you can still see them.

Q Where was the other one, Fisher House -- is that what you called it?

A Yeah, Fisher House. That's -- really that's the old roadhouse. In fact, it was a post office too. Yeah, I used to bring all of my mail right there.

Q And that's torn down now you said?

A Yeah. It's all torn now, and then they just made a story out of it -- just a one-story building, but it used to be three-story.

Q Who is Fisher?

A He's an old-timer that came into the country, oh, in -- oh, way back. I think it was way back in '97 or earlier. In fact, old man -- I think his name was Ed Fisher -- he's got a daughter down her right now that is about 70 -- she could be 75, 77 years old. And I know them too, I mean, I know the mother -- or the father, and all the girls, and one of the girls is living and she's about 77 years old. She's down here now. Yeah.

In fact, I think they were in Dawson. They used to live there a lot, you know, and they'd come back down. And in fact, in the early days they used to live right here in

Ruby, but they moved back to Dawson for some reason or other and they had come back. That was 1931. And I just happened to be on the same boat coming back down the river, on the steamboat Jacobs. See, there used to be riverboats come, you know.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A The federal government run the boats, and we come back all on the same boat. That's where I met them in 1931.

Q How long did that place last? How long did he run the roadhouse there?

A I think maybe three, four years, and then they sold out. Yeah. Then I think the old people took off or something. I don't know what the heck happened. I never did -- well, of course I'm on and off here in Ruby all the time, see, and I kind of think they off to Fairbanks and they just retired. They were old people, you know, real old people.

Q And that was it? They didn't -- it wasn't run as a roadhouse anymore?

A Of course, there was -- two or three other people took over the roadhouse after that, see. They just bought one another out, see. They kept it up for a long time there.

Q When was it torn town, do you remember?

A Well, oh, I'd say about 20 years ago or something like that, maybe a little more. John and Mamie used to -- well, when he owned it, well, he tore it all down because there was no business there and it was ready to fall over, you know, so he just tore it all down and made it a one-story building. And it was kind of a storage place. That's all it is now. He's got everybody's junk in there that you can think of.

Q Ruby was quite the town? Long and Poorman were pretty sizeable places too?

A They were. There was a roadhouse there and a roadhouse in Poorman. It's quite a place. Oh, like I said, when I first come here they had 500 people. Now they got -- between Poorman and here, you know, that's a lot of people. Well, they had a lot of drift-mining going then in them days. And (indiscernible).

Q Now is there a district where they were or.....

A Oh, yeah. They got their own houses and everything, yeah. They were good customers of mine. They'd say, 'Charlie, go get me a case of beer or a case of whiskey. Make sure now.' They'd give me their money. Whiskey was cheap -- a case of whiskey. I'd get it to them and they really paid me well. Yeah, no kidding. I'd do anything. I made more money off of them than anybody else because they know me, see, and I made more goddamned money off of them. Jesus Christ. They were pretty good old sport though, you better believe it -- not like you find nowadays. Them guys -- them goddamned supporting loans. If you was down and out, they'd give you a chuck of money to take off, go to Fairbanks, go to the hospital. That's the way they are. They didn't even expect it back. Yeah, that was the kind of people they were. But how it is not, you can't.....

Q Yeah.

A You can't do that. (Indiscernible), they can get a little.

But them days were different of course (indiscernible), they stayed here for years and years, you know. They'd practically make there home here. God, I only wanted to stay here for about 20 years (indiscernible). Yeah, she stayed here about 20 years. Of course, she quit the business, you know, but she liked it so goddamned well, you know, she just stayed. Yeah. She knew all the people, everybody knew her. They know what she was, and (indiscernible). Yeah. Yeah. She was a good old scout. Yeah.

Q She was a Finn?

A Yeah, a Finn, yeah. And I don't mean (indiscernible). She was a good scout. Oh, you just can't beat her. Goddamned.

Q Yeah.

A Annie, yeah, she was from Finland, yeah. She talked broken and everything. Yeah, I brought her a lot of goddamned -- a lot of whiskey out there.

