

Maynard Londborg Oral History Interview

Conducted by Dr. Terrence Cole, UAF Office of Public History
March 31, 2004

Man: We're rolling Terrence.

Ter: And today is the day before April Fool's Day, right. We don't get this wrong, but it is March 31, 2004 and we're here in Denver, Colorado at the home of Maynard Londborg. And Maynard, I want you to say your name cause I don't - how do you spell it and say it just for the camera so we'll have that.

Lon: You mean the last name?

Ter: Well both your names?

Lon: Maynard - M-A-Y-N-A-R-D and Londborg - L-O-N-D-B-O-R-G and there are two O's in it.

Ter: Now there is a couple of Borg's as far as I can tell at the Constitutional Convention, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: How many Borg's were there?

Lon: Well there was Sonborg, probably two or three.

Ter: There are a couple other I think, but I know is you and - but you're Lon how do you say - is it Long, no I have trouble with my - like L-O-N-

Lon: D.

Ter: So it's Lond -

Lon: Londborg.

Ter: Londborg, yeah.

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: I keep wanting to put a G in there not the D. But anyway why don't you tell us a little bit about where you were born and are we all right with the dog you guys?

Lon: I was -

Ter: Yeah.

Man: I can hear that dog in the background but I don't know what we're going to do to stop him.

Lon: A little farm country home out in Nebraska and right - oh, we had about four or five little towns around us. Gross is the closest one about two miles away. And Bristow is where we did most of our shopping. It was south of us. Lynch southeast was our postal center and then once in a while we would go to a little farther west up to Spencer. So we were kind of in the middle of a few towns there. And I grew up and lived there on that farm during the dry years and dust bowls in the 1930's - 20's and 30's. It was - looked back quite a terrible experience. The crops had come up and before you could cattle out to eat if there was any vegetation these hoards of grasshoppers would come in and they would just mow everything down. So we had dry years, dust bowl, grasshoppers, and of course the depression.

So it wasn't a very promising place to stay. And when I graduated from high school I had a chance to go to college and that turned out to be a good move, just one thing led after another. Not everybody could get away from the farms and just a lot - and then the young people were all going into the - especially the women, into Omaha to work as housemaids and different jobs. And it actually left just the community of old bachelors up there. And of course they pretty well died off so. But that's the you know as far as the early days.

Ter: Tell us a little bit do you remember what was a dust storm like? What was that?

Lon: The dust storm when the clouds came in the sun would be obscured. I had about two miles to walk to school. In the schoolroom when a dust storm would come in we would go down to the little pump, well, bring in some water and soak our handkerchiefs in that and we would put that around our nose. We'd sit there in the schoolroom and it was so dark the teacher lit a kerosene lamp and school was just over, virtually over. We just sat there and waited in the schoolhouse. And then were times when they would dismiss us and had about two miles to face the dust on the way home.

Ter: Was there electricity in the schoolroom? Did it have electricity or?

Lon: Electricity had not come to that part of the country yet.

Ter: So how about your in your - the farm and stuff, there was no electricity?

Lon: No. We had just - I grew up studying by kerosene lamp, reading by kerosene lamp. We had oh, some gas lanterns or lights that we could use once in a while, but most of the time it was just little yellow kerosene flame burning.

Ter: When the dust storm though hit the school, what did it sound like? I mean was the wind howling and did the dust come -

Lon: Oh, the wind just - and you'd hear the dust hitting the side of the building. The - any fence that was somewhat tightly woven like hog fence, acted like a snow fence and the dust would pile up. I know that our church cemetery was out in the country and the dust piled up and the cattle out in the field would like walk right over into the - we had about one day I think there were 18 of us gathered there with horses, wagon, fresnos and plows and moved a lot of the dirt back. It was - it was just unbelievable.

Ter: What was this like on your father? Because it was your father's farm or you guys did you actually own the land or what was the?

Lon: Yeah, he did up to that point, but he finally just turned it over to the loan company, about all we could do. And my sisters particularly that had gone into Omaha to work sent money home to keep the payments on the loan and my dad wanted to - didn't want to owe them anything so he went to the bank and I think he borrowed \$2,000 and paid them back and we lost our farm for \$2,000. He said I might as well have borrowed 6,000. And that is what the neighbor did right next to ours. He borrowed 6,000 and he lost. What the banks didn't want - the loan companies didn't want the land either. So they would turn around and sell it back to re-contract for just practically nothing you know to get it off their hands.

Ter: What did your family do after they lost the farm? Where did they - did he move into Omaha or did they -

Lon: No that was in 1938 when we moved, the folks moved into town, just the neighboring town and the year then I left for school. My older brothers and sisters were all out on there own so dad said well you're the only one left what do you want to do? I said well I sure don't see any future here so I pulled out.

Ter: Did, Maynard, what day were you born on? I didn't get that exactly and where did you fit in with all your brothers and sisters? What day were you -

Lon: I was born on May 11, 1921, the youngest of 10.

Ter: And did all the kids live until adulthood or did they all -

Lon: Yeah. There is - it was kind of interesting because my father and his four brothers migrated from Sweden and they stuck together and they went up there and homesteaded and they had lived in the southern Nebraska for a few years and then they heard that this military reservation was going to open up for homesteading around Fort Randall.

And they threw their gear and everything into wagons and just had a wagon train on up and the town - the big town of us O'Neill was the land office. And they stopped in there to look and see what land was available and then they said well I think we'll go on up there. It is another 40 miles and look it over and we will be back in two or three days and file a claim on the land. And the agent said well if you do that, by the time you're back somebody is going to already have claimed it. So we suggest you pick the land right now.

So they picked the land without even looking at it. And the land the five brothers had land that was either adjacent or cornered together and the five particles of land my father picked the worse one and raised the biggest family. So he had to supplement the farm income with - he had a little blacksmith shop. He did a lot of carpenter work.

Ter: Did all of his -

Man: Sorry to interrupt. Can I stop for just a minute?

Lon: All the brothers -

Man: I'm rolling Aaron, you tell us when you are.

Man: We're ready to go again.

Man: Sorry I had to interrupt.

Ter: Maynard, one thing about your dad and his brothers, he had four brothers, right?

Lon: Right.

Ter: Now did they all lose their farms too or what happened? Did any of them stay on?

Lon: They stayed on and pretty much went the same way with them as far as the farms. Most of the farmers up there in that area lost their farms or they refinanced with the loan company or whatever you had to do so.

Ter: Now what's your of your nine brothers and sisters I guess, what were -

Lon: Well I say I had five sisters. They each had five brothers so.

Ter: Now wait say that again.

Lon: Anyway there was 10 of us, a family of five girls and five boys so.

Ter: What were their names?

Lon: My oldest sister was named Venbla - V-E-N-B-L-A and his married an Arthur Johnson. And then my brother Elmer was next and he had three sons that are still living out in Oregon and his wife's name was came from Hinderborman family. And then let's see there was after Elmer then there was Nellie, married a John Holmberg. And Amy married a Elmore Arnold. And Tillie married a Bill Bonderson. And Hilder married an Ivar Larson. And then I had a brother Walter, just about six years older than me. And he married out in California, but they never had any children. So the only children - my oldest brother had three boys and then my sister Tillie Bonderson had three girls. So let's see there weren't that many cousins in our family.