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

A Now wait a minute, I could tell you that in a hurry. You can't see it, but we call that -- well, I know where that is. It's actually Ninemile right there.

Q Where, right where it says "devil"?

A Yeah. Oxbow. We call that Oxbow. It's got a big curve in the goddamned road there, and that's probably it right there.

Q Right where the -- it says "devil" there?

A Yeah.

Q Right in here?

A But you can't even see the roadhouse. The roadhouse is on the opposite side of the road, say, the left-hand side going out, and you can't even see it now, but that's where it was. That's Boston Dome, yeah, but that's -- well, that high hill up there, see, they just call it Boston Dome. Yeah, I remember that now. And there's Boston Creek there too, see, it runs all the way down this way somewhere.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A It runs into Mink somewhere.

Q Here's what he's got down. He says, "possible roadhouse site" right there.

A Mm hmm (affirmative).

Q And "Boston Roadhouse" right there. Now can you tell.....

A I know just about where it is. In making this curve in the road, which is called oxbow.....

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

Ait's just right on the bank up there. That's all it is. You can find it.

Q Yeah.

A You can find old, you know, old relics and everything else, see.

Q Was that the one you think that they called Boston Roadhouse?

A Yeah, it's got to be. But except the reason I know where this is, they used to (indiscernible).

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A So you had to be at Ninemile, and this is Eighteen or Nineteenmile, see.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A It's got to be it.
Q So if you're trying to pinpoint, it'd be about -- where would it be?
A Well, wherever this curve is, see, in the road.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A It's got a big curve like that, see.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A And it's right on top of the bank here.
Q Okay.
A Yeah.
Q And this is where we've got Fourteenmile Roadhouse, do you think?
A Mm hmm (affirmative).
Q Is that about.....
A Now that's Fourteenmile. That's exactly Fourteenmile right there.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative). Okay.
A Yeah, they used to have a pretty good roadhouse there, a big horse farm and everything there. Of course, there's nothing left now, you know.
Q Another question we have is, the Hub Roadhouse -- he's got two locations here, one down here and one up there. Can you tell at all?
A Yeah, I know where they are. The old road probably is that, see, you come around the Hub Hill and then you start going down the hill, see. See, that's the main road right there.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A You start -- but at one time -- well, let me explain this now -- that one time it went down quite a ways and then come back up again.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A And it's right in there, see. But now they made a shortcut, see, they just cut right straight across so you don't go by that way anymore.
Q You don't go by Scow Mountain?
A No, you don't by that roadhouse, see.
Q Oh, mm hmm (affirmative).
A But Scow Mountain is still there.
Q Yeah, right.

(Airplane noise)

A What the hell are they doing flying around?
Q (Indiscernible.)
A We'll try to get somebody on the radio, I think. I got an aircraft radio here too.
Q Oh, do you?
A But I'm on frequency 123, but I just take care of Galena Air Services. That's all.
Q Hmm. Let's see. So it would have been in one of these two locations? It's hard to tell, I know, from this map.

A Oh, of course there's all high hills all through there, see.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative). See, here it curves here a little, the road.....
A Mm hmm (affirmative).
Qdown here.
A Yeah, well, that's probably it, see.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A But they cut right across now. You just go straight now. Oh, what the heck -- somebody's here.
Q Yeah.
A Now let's see. Well, of course that's all mountainous country, you know, well, I mean, high hills, you know, a thousand or 1,800 feet, all through there.

(Interruption - Knock at the door)

Mr. Carlo: Come in. What the heck you guys doing now?

(Off record)

(On record)

Q How about this trail? We got this thing pretty well lined up? Let's see. We got -- he's got this thing here, he says, "Possible route, easier slope for dogs, but Charlie Carlo said this section was not used." in here. Is that.....
A No, it's not used. And this whole -- it's just too goddamned hilly -- just we'll stay out of it. Yeah, just stay out of this here -- Devils Thumb, yeah. No, just stay out of it. I think they got this road on the wrong side anyway.
Q This is the trail -- supposedly the trail that, you know, the trail's not.....
A Mm hmm (affirmative).
Qnecessarily the road.
A Now this would be Sevenmile.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).
A And in the early days, they had a road running right through here, see, and you just follow the highway, just follow the road to Devils Thumb to come back on this road again. And they follow the (indiscernible) all the way down into Long Creek -- all the way into Long.
Q Let me get a.....

(Off record)

(On record)

Q Okay. Now where was that again?
A Starting from -- well.....
Q (Indiscernible - simultaneous speech.)
Awhere the heck was it? Well, I, like I said, I kind of think he got mixed up because that road should have been about Sevenmile, see, Sevenmile. Yeah, it'd be somewhere right along in here.
Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Oh, there's Blossom Creek, yeah. And then they'd take this ridge.....

Q Okay.

Aand they'd follow it all the way over to Long, yeah, Long. It's all highway, so of course they -- where's that Devils Thumb?

Q Right here.

A Yeah, you got to go by there, see, Devils Thumb. Then they'd come back again and follow that ridge all the way down into Long.

Q So it wasn't here then, the road?

A No.

Q It was more this way?

A Devils Thumb would be -- yeah, Sevenmile would -- you follow the highway just, you know, all around. See, they've taken all the highways to Devils Thumb, and then from Devils Thumb -- no, wait a minute.

Unidentified Speaker: We tried, Charlie, but she says she's too young, Sharon. So it looks like we'll have to rough it today.

Mr. Carlo: Jesus Christ. Too bad.

Unidentified Speaker: Yeah.

Mr. Carlo: In fact, I know I can't get none.

Unidentified Speaker: Yeah.

Mr. Carlo: Yeah.

Unidentified Speaker: Too bad.

Mr. Carlo: I wish I could.

Unidentified Speaker: Yeah. We're going to go down and try the boat, and maybe they'll sell us some.

Mr. Carlo: Yeah.

Unidentified Speaker: Catch you later.

Mr. Carlo: Yeah, okay.

A Now goddamned, this is the school map here. From Devils Thumb -- where's the Hub? Oh, right there. Oh, Christ, that goddamned -- this map is all screwy. This is Scow Mountain and the Hub Hill.

Q Right.

A Devils Thumb is supposed to be over here, way over here.

Q Hmm.

A From Devils Thumb, you come through Scow Mountain or over the Hub. Yeah, that map is all screwy.

Q There's Devils Thumb.

A Yeah, I know. Yeah. I know where that is. Yeah, that mountain's supposed to be way over here.

Q Right here?

A Yeah, it's supposed to be right there. Then you come over to the Hub Hill, and then from the Hub Hill, then you start following ridges again. It's the only way into Nome. Yeah, that's all screwy.

Q Hmm. So it should be right in -- this is where.....

A Yeah. Yeah, that's all screwy. Geez, no wonder I've been (indiscernible - tape malfunction). And you can see all

these little willows because it's got a bunch of willows just all grown up, you know, where the old wagon wheels -- part of these, we just -- you could just follow them over just that like, that whole ridge. Yeah.

Q Now Devils Thumb should be right out in here?

A Yeah. You see, from there you cut over to the Hub Hill.

Q Okay.

A And it's to your right-hand side as you're going out the road.

Q Okay. So where would the trail come down from here now, follow these ridges in here?

A Let's see.

Q From -- okay. This is Boston Dome right here?

A Yeah.

Q And this is.....

A Let's see. Let's see. Well, that's one road. Now that's one road that.....

Q This one?

Ahad come over to Devils Thumb.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A But then there's another road coming from Tenmile and it follows this ridge maybe, see. And it's the same road, you might say, but a lot of them guys, they crossed the creek there in the early days, but there's a road from Tenmile past Elevenmile.

Q Right in here?

A Yeah. And they follow that ridge.

Q Yeah. (Indiscernible - simultaneous speech.)

A You can follow it, yeah. You can follow it, yeah.

Q Okay.

A Just -- oh, the willows have all grown up. You can't miss it.

Q Is that an old-time trail, do you think, like an old wagon trail?

A It is an original trail.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Yeah. They used to drive horses over that. And then early days, that's where they had to go. They couldn't travel by horse team, you know, going through the valleys like we're doing now.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A They had to stay on the ridges, get on the high ground. Excuse me, I got to (indiscernible).