Ter: Now are any of the - your brothers and sisters still alive?

Lon: None of them now.

Ter: None of them now.

Lon: No.

Ter: Now, okay I was going to guess you - okay, you went off to college. Where did you go to college? Oh, wait before we did that. I want to ask one more question about the dust storm. Did the dust ever come through the cracks in the building?

Lon: It was terrible. And then like on our buildings, the barn and the house too, it would just peel the paint off from the outside. And I know our barn had cracks between the boards because of the dust just took all the pain off. And the dust would get into all of the feed. Cattle would have to chew on half dust and half hay, whatever.

Ter: I didn't - I never thought about that. That would be awful. I mean they go after the feed with regular gusto or how?

Lon: Oh, it was awful. And then we didn't - couldn't raise anything, crops, and the government had what they called idle acres. They paid farmers to let the land stay idle, thinking that would help it. On that the thistles grew up, these Russian thistles. And I know one year we - I brought one of my brothers and went over and mowed down a whole field of thistles from another farm or another place. We hauled that home and stacked it and sprinkled a little salt in there and the cattle ate it.

Ter: No kidding. They ate the thistles, wow.

Lon: Well they were young and tender yet.

Ter: So it wasn't going to rip them up inside? Did - so what were your chores around the farm? What kind of stuff did you have to do? As the youngest one did you get out of all the work?

Lon: No, I had my share of it, milking cows and feeding the pigs and with the chickens and all of that, all of the stuff on a farm.

Ter: Did you have sheep? Did you have what kind of -

Lon: We didn't have sheep on our farm.

Ter: How many cattle did you have to have?

Lon: Oh, I think the peak as I recall maybe 25 cattle and some were feeder cattle for selling and some were milk cows.

Ter: And did you learn how to ride a horse?

Lon: I had a good horse to ride, very good one and -

Ter: What was his name?

Lon: Peanuts. My -

Ter: What was good about him?

Lon: Excellent. A horse well trained as a riding horse. Peanuts' mother was one of the best cattle horses in the country and her name was Spider because of her long legs. And she belonged to one of my older brothers and when she had Peanuts this older brother told my brother Walter, who was immediately older than me, and I that we could have him if we -

Ter: Say that again, that's okay.

Lon: He said that you can have him if you take good care of him. So we went out - I don't know why we named him Peanuts but it is probably the first thing we could find to feed him or something. But he grew up with a lot of the characteristics of his mother Spider as far as being a good cattle horse and very fast.

Man: We are going to turn that refrigerator we need to turn that to off.

Man: Okay, we're rolling.

Ter: So what - why was Peanuts a good cattle horse? What does that mean?

Lon: He could practically sit in the saddle and they just know what to do to cut cattle. They - and his mother Spider when people would travel down to another pasture maybe four or five miles away why they'd usually come and get Spider and she could - all you had to do was just be sure you sat in the saddle and stayed in there. Never had to give any directions. That's really fun to watch a good cattle horse. They know what to do.

Ter: Did you really like enjoy riding and all that kind - or that was every kid had on the farm had to do or -

Lon: Oh, I enjoyed it a lot and still enjoy it and horses up until just recently as far as going out trail riding around here in Colorado and that. Our banker in town in Bristow, Nebraska was down in the town south about 35 miles at O'Neill when a dust storm came up and he was concerned about his family and everything else. And of course he drove fairly fast, but then with the wind and the dust coming right at him it made it even faster as far as the

dust hitting the car. When he got home there wasn't a speck of pain on the front of his car. There wasn't any paint left on the license plate. The windshield and the headlights were all pitted. That was - and then the -

Ter: That must have been scary, I mean being in them must have been scary, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: First time. Do you remember the first one or do you -

Lon: Oh, not necessarily. Then the -

Ter: What was the sound like? What did it sound like? The sound of the sand, the dust hitting the edge of the barn or at school.

Lon: A lot like when you get sleet out here you know just sharp sound hitting. Then the grasshoppers, when they couldn't find anything else to eat went to the telephone poles and they creosote on the bottom of the poles they liked that and they would eat through until the pole just was suspended by the telephone wire. And so long stretches where all these telephone poles were hanging by the line just dangling and grasshoppers. Neighbor of mine that left a pitchfork and his leather gloves out in the field. When he came back to get them the next day the pitchfork handle was so pitted you couldn't hardly use it and all that was left of the gloves were little metal grommets. They had eaten all the leather.

Man: I'm hearing a far away fire siren. So Aaron, I'm ready again whenever you are.

Man: So call it.

Ter: So was there something else you were going to say that before I went back and asked you again about the dust storm or?

Lon: Oh, I think that pretty well covers it.

Ter: Okay.

Lon: Dust storm, grasshoppers, and -

Ter: No locusts?

Lon: All those good things.

Ter: Okay. So well when you when you went to college, where was the college at and where you'd - 1938 right?

Lon: That was at that time it was North Park College. Now it is life a lot of others North Park University. And rather small church school and that's - but I had in mind that I wanted to

pursue some scientific field like either chemical engineering or electrical engineering. So I took practically all the - my courses in math and science, which turned out to be real help in later when we started a school because I had a good background in math and science.

Ter: When you ran the Covenant, let's just skip ahead just briefly to that? Did you teach all the - there's a picture of you teaching physics, right?

Lon: Yeah. Taught all of the sciences, general science, physics, and chemistry, biology. And then almost any math class and the same way later when I was at the teacher or school in Minneapolis. I taught mostly science math classes there.

Ter: Was it sometimes hard to get science teachers than other fields? Was that more difficult sometimes?

Lon: Probably. And that's why I was fortunate because, especially when I was at Minnehaha Academy in Minneapolis. They would have their registration day and they'd get all the classes set and there was always a class that was left - they never expected the enrollment. Maybe geology, it might be algebra, it might be physics and then they'd give that to me so. There were times when I didn't know what I was going to teach until the day before. That didn't matter.

Ter: Did you - so when you went to college, once again the name of the college you went to?

Lon: North Park.

Ter: North Park. No, no, but the college you went to as a student originally in 1938?

Lon: North Park College.

Ter: Oh, it was North Park then, oh, in Chicago. So was the -

Lon: Chicago.

Ter: Okay. So and so was your family in the Covenant Church back in Nebraska?

Lon: Right.

Ter: Were they all members I - so you were raised in the Covenant Church?

Lon: Right.

Ter: Anything that distinguished the Covenant Church from the other Swedish main line because the Covenant was a break off, right, in the - wasn't that kind of how it started?

Lon: Well it really had its start in Sweden sort of the pietistic movement over in Sweden and I don't think they intended to start a separate denomination but it almost came by default because they - when they got over to America they wanted to be separate from the state church of Sweden. It was just they had been with that for time they grew up and so when they came over they wanted to be separate. But it was interesting that the early name of the church was the Swedish Mission or Swedish Evangelical Lutheran. They had tried out different names and then finally I think it was around 1930 they said well let's pick our own name and they picked it, the Covenant Church then.