Q Sure.

(Off record)

(On record)

Q Okay. Well.....

A Well.....

Q What we have shown here is a winter trail. Okay. Now remember these are the older trails.

A Yeah. Let's see.....

Q Summer trail on here.

A This is Long.

Q Long and.....

A Yeah. Well, this is.....

Qthis is Sulatna?

A Yeah. And this is a winter road when they'd go by horse team with sleds and everything. Of course, this is the summer road. And where's -- yeah, that's Sulatna Crossing right there. Yeah. And of course, the road's like -- well, of course, from there -- no, wait a minute. There's a monument -- yeah, a Monument right there. That's the end of the road right now, see, Monument?

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A That's the end of the road. That's as far as you can drive out right now. See, before the road we used to drive all the way over to Poorman. Where's Poorman? Over here, see. We used to drive all the way over there. Now you can't do it, you're -- well, Monument (indiscernible).

Q Yeah.

A Yeah. Monument Creek, that's as far as you can go, in fact, just one mile from this side you'd have to turn around. I was out there the other day -- a couple of days ago.

Q Was that Wild Goose Roadhouse here when you.....

A On Long, yes.

Q On Long? Do you remember that?

A Oh, I stayed in that place a good many years.

Q Did you?

A Oh, yeah. Yeah. That was two-story, I believe. It had a lot of rooms in there, oh, there must be 12, 15 rooms or more in there. They have a nice roadhouse -- nice roadhouse.

Q Who ran that, do you remember?

A Hmm?

Q Who ran that?

A Shan Walker was the last one. Jesus, (indiscernible). Goddamned. I got to change clothes anyway, the whole goddamned works.

Q Yeah, okay. And then just quickly here, did you ever stay in any roadhouse down at Poorman?

A Oh, yeah. Yeah, I stayed there a lot of times. And Joe Jesse was the one that ran the roadhouse when I first come here.

Q Who?

A Joe Jesse in the early '30s. And, of course, the Porkapiles took over afterwards. They bought him out. But it didn't last too long, see, well, World War II just took everybody out of here, machinery and all, all of your modern equipment, you know, like drag lines and Cats. The government took it all over. They just walked everything out of here, put them on the boat here and ship them. They took every piece of equipment out of here.

Q Hmm. How about Sulatna? There was a roadhouse there, I think, too, at one time.

A Oh, yeah, Sulatna Crossing. Yeah, I stayed there. I stayed there quite a lot, too. Yeah, they had a big horse barn there -- nice roadhouse. But this guy that I was driving for, he owned the place, see, so I got the keys, so I'd just

go in and make a fire and do my own cooking and everything, you know, in case I get stuck, you know, get in there, they -- and I stayed there. I stayed there a good many nights.

Q What was his name?

A Hmm?

Q What was his name?

A Averick Verhonic (ph), yeah. Yeah, that was quite a family, too. (Indiscernible) was around, you know, Oregon. I know -- I used to know quite a few of them when they were up here. When they were young kids, they used to come up and visit him.

Q Hmm. Did you ever -- were they still driving horses, trading at all when you were up here?

A When I come here they were still driving horses, yeah, winter and summer.

Q Really?

A Oh, yeah, winter and summer. They'd go out, them guys, they own a horse team out there in the mining camp, and they send them out.

Q Did they freight with them, too?

A Oh, yeah. They freight with them. In the summertime, the horses, they got to move like all their boilers and everything. They find new ground, see.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A They got (indiscernible) and them horses, they got to pull the boilers over and set them up, you know, get them fixed up for the winter work, see. They do all the mining in the winter, see, just dig it out from the hole and put it on top, stockpile it. In the spring, take a (indiscernible). They'd have ditches running along the hillside and what-not, get all the water right underneath a big pile. Yeah.

Q You never drove any horses, did you?

A No. I had my share of it. I got thrown a couple times off of horses, and I (indiscernible). Yeah. Yeah, they'd buck me off and I didn't care for it anymore after that.

Q Where'd they keep those horses in the winter?

A They got barns, although I see a pony there. They just turn them loose, see. He stayed out all winter, and so help me, he was -- talk about long hair, just like a, I don't know, a buffalo or something -- talk about hair, it was so long.

Q Yeah.

A Yeah. And he stayed out all winter. In fact, he -- they took him into Tanana and he took off. Come falltime, he took off, stayed out all winter and he'd come back in the spring. It's a wonder the woods or bears didn't get him. It's surprising.

Q It sure is.

A And he -- this Martin Lavoris (ph) had him here for two or three years. They'd just turn him loose, yeah. He makes out his own, then come spring he comes back. Goddarned, can you imagine that? That was a good old pony.

Q Let me.....

(Off record)

(On record)

Q Okay. Now we -- there's Louden; okay?
A Yeah.
Q And Galena?
A Mm hmm (affirmative).
Q Whiskey Creek?
A Oh, wait a minute. Wait a minute.
Q See.....
A Now this is coming downstream, isn't it?
Q Right.
A Oh, wait a minute.
Q Yeah.
A Yeah, coming down.....
Q There's Galena and this is the river here and Louden.
A What the hell is Louden doing way over there when it should be way up here? Somebody's all screwed up here. Louden is right up in here.
Q That close to Galena? Wait a minute.
A Well, yeah. It's only just a little short ways from -- you got to -- to travel through, you got to go.....
Q It's downstream from Galena?
A No, upstream from Galena, and it's right in here.
Q Well, this would be downstream though. This is going this way. This is.....
A No, wait a minute.
Q This is Galena here.
A Oh, well.....
Q And this is Koyukuk here.
A Oh, oh. Oh, yeah, now I see. Yeah. Yeah, okay. There's that slough there, yeah.
Q Right.
A That's Louden Slough, yeah. Oh, that's right. Okay. This old road now.....
Q Here's Whiskey Creek.
A Yeah.
Q And we're wondering why this -- here's where we have this Lewis Landing Trail.
A No, no, no.
Q And here's Big Island.
A Oh, yes, there is one, yeah. See, they follow the Yuki down. Where's.....
Q Yuki?
A Yuki, Yuki.
Q This is the -- it says Yuki.
A Oh, yeah. Well, see, they just cut right across the flats. That's one route. And after they get down here a ways, then they cut across, too. They cut across.
Q To where?
A Because it's all flat, see, and they cut across. They used to come out at Louden or Lewis Landing. Well, Lewis Landing really should be somewhere along in here.
Q Okay. Now.....
A Yeah. Yeah.
Qhere's Whiskey Creek here. Which side of Whiskey Creek

was that on?

A No, no. Whiskey Creek there, it should be down in here somewhere, see, Whiskey Creek is way above it. But there is an old trail that cut over to here, see.

Q So Lewis Landing should be down in.....

A Down in here somewhere.

Q This is Fish Island here?

A Yeah. Yeah, I know where that is. Yeah.

Q Okay.

A It should be right up above there somewhere.

Q Right in here somewhere?

A Yeah. Mm hmm (affirmative). Now Lewis Landing -- no, it shouldn't be at the mouth of the Yuki, no, because I know it's always downstream.

Q Downstream from Whiskey Creek?

A Yeah, downstream from the Yuki River. It's quite a ways below.

Q Is it downstream from Whiskey Creek, too?

A I kind of think that's where it is.....

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

Asupposed to be, yeah, right there. But they cut across, see, it's all flats through here.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A And they cut across. I know they used to come down the -- oh, the Yuki River, see, this is pretty much all flats coming down through here.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A And so they cut across.

Q They call it the Yuki Trail, too, is that what they call it?

A Yeah, something like that. That's Lewis Landing, yeah. Oh, that's right. Louden is there, yeah. They got that right. Maybe your map's -- it's like some of it was screwed up there, you know, that first map I seen.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative). It's just a U.S.....

A But this is going downstream there. This is going downstream, see.

Q It should be going this way?

A It should be, yeah.

Q This is Nulata; okay?

A Yeah. In all your maps.....

Q Mm hmm (affirmative). Okay. That's.....