Ter: But you grew up in the church and your dad he was a member of - I mean -

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: How many people were in that church back in Nebraska? What was it - was it a small -

Lon: Small, probably 50, 60 members at a peak, something like that.

Ter: And did that include all his brothers, their families, were they all in the same?

Lon: Not all of them. Some of them went to the Lutheran Church in town of his brothers and that. So they weren't all there, but it is interesting though that these five brothers stuck together and they are all buried in the same cemetery just in one row, which I think is unusual. I don't think many families had migrated that far and stuck together.

Ter: That's interesting and do you remember the names of his brothers? If you don't, that's okay, but I was just - do you remember their names?

Lon: Oh, yeah. It was John was the oldest one and then Sam and then Andrew. My dad was Peter and then the youngest one was Charlie.

Ter: And they're all buried together?

Lon: Just -

Ter: In what -

Man: Terrence, have to change tapes.

Ter: Okay.

Man: And I'm hearing.

Ter: Okay.

Man: This is a good -

Ter: Let's just see.

Man: You could try it.

Ter: How are you doing, Maynard? There's a glass of water there for you.

Man: Yeah, it's a pretty warm day, isn't it?

Ter: Yeah.

Lon: I would say -

Man: I'm fine. I just wanted to make sure that you all were comfortable. We don't want to you know anyone to be too warm and uncomfortable, but.

Ter: I have to watch it my feet fall asleep sometimes. I'm trying not to move so you could move around whenever you need. We'll just redo it. Is there an original copy of this picture some where do you know of the four brothers or is it just.

Lon: Well I have it I'm sure some place.

Ter: Okay, well we could maybe even get we could get it later or something. Maybe we could get a digital copy of it or maybe your daughter can get it for us. One thing that I - tell me when you're ready boys. I'll just keep talking.

Man: We're rolling.

Ter: We're rolling, okay. So the father's name was - why don't you just say their father's name and you said it was Joe Johnson or no, what was it?

Lon: Johan Swenson was his name and so his children then became whatever their given name and then would be Johnson.

Ter: A son of Johnson basically in other I mean son of John?

Lon: Well that took on different spellings over the years too and -

Ter: Why don't you just read the names of what would be the Swedish names of the brothers would have been? That's kind of interesting, just the five brothers?

Lon: Swen Johan and Anders Gustaf, Solomon Edward, Peter Alfred, and Carlie August. That became John and Andrew and Sam and Peter, and Charlie. Then they had a little girl that died in infancy, a little sister.

Ter: Well that is remarkable that they stayed together. That much have showed that they you know they got along okay, more than okay. That they stuck it out. One thing - well we can look at that, let me put it down here.

Lon: Want to hand me the other books.

Ter: Now is that a memoir that you have written there or?

Lon: Yeah, that's the story of my life through the college up in Alaska, Matanuska. This is my father's when he got his citizenship.

Ter: I see. Well we can maybe take a look at that later and then it would be great if we could get a Xerox of that - copy of that too because. I love Hubbard floors but they just get so dusty, okay, that's sort of - that is kind of like the dust storm, huh.

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Is that what reminded of you when you saw that cartoon?

Lon: Oh, right away. That was the famous remarks of the women when company would come when they say well I just dusted before the dust storm.

Ter: Because it would be covered with dust, right? Yeah. Yeah.

Lon: And then the farmer's springtime they say well I wonder whose farm we're farming this year. Top soil come from South Dakota all over you know.

Ter: You know just one more thing about the farm. Did - was your dad sort of did he feel - how did he feel after they lost the farm? Was that a big sort of sad thing in his life or was he resigned to it or what was the - his reaction?

Lon: I think it was you know he was expecting it. He saw it around him. Others same thing happening and my brother that went to California started working for Douglas Aircraft Company and he could have you know taken it over easy enough. My dad asked him if he wanted too and buy it or take it and he said well I don't want a dead horse on my hands so he just washed his hands of it. But then when the folks moved into town why he bought them a house so they could live in.

Ter: And they passed away there? Did they stay in that town or?

Lon: Yeah. See they moved in in '38 and my mother and father passed away the same year in - well, it was the year we went to Alaska, so it would be '46, something like that.

Ter: I see. Well you went to college you went out to 1938 is when you started in college, right, yourself and what year did you graduate then?

Lon: Well it took me three years to get through the junior college. It was a junior college then because I had to get a job and work and so I took one year of college, summer school, and then the rest of it all through night classes. And I worked in a sewing machine factory.

Ter: In Chicago?

Lon: In Chicago. And that proved pretty valuable because I learned a lot about machinery there. That big milling machine, drilling machines, and the like.

Ter: Was this a factory that made small sewing machines or was it - what was it?

Lon: Industrial.

Ter: How big were they?

Lon: Well I think the biggest one I saw must have had a head of about eight, nine feet. They could sew anything, big canvas and all kinds of things.

Ter: Okay. So what year was that then that you graduated? That was 1941?

Lon: '41.

Ter: Okay. So where were you when the war broke out or when the -

Lon: I had gone back to Nebraska. Had surgery that summer and then I was staying with my sister and brother-in-law in - out in Nebraska recuperating and that was in '41 when they started the draft. That came before the war broke out and there were three of us that we asked to be on the draft board to sign up people. So we signed each other up and then everybody else all day just a parade and got everybody registered.

Ter: Now so were you on the draft board?

Lon: Not the draft board, just the actual signing people where they registered so I wasn't on the draft board.

Ter: So and were you drafted then or did you have a deferment or what was the -

Lon: Well that's in the fall of '41 I was mentioned I was staying with my sister and brother-in-law and they had a farm, oh, here, yeah that my -

Ter: That's okay.

Man: I didn't hear it.

Ter: You go ahead. You have to replace the battery or.

Lon: Need to change the battery.

Ter: Okay, that's all right.

Man: Let's just stop for a minute.

Ter: Tim, I can't remember. Maynard, speaking of that in a way how did you - was there any particular incident that made you hard of hearing or is that working in the factory or do you know? Cause I would say with Tom - Judge Stewart, he said it was pretty clear to him working in the mine and they didn't have ear protection in those days.

Lon: I'm not sure what affected my right ear, but that's - I had the hearing loss there for a long time. I know one time a dentist up in Alaska and he was in there drilling for about two hours and terrible noise and I got out of there and had vertigo for about three weeks. Just you know lose your sense of balance.

Ter: Yeah, so that's awful, oh man.

Lon: My left ear is not too bad with a hearing aid I do pretty good with it so.

Ter: Oh, yeah you really do seem to pick up most everything so. But anyway so we were talking about the draft board and you were living on the farm in 1941 or helping out I guess with - not on the farm, but you're helping with your brother is that right?

Lon: Well I was staying with my sister and brother-in-law recuperating from surgery and during this time and then I'll try to make this story short, but my brother-in-law was the lay leader for the local Methodist Church right near their farm in the town. And he just told me one day that he said well our pastor is going to be gone and he said you're going to speak. And I said well I haven't been to seminary or Bible school or anything and he said, yeah, but he said we're all farmers we haven't even been off the farm. And he wouldn't take no for an answer so I said okay. And that's how I got started you might say in the ministry.

And then about a week or two later a big black car drove into his yard and he called me over and introduced me to the district superintendent of the Methodist Church and he said I've got a church I want you to go out and see. And that was out at Royal, Nebraska. So I went out there and when - then he conferred with the people and he came back he said well I'm going to appoint you pastor out there. I think I was 20 years old and went out there and just one thing after another and unknown to me he had written to the draft board and he said now we're losing ministers and he is covering a big area and so I got - when I got in the mail my classification as 4D and then of course I stayed in the ministry ever since that I was. I tried a couple times to join the service and both times just the last minute something came up and I didn't.

Ter: So from the beginning you were - you basically got sort of drafted into the ministry?

Lon: I suppose you could almost call it that. It was - and I look back. It's - I - at the years the way they've turned out I probably was able to do through the ministry you know, although in a retirement home like this I imagine 90 percent at least are veterans or more. So not too many of us that things just worked out we didn't get into the service.

Ter: Well so when you were then in the - you ended up being the pastor of this church, 20 years old. What happened then? Because you obviously didn't stay a Methodist so you went into the Covenant some how but did you go back to school or what about that?

Lon: Yeah, see then I wanted to stay at that church through the next year. I mean I really enjoyed it then. A lot of young people and talk about horseback riding. Every kid had a horse and that was our outings was to go out horseback riding in the evenings or daytime and I really wanted to stay on there. The district superintendent came and he said well I'm not going to let you stay here. There are too many nice girls. He said I know what happens. You end up and you get married, you don't have your education complete and he said I'm stuck with a lot of ministers like that. So he said you pick your college and wherever you want to go and I'll see that you have a church to serve while you're in the college. And it ended up that I went to Nebraska Wesleyan in Lincoln and they assigned me to a church there in Lincoln. And after a year or two then I wanted to go on to the seminary and that is when I transferred back to North Park Seminary. So I had about a two-year outing then with the Methodist Church, otherwise back in the Covenant.

Ter: You went back on the straight and narrow.

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Returned from your wild youthful fling with Methodists.

Lon: From the string, yeah.

Ter: Yeah, that's right, yeah. Well what was the - so what year did you graduate from North Park, what year was that?

Lon: You mean the seminary?

Ter: The seminary I mean.

Lon: '46.

Ter: '46. And so how did you get to Alaska because that was - how did that work out and when did you first hear about the -

Lon: Well my wife Lorraine was in nurses training and she graduated in '44 and we got married in '45. And then when I finished seminary I thought I would stay home and go to some college and get my degree. And that summer in '46 I got a call from the head of the

mission department. When he talked to me he said would you go to Alaska for - he mentioned specifically to replace the missionary at Yakutat, who was going to take a furlough. He said it would be about a year to 18 months. I said sure. And -

Ter: Had you ever heard of I mean have you ever thought about being in Alaska before that?

Lon: No, not particularly.

Ter: Did you know where Yakutat was?

Lon: No. I knew it was up north some place and so while I was in the seminary serving churches in Chicago area and this field director's wife - he and his wife had been missionaries in Alaska and she spoke in a church I was serving and made a remark I said I think if I ever went to any place -

End of Side A

Lon: I'd like to go to Alaska over Africa or some place like that. And when they were apparently talking about getting somebody temporarily she mentioned that to her husband and that somebody had called in. So before we knew it we were on the way into Yakutat.

Ter: Now why did you say going to Alaska I mean was sort of sounded more interesting or what was the -

Lon: I just frontier and wide-open space - it just had an appeal, which it still does. I mean I don't know why I'm in Colorado now when you'd rather be back up there. Well, you know you're up there.

Ter: That's right. Well I can't stand Alaska though. I'm just waiting to get out, sometimes. No I'm only kidding. But let's back up one thing Maynard how did you meet your wife? You said she was in nurses training, but how did you first meet?

Lon: She had one year when she attended based in North Park College before she entered nurses training and I met her that year and it was kind of love at first sight as far as I was concerned, but she was determined to go to nurses training. In those days the nurses couldn't get married, so that meant a three-year break where we couldn't do much dating or anything.

Ter: Because in those years if she was married she would have to drop out of the nurses training?

Lon: Right.

Ter: Is that right?

Lon: Especially that school. There might have been some others, I'm not sure, but not (inaudible) Covenant in Chicago.

Ter: So did she complete her nurses training then?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: And then you were married the next year?

Lon: Right.

Ter: It is too bad it didn't work out, huh? How long have you been married now?

Lon: Fifty-nine years.

Ter: Fifty-nine years. Yeah. Isn't that amazing? That's wonderful. Fifty-nine or is it or 60. Sixty years next year.

Lon: Next year.

Ter: That's right, yeah. So how did it and your wife's is Lorraine?

Lon: Lorraine.

Ter: What was her maiden name?

Lon: Lundstedt - L-U-N-D-S-T-E-D-T was her maiden name.

Ter: That's a good Irish name, huh?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: So she was Swedish too? Her family was Swedish as well?

Lon: Right.

Ter: Yeah. Did - so what did Lorraine think of going to Alaska when this happened? What -

Lon: Well -

Ter: Because you were going to go as a team, right? I mean clearly -

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: And she was going to be the nurse?

Lon: When I asked or when I was asked if I would go up there for I said sure and he said well you better talk to Lorraine first. And I said well I know what she'll say. And so I came home and I said well I know where we're going now and she said where. And I said Alaska and she said great. She said can I call and tell my folks. I said I think I better confirm it so that it isn't just a rumor, but she was game right from the word go. And has followed or I don't know if you could say followed but wherever we have been led in the work up in Alaska she is right there with it so.

Ter: Well that's wonderful. Well tell me about how you'd get to Yakutat? What steamer did you take? What was - did you go to Seattle I guess? Did you take the train out to Seattle or did you fly or how did you -

Lon: I drove a car for a company to San Francisco, a new car. Those days that cars were being shipped out West and then I think we took the train to Seattle. And then we were supposed to go by boat and we got into Seattle and Alaska Steamship Company was on strike. We stayed there for about a week and they decided that was going to a long strike so they said you better fly up there. So I went up on Pan Am I think it was to Juneau and then Yakutat.

Ter: Did - was that the first time you were ever on an airplane? Had you been on an airplane before?

Lon: I think that was our first time.

Ter: And that was a big strike that year. I remember - I guess that was - I don't remember but that was the post-war strike, right because it was '46?

Lon: '46.

Ter: What day - when did you arrive in Yakutat? What time was that? What month of the year was that?

Lon: Probably August or September something like that.

Ter: So you landed in Yakutat. What did you think when you got there? Did you think oh no?

Lon: Well it was very fascinating, beautiful country, beautiful mountain ranges around there. The town had a military base located there because of the Japanese presence and so forth and that had a tremendous affect on the town. Apparently it was a somewhat quiet, peaceful town before that and the presence of thousands of military just changed the town completely. So it was in a way a very difficult place to do any work.

Ter: How did it change it, you mean there was a lot of liquor and stuff?

Lon: Liquor and I don't think there was a young girl that could grow up there and was hardly safe in the area. And I think - I forget I looked at the statistics of the births over that

period of time and it was kind of a sad story to read the parentage of the ones that were born. They had a lot - and then the liquor.

Ter: And no father, basically no one being around, the fathers, yeah.

Lon: Then also in '46 the fresh fish buyers came in. They hadn't been able to before the war was over. And they stayed out about three and a half, four miles off the coast, which would be international waters and the people would bring their fish out and sell and otherwise Libby's Cannery had gotten the fish over the years. And they were getting I think a dollar twenty-five for sockeye salmon and these people would bring boatloads out there and they would pay them cash but always give them a little liquor besides. And they'd go back out there and buy more liquor. So many of the fishermen ended up in the fall with no money, just - and they had no way to get back into town because Libby's wouldn't transport them back on the railroad, Yakutat and Southern.

Ter: Because the railroad was that railroad running then when you got there?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Yakutat and Southern, where did it go from?

Lon: From Yakutat out to the fishing area.

Ter: About how far was that, about how many -

Lon: About 16 miles.

Ter: So what kind of railroad was that, that's a little - was it a narrow gauge kind of?

Lon: Probably.

Ter: Actually I didn't remember that was running then.

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: And was there a cannery there? Did Libby's have a cannery right there?

Lon: In Yakutat?

Ter: Yeah.

Lon: Yeah, Libby's Cannery.

Ter: So what was that - was that really the main employment in the town?

Lon: Right. And people could go there and get credit during the winter - Libby's I think treated the people very good and then when they'd get the fish they'd clear up their debts and then have a little reserve left over and life when on. Until '46 it just shattered that whole thing.

Ter: And then that was because of the liquor and -

Lon: The fresh fish buyers. And the government tried to get them to stop it. See they were outside of the boundary - they were in international waters is where they did their business.

Ter: Well now is Yakutat supposed to be a dry village? Was it illegal to have the alcohol in there or was it you know -

Lon: Oh, I wouldn't say it was dry. It probably had been pretty dry, but after you know the military in there and this other, it was pretty (inaudible) stated that way.

Ter: Now how long did you stay at Yakutat? How long did that stay -

Lon: One year.

Ter: One year.

Lon: And we would have stayed longer but the church wanted us to move to Unalakleet to help start a children's home because my wife was a nurse and there was a lot of maintenance and I had a lot of experience with machinery and things like that. So we went on up to Unalakleet then that next summer.

Ter: Now how did you get up there? How did you get there?

End of Tape 2

Ter: I think I might have heard that they might have saved a locomotive or something of it, but basically it was a fish hauler. Is that what they used to haul the fish in from the fish - where the ships would have docked?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Because why did they need it or why not bring it right to the cannery? Is it because there is no -

Lon: Well it was pretty rough waters out around.

Ter: Oh, I see.

Lon: That area so in other words the fishermen would have to take you know bring them in or out and this worked out a lot better.

Ter: And safer.

Lon: The town of Yakutat had decided they would like to have some electricity and there was the - around the cannery was the new village and around the corner, way down the coast about a mile was the old village where a lot of the Natives still live down there. And our mission house or compound was right on the edge as you went into the old village. So I had about half mile or three-quarters walk into town to get our mail and stuff. Always had a rain jacket in my backpack because it just rain would come just instantly. And anyway they got a idea and I don't know where they got this light plant, but it was the one cylinder. It stood vertical and then big flywheels and it had the generator that operated off of a belt and then they had a line that ran down through the new village and anybody wanting electricity could tap onto that. I don't know how much they had to pay.

One night, I don't know what exactly what happened. But the belt broke and it whipped around and caught the line that went out and it pulled it into the flywheel. Literally the whole stretch of wire all through the new village was pulled in there and there was a great big ball of wire on that flywheel. There was the China man that had a restaurant, Lin Loe was his name and when the lights went out he had his flashlight right there and he went out and it just whipped it right out of his hand and that wire was going by. It could have taken his hand off, but made quite a story that the electricity went out and they rolled up the wire. Unfortunately, I didn't have a good camera, but I don't know if anybody ever took a picture of that big ball of wire on that flywheel.

Ter: I've heard of rolling the sidewalks up.

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: But that's something.

Lon: That was something else.

Ter: So what happened? Did they ever get it back on line or what happened?

Lon: Oh, yeah, eventually they got -

Ter: They'd string it back out?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Was this wire sitting on the ground or was it like on a pole?

Lon: No, it was up on poles.

Ter: That's really amazing. When you lived in Yakutat did you live in the house that in the old Swedish - the old teachers' house or?

Lon: Yeah. It was an old house, very old house and Yakutat I think they have about 130 inches of precipitation a year. Ketchikan has more, but 130 is plenty and when it would rain water would come under the front door and the back door at the same - I mean it downpour and water would get in both the front door and the back door.

Ter: And would meet in the middle?

Lon: Yeah, in the middle of the house.

Ter: So what did you - cause you had never lived in such a rainy place before obviously. I mean did you have any idea what the weather was going to be like when you?

Lon: No, no. Not the way (inaudible).

Ter: And so you always had your boots and your rain jacket with you?

Lon: Always carried it and usually had boots on as footwear and then a little backpack for groceries and mail and I always had a little rain jacket in there.

Ter: And did you have electricity in the house? You must have I guess of the line.

Lon: Oh we were out in the old village so we weren't part of that.

Ter: So you didn't have any electricity?

Lon: No.

Ter: And what did you heat with? Did you guys have wood or -

Lon: Oil. At that place we burned oil.

Ter: Now did - was there any boardwalks connecting the old village or was it just mud or what was the?

Lon: There were some boardwalks around in placed. I think later when we moved up to lived in (inaudible), Alaska, there they had quite a boardwalk all over and of course Nome had pretty much boardwalks there.

Ter: Well, so when you're leaving Yakutat and you are going to go out to Unalakleet, church has let you know.

Lon: Right.

Ter: Did you know where Unalakleet was?

Lon: Oh, I found it on the map and -

Ter: Did you know how to spell Unalakleet?

Lon: No. Not many people do. The - we went to Anchorage and then our missionary pilot met us there with a little Stinson and flew us out to Unalakleet.

Ter: Now that was in '47, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: But now so was that your first trip out to Anchorage, because when you went to Yakutat you just stayed in Yakutat basically right?

Lon: Yeah, pretty much so. I did have one trip up to Unalakleet for a conference. My wife didn't go along with. I was up there and then she had a couple trips to Juneau to bring in sick children into Juneau and that was some scary flights that she was on. Rain and snow or sleet. I don't know how those pilots did it around that country.

Ter: Where did they land at Yakutat? They did it on floats or was there a strip there?

Lon: There was a landing field that part of the military installation. Otherwise a lot of float planes in the bay.

Ter: I guess that is where the planes still land is that military airstrip I think so. Well so you went over to Anchorage. What were your first impressions of Anchorage when you first saw it, that would have been 1947 I guess probably?

Lon: Pretty small town at the time. I think Northern Lights Boulevard was the southern extremity but then Spenard Road went on angled out to the airport. Otherwise it was a really small town then yet.

Ter: Did you meet cause we talked the other day you met Jenny Rasmuson, but did you meet her that time or maybe that was later on, you know the missionary at Yakutat?

Lon: I met her - I mentioned that I had gone to Unalakleet and I went through Anchorage and that was when I went in and visited her in the hotel that she was living in.

Ter: And Mr. Rasmuson, was he there I guess because this was '47, so he was still alive, but I don't know if he was in Anchorage so if you ever met him?

Lon: Oh, her husband?

Ter: Yeah, E.A. I'm not sure.

Lon: I don't think. She was a widow I believe.

Ter: When you met her?

Lon: Met her.

Ter: I see, okay. Well, so you went out to Unalakleet in what year that would have been forty -

Lon: '47.

Ter: '47, so what was that like out there? Your wife was going to be the nurse.

Lon: Right.

Ter: What are the challenges that she faces as a nurse? What was the major health problem?

Lon: Oh, it was tuberculosis. There was hardly a family that wasn't affected by it and many of the children were left with either one parent. If it was the father, he couldn't take care of them. He had to hunt and trap so that was one of the big reasons the children's home was started was to take care of these orphans and half-orphans and that was a big enough challenge. Then of course the village they were supposed to have a government nurse there, but about half the time they didn't. And then usually if they did have one there then she traveled to other villages. And my wife would end up doing the nursing in the village.

Ter: Was she actually employed as a nurse too by the mission or who did it work? Were you working for the government?

Lon: For the church. My wife was never employed by the government or any village. All of her nursing was just gratis.

Ter: So and so basically what income the two of you received was what you got from the church basically?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: So it was nothing from the government at all -

Lon: No.

Ter: They didn't ever help out?

Lon: No.

Ter: Man that must not have been very much money. I mean how much you know.

Lon: Didn't need much money.

Ter: Well -

Lon: Just go and get some fish and lot of subsistence that way.

Ter: How much did you get paid, do you remember what the -

Lon: No, I don't. I couldn't figure it out as well - it wasn't very much. Basically enough to order - we'd order bulk groceries from Seattle and if we would have had to go to the store and buy over-the-counter all our food it wouldn't have been enough so we usually put in our order for and the ships came up there once or twice in the summer. So you put in your order for the whole year, flour and sugar and milk and whatever.

Ter: What volume, do you remember Maynard, about how much you'd buy for a year and how much you know flour. I mean would it be a whole pallet or how much would the size take when the groceries finally came you know, I guess it would be a lot of room it was a whole year's worth of supplies?

Lon: Yeah, it - as far as volume, probably five sacks of sugar, five sacks of flour and maybe 40 cases of milk and that would be the dry milk.

Ter: Not the condensed milk, I mean it was just powdered milk, right?

Lon: Mostly powdered milk.

Ter: Did you ever get any fruit or stuff like that?

Lon: Very, very little, except that's why we grew so fond of the cranberries that we could buy. And we'd usually go out - they'd put in milk cartons, especially the town north of us Shageluk. We'd buy two or three of those and have cranberries all winter and blueberries. That was basically our fruit.

Ter: Did - so you're in this situation where - but when you got to Unalakleet, did you have to build a house or was there -

Lon: No, there as an old house that was built around the turn of the century and at the time it was pretty apparently a pretty nice house. It had two story with four kind of bedrooms on the second floor and during the Gold Rush days miners would come through and Unalakleet was the route if they came up from St. Michael or if they over from Kaltag, either way, and they would end up staying. Oh, the visitors list is really long in the old mission house and then they'd always say well if I strike it rich I'll help you out. And some of them did. They came back and they had enough money and gave them so they - I think that's how that house got built.

Ter: And that's the house you moved into?

Lon: Right.

Ter: Right.

Lon: But that was pretty old by that time.

Ter: So did you have to fix it up?

Lon: Well that house got fixed up so many times that it was cold, poor insulation. We'd spill some water on the floor and ice right away. My wife had little mukluks and wool socks made for the kids and they them during the daytime in the house, otherwise their feet would be cold. So when they were ready to go out and play why they'd just slip a parka on and take off.

Ter: Cause they already had their boots on?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: So it wasn't going to remove your boots when you come into the house?

Lon: Not -

Ter: Put your boots on before you leave the house, yeah. The - so your job is building the home basically for the orphans, right?

Lon: Well I helped on the construction. I did practically all the wiring in that building and then in 1954 I think it was they were able to get a lease on some government buildings in White Mountain and they moved the children's home up there.

Ter: So but the children's home was still run by the Covenant, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: So that was your primary responsibility was running that home, right? Was that your -

Lon: Well I had the church to take care of.

Ter: Oh, and the church too, yeah. So you were the regular minister and pastor. Did you do the whole range of stuff that ministers do - funerals, weddings?

Lon: Everything. You never knew in the morning what you were going to be doing. And we had a - well and the house was old. We burned wood and then they burned wood in the church. And the people would go out and gather some and we had a hold of a D4 cat that was a Army veteran in itself that had been out on the Aleutians and had a couple of bullet

holes through the thick plate behind and we - long story, but got that from Nome through Nome and on down and -

Ter: Got it barged down there. Did you bring it down on the barge?

Lon: Yeah. And I had to learn to drive that thing and maintain it and so I - there was an awful lot of time spent in just staying alive. Hauling wood, hauling water and all of these different things.

Ter: Didn't offer a lot of time for reflection and you know -

Lon: No, and not a lot of time for what you thought you were supposed to be doing you know the mission work - church work and that and but we survived that.

Ter: Now when you - when the home was built, how many kids did you say - how many kids did you have in the home?

Lon: I think we ended up with about 30 and our missionary pilot was flying them in from all the villages.

Ter: Do you remember his name? Who the pilot?

Lon: Roal Dominson.

Ter: Oh that's Roal Dominson, okay.

Lon: And a -

Ter: He was named after the explorer obviously, right?

Lon: Something like that, yeah. But we almost treaded seeing the plane come because we knew it would be another kid he'd be bringing.

Ter: And probably always the room for one more kind of philosophy, right, I think what you operated on? So were there bunk beds or how was it - was it a big dormitory or what was the?

Lon: Well in that building that was built for the children's home we did - I don't remember just how we got bunk beds in there but probably through Army surplus in Anchorage something like that.

Ter: And you and Lorraine were responsible 24 hours a day for all those kids, right?

Lon: Just about.

Ter: So you had 30 kids. It was like having a family of 30 children, right?

Lon: And two of them were youngest two were in diapers and she had to take care of. We had a little light plant in the basement of that building, a little Onan and it was used during the construction of the building cause it had automatic start soon as you turn a power saw on the light plant would kick in. And it was in the corner of the building, the basement, with the exhaust pipe running out into a big barrel and then there was this exhaust from there about 10 feet up in the air and that was instead of a muffler I mean it was used that way.

And we had a terrible snowstorm one Christmas and the light plant gave out and a friend of mine, one of the Laplanders that was living there he came over and helped me and we overhauled it in the dark with little kerosene lantern and took it all apart and cleaned it out. We got it running and we shut it off and then the next day morning was Christmas day. I think it was Christmas or Thanksgiving, one or the other and we started it up in the morning and one of the girls that was missionary helping and she went with me over to the church and she got called back because the other one got sick and then the kids were sick. We thought it was the flu and went out in the village and everybody said oh they must have the flu in there. They were throwing up and it was just terrible. And we had shut the light plant off then during the daytime and in the afternoon we started it again and everybody got nauseated again. And had a pretty good idea what it was. And I went out and the snowstorm had plastered that side of the building and it literally covered the end of that spout there 10 feet up in the air. And I got a long stick and I poked a hole in the and got the exhaust going out again. But we thought about that and I got it written up in my book here, the guardian angel or something because I could just see headquarters, the newspapers, 18 children orphanage in Unalakleet also suffocate from carbon monoxide poisoning. You look back and it is scary.

Ter: Yeah, how close that was, yeah, yeah. And that wouldn't be a good recommendation for your last job.

Lon: That would have been my last job too if I would have stayed in that building.

Ter: Yeah because everybody CO poisoning.

Lon: See I was going out in the village around and talking to people so I missed a lot of it for myself.

Ter: Now when the electric plant was that - did that - so there were hours you didn't want people to turn on lights and stuff or?

Lon: Oh, yeah. We had to ration out and just certain hours and they'd do the laundry and ironing and things like that and then we shut it back off. Later when we had the building turned over to the high school I was able to get a diesel light plant and we found that was cheaper to run day and night.

Ter: Because the first one what was the fuel the first one?

Lon: Gasoline

Ter: It was just a gasoline.

Lon: Two cylinder.

Ter: It was like a lawn mower basically right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Boy that would have been noisier than all get out. I mean it must have been I mean.

Lon: And the problem was that we couldn't ship in good gasoline, well we could from Seattle, but there was the Army had a lot of gasoline up at a Army post north of us and high water had taken that and washed those barrels way out in the flats and people would go there and put a barrel of that gas on and bring it in and sell it. We bought some of that but that was a high octane for airplanes and they'd run in this little Onan for maybe a couple of months and then you had to stop and clean it all out again.

Ter: Well now during this time the Dew Line comes in, right, the Dew Line or was that already there when you got?

Lon: No, that came in about the time we started the high school in 1954 and '55 they built the road up and got the Dew Line in.

Ter: Well, let's talk about the high school then first because you were telling me how you got your - how you got the school going. So let's talk about that, what -

Lon: Well, they had -

Ter: Well, I guess the orphanage moved first, was that right?

Lon: Right, they moved up to White Mountain and actually had better facilities for a children's home up there. Those old government buildings and then had been living down in Marshall on the Yukon and they asked us to go up - back to Unalakleet and the mission station. We got back up there in '54.

Ter: So you went from Unalakleet down to Marshall?

Lon: Right for about two years.

Ter: Oh, I see, okay and Marshall is on the Yukon River, right?

Lon: Right.

Ter: Okay.

Lon: Very interesting village.

Ter: What were you doing down at Marshall? What was that - was the same -

Lon: Had a mission church and that was had become an old mining town and a lot of old sourdoughs living there. I mean just characters. I've got stories about several of them written up. I mean they were just fascinating characters.

And anyway we got back up to Unalakleet and some of the parents approached us and said that the early missionaries had started a grade school and that is why the old people can read and write so well and then the government took over grade schools and the (inaudible) came in. And they said would you consider starting a high school? And they said we don't want to send our kids way down to Edgumbe to 1300, 1400 miles down there and never see them for maybe two or three years.

And thought about it a little while and at that time the territory had a plan where anybody in the village where there was no school could ask the territory to pay for a correspondence courses, high school through the University of Nebraska and the grade school was that was another one, I don't know, it's Calvert System or something. But the only thing I could think of was to sign these kids up, have the parents put in applications for correspondence courses and then I would just hold regular classes for them. And I proposed that then to the lady who was head of the educational department in Juneau and territory and she fired a word right back, well if you're going to do that why don't you order textbooks from our adopted textbook list and just start a high school and we'll put you on the approved list. And we couldn't be accredited then or anything as yet. So I sent word back I said we don't have any certified teachers and I said I'm not certified to teach. She said well we'll take care of that. We'll send you a teacher's certificate. And so that came in the mail and good for one year and we got our school started.

And then the year was over I said now we still don't have teachers, certified teachers. We have a couple coming next year but that doesn't take care of the immediate year up ahead. And they said don't worry about that, we'll send you a principal certificate that gives you teaching privileges sand that's good for two years. So when they sent that and -

Ter: Then you were off to the races.

Lon: Off to the races.

Man: Just a little break here just to -

Ter: Magazine in the back that - that's amazing.

Lon: Then in '56 then we got Al and Gladys White up there.

Ter: Oh, these are the teachers yeah?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Well, that's amazing. Well we're about to talk about the convention here a little bit. You want to get up and take a rest or stretch your legs, okay.

Man: We can disconnect here.

Man: I can move this if you want to use the restroom.

Man: I can definitely feel that Terrence, that's pretty good. Yeah, we're rolling now.

Ter: It is a - you and Lorraine, is that you and Lorraine?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: And what's that picture of you on the dog sled or what was the -

Lon: Oh, that's - that must be Linda down in the sled.

Ter: Linda is in the sled. Your daughter is in the sled, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Now is that at Unalakleet, is that -

Lon: Yeah, that's the old church there.

Ter: Did you ever do anything with dogs out at Unalakleet I mean I wondered if you ever did you know cause basically with the transportation around you didn't really - no one really had dogs much back then, right, I mean in the villages, was there any?

Lon: When we arrived everybody had a dog team. Now they don't.

Man: Hold on a second.

Ter: So when you first got there did everybody have dogs is that in Unalakleet?

Lon: Well there were dog teams - practically every family had a dog team and like at conference time where the church is you know and they'd come from far away up and down the coast. You'd have maybe 300 visiting people or a 100 visiting people but three to four hundred visiting dogs, put up a howl.

Ter: And did - had anybody had snowmachines at that time?

Lon: They were just getting introduced, the snowmachine. Arctic Cat and Ski-Doo and some of those, but I don't this is when - no they came in quite a bit later around the 50's something like that.

Ter: But when you first got there the people were still using dogs to get around.

Lon: To get around, haul their wood and ice and go out hunting and trapping.

Ter: Now did you ever keep a dog team or did you ever need for one?

Lon: No, my neighbor who was the postmaster Frank Ryan had a beautiful dog team and three days a week he would (inaudible) or a fellow that would handle him would go out and meet the airplane and bring the mail in, passengers and that by dog team into town in the wintertime. And then on the other days the dogs would be idle and his daughter was going to exercise the dogs because they just aren't getting exercise. And they would take off just like a bolt of lightning, go about two and half three miles up the river and then they'd stop and they'd swing around. And she wasn't heavy enough on the brake to hold them and the dogs would come into town.

And Frank told me about this and he said that she is going to ruin those dogs. And at that time we were burning wood and I said if I can use the dogs and go out and cut wood, I'll bring you wood and ice back in and made a deal with me. So there was a young Native boy that usually went with me and we'd hook up those dogs and the first time they went out they pulled the same thing on me, just whirled right around. And I was heavy enough so they couldn't get started again and I was giving them the commands to turn and get back on the track and they looked at me and who are you? And then they stood there and I think it was 10, 15 minutes that we had a little mental deal going on. Finally kind of sheepishly they turned around and never had any problem after that. But if I had gotten off the sled and tried to run up you know and got the leader to turn around they would have been gone so.

Ter: Do you know why - why did they stop at two and a half miles - was there a certain point there that -

Lon: They figured out that was a good turning point for them and it was just about the same place every time you know.

Ter: How much farther up the river did you have to go to get the wood? How far was your wood?

Lon: I think all together we went seven, eight miles and then we'd cut wood and when we would get a sled load or two, then I'd go up with the D4 cat and pull it in.

Ter: Oh, I see so you just used the sled going up there and -

Lon: And cutting -

Ter: Not for bringing it back basically?

Lon: Just cutting it.

Ter: Is it a D4 is that what you said?

Lon: D4.

Ter: Did you have a sled that you could build behind it?

Lon: Big go devil what they call them and built behind there. Oh, we actually had two of them so I could up four and five cords of wood on each one and get that started down the river went along pretty good.

Ter: How did you handle your drinking water? You didn't have a well there did you? What did you do with -

Lon: We had a well under that building but it was brackish water. It was terrible. And so we would go up the river and haul water down in barrels in the summer time and in the winter we would haul ice in. We had an icehouse and then under the children's home there was about a 5,000 gallon cistern tank it was there and we'd haul water down and fill that up about every couple weeks or so.

Ter: How did you haul water down, with the cat or -

Lon: Yeah, with the D4 cat.

Ter: And was there a big like tank sitting on one of the sleds?

Lon: We had gotten a hold of a couple tanks that were each about 500 gallons. We'd roll them up on the sled and we had a pump and we'd go up and chop a hole in the ice and fill them up. Take about four or five trips in a day to fill that cistern.

Ter: And how often would it run dry? Would it be -

Lon: Sometimes too often. They liked the fresh water rather than the brackish water for everything, but we tried to limit it to you know cooking and maybe rinsing some clothes and things like that.

Ter: But did you have toilets at all in the home or was it just an outhouse or what was the - what did you -

Lon: You are well acquainted with the term of honey buckets. That is what we started with and after well about the time we were ready to leave Unalakleet the government had put in a septic system through the town and then they had flush toilets and so forth.

Ter: That was in the 1960's though, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: 1966 or so.

Lon: Right about the time we left. Only problem I guess about the first winter the (inaudible) froze up and then they really were in a mess there at Unalakleet. So -

Ter: Did they have like at Nome where you - like a line where you were supposed to dump the garbage out on the ice, did anybody do that or?

Lon: They did that at first and they had sort of an imaginary line that once you got started people would bring garbage and stuff way out there and dump it and hopefully in the spring why it would wash away. I remember when the health department came up and I was concerned about it. They said well once it gets turning around with the dissolution factor so great so you don't have to worry about anything. Might be true.

Ter: That's what the health department said?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: I don't think they do that now. I wonder if DEC or the EPA has the same attitude nowadays anymore. Did - so but hauling that water, what an immense amount of work. What about the ice? Now was the ice kept underground or was it just a shed you stuck the ice in, what was that?

Lon: It was half underground and built up over it.

Ter: And so that was the drinking water source for the wintertime?

Lon: Wintertime.

Ter: How big were the chunks of ice that you brought in?

Lon: The -

Ter: And how did you cut them, Maynard, how?

Lon: They were probably 18" long and at least 12" wide and four or five deep. At first they were going up there and sawing so the ice would break off and then it would float and they'd pull it out and finally they found that it was better to let the ice get real thick and then we had an excellent co-worker that came up he could just do anything with metal work and he mounted a saw and pulled behind the cat and it would saw ice down to about

five, six inches and then it was still solid under that and they'd go both ways and then you'd break up your first piece and after that why they just popped up with the ice pick.

Ter: And these how did you get them on the sled, so you say like -

Lon: Oh, well that was with an ice tongs and it was manual work pretty much.

Ter: But you know I see what you mean you had to spend many hours a day living right?

Lon: Living, right.

Ter: That is just what you just living. Must have been exhausting work though I mean.

Lon: It was on that. I mean there was just no end to it. Ice and water and then fishing and different things like that.

Ter: What about with the fishing? Did you like enjoy that or did anybody have any wheels down there or I don't know what did they do? What's the -

Lon: The people used basically gill nets to catch fish and or else a seine where a school of fish would come in and then you'd drop the seine around them and pull them on in. I got pretty handy at that.

Ter: Did you have a boat at all?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: What was the name of the boat?

Lon: Well the one that I built I don't think I gave it a name. It was kind of a first job, but it went pretty good in the water. That was -

Ter: But you built your own boat then too?

Lon: I built one yeah.

Ter: Did you have a kicker with it or -

Lon: Yeah. Little 10 horse Johnson I think it was.

Ter: So between that - what about hunting? Did any caribou ever down there or what's the -

Lon: The hunting was not very good around Unalakleet until there was a big fire in the Interior and moose and caribou started showing up. It drove them over and about the time we were ready to leave why it was pretty decent hunting there.

Ter: But from the 20 years there basically there wasn't much, right? There wasn't - did you ever get a moose down there at all or do you remember? Did you ever -

Lon: Most of my hunting was hunting rather than getting one.

Ter: It was the hunting part?

Lon: Right.

Ter: None of the bringing back home, yeah, well, that's good, that's like missionary work I guess in general or like you say.

Lon: Everything.

Ter: Amount of labor. Now you had four children, three children, how many?

Lon: Four.

Ter: And how many were born in Alaska? Who, what was the -

Lon: Three were born in Nome, Alaska and then the second one was born in Iowa when we were out on leave for a few months. So he doesn't claim Alaska from that standpoint.

Ter: Now so when Lorraine was pregnant then you brought her up when she was expecting up to the hospital in Nome, is that what you did?

Lon: Then our missionary pilot usually would fly down and bring her into Nome and had a doctor up there that delivered the two youngest I guess - Dr. Langson and he was a good doctor. But we were living down in the Yukon when I guess both John and Beth were born and they had a flight there from Marshall on up to Nome. And I remember with Beth she gave us a false alarm about a month early and our neighbor got on the radio in the night. He just kept calling. He had Alaska Airline radio phone and finally somebody picked it up and they called and got in contact with Bethel and they sent a Beaver out to get Lorraine and landed in the middle of the night. I went with him to Bethel

End of Side A

Lon: Strange thing happened but got in there and the labor pains stopped and she stayed down there about a week or so and then our pilot brought her up to Nome and so Beth was born in Nome too.

Ter: Did - what was it like having the kids in the school because well the elementary school was a BIA school, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: So for the young kids. Were there any other white kids in the school or were they the only ones or what was the -

Lon: We had - well even when we had the high school we had a mix of quite a few Caucasian, FAA workers and others around the country would send their kids there so we had maybe 10 percent were Caucasian.

Ter: And as elementary school though was a BIA - it wasn't a church school?

Lon: No.

Ter: Elementary was the BIA, right?

Lon: It was under the Bureau of Indian Affairs, yeah.

Ter: And so then let's talk about founding the school, because that is 1954, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: And you're coming back from Marshall and did you use the old orphanage, was that part of the building?

Lon: Yeah, that was the building that we were able to use for high school.

Ter: And so as you said you didn't have a certificate so they obliged and mailed