A It should be coming this way.....

Q Right.

Ainstead of going this way. That's where it got me fouled up, too. Yeah, your maps, I don't know, it seems like, you know, if you just turn it over it'll be just all right then, but it's screwed up now, see. All your downriver streams should.....

Q Right.

Abe coming this way.

Q Okay.

A Yeah.

Q Well, there, you know -- but you think Lewis Landing was downstream from Whiskey Creek?

A Oh, yeah. Yeah, I know that, yeah. Yeah.

Q Okay.

A In fact, let's see here. They call it some camp there, Lewis, right there, somewhere along in there -- Lewis Landing or something, right in there somewhere.

Q There's a.....

A It might be that one right there, see.

Q At the cabin here?

A Yeah. It -- that's where Lewis Landing's supposed to be.

Q Do you ever go on this trail at all here, along -- like up to Galena or anything -- this dog trail, down the river?

A Really, as far as I know, there has never been a dog trail -- let's see -- Galena, past the slough -- no. What this is is just an old telegraph line.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A That's what it is. There never was a trail there. Of course, you'd be way up on top of the hills in some of them places there. There never was a trail there.

Q So they used to follow the river then if they were going by dogs?

A Oh, yeah. Mm hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Of course, they'd cut through Loudon Slough, and of course, there's -- let's see. Yeah, there is a trail going over the hill here, too. There's a trail right there. And there's a coal mine right in here, yeah, and it comes out at camp here, right there. That's a coal mine. You can dig coal there. In fact, they're trying to encourage the people of Galena there to go get their winter fuel right there.

Q Hmm.

A Of course, you know, it's low-grade, a lot of dirt in it and everything, and it's not very good coal but it's useable. They're trying to get all the people to go up there and dig out their coal.

Q Hmm.

A But there is a trail, though. In fact, a lot of the guys, they go with snowboats right over the hill here.

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Yeah.

Q Where'd that come out, right up here at.....

A Right at camping.

Q Where?

A Camping, right -- it'd be right there somewhere. You know, that Air Force site?

Q Mm hmm (affirmative).

A Yeah, it's right there somewhere. They'd come out right there, then they'd follow the road right on down into Galena there, right on the highway or whatever little highways they got there. They one got nine, ten miles of highway between Galena and camp. But them guys, the Iditarod runners, they'd go through here, this slough, go down and then they'd cut across over here, see.

Q Hmm. (Indiscernible.) Well, here's the Yuki, yeah. It says Yuki River right there. Yeah.

A Oh, this -- once you get back in here, why, it's pretty hilly country, you know, pretty high up. This is all little rolling hills all through there, and the lakes, flats and

everything else -- small hills, you know, just rolling hills.

Q Hmm.

A I've done a lot of hunting all through there.

Q Did you ever get down to Dishtakit (ph)?

A Oh, once in a great while, when I had my airplane, I used to get down there, but I haven't done too much flying over.

Q Hmm.

A I know just about where it is.

Q Okay.

A Yeah. I used to have my own airplane and I used to fly a lot, take in the country, you know.

Q It's a nice way to see it, isn't it?

A Yeah. I had three airplanes so far, small ones, you know, seacraft, 140's. I've flown a lot. I just quit all of a sudden, just given up.

Q How come?

A Getting too old, raising too many kids, you know, raising nine kids, you know, you got to cut down on something, so I gave up the airplane. I'm sorry I did, too.

Q Yeah, keeping those things is expensive.

A Oh, God, I couldn't afford it raising my family.

Q Hmm.

A When you raise nine kids, why -- that's a big family.

Q Yeah.

A So I just quit and I sold it, get rid of it. That was the best thing I ever did, too. I was sorry though. If I kept it another year, I could have doubled up on the price of my 140.

Q Yeah, those things have really gone up.

A I sold it for \$1,800. If I had just waited another year, I could have got \$3,600.

Q Really?

A Oh, yeah. Them airplanes just start climbing. Oh, man, they were selling at a high price then.

Q Hmm.

A Yeah, all them small little aircrafts, they raised up like hell.

Q Yeah.

(Off record)

(End of audible portion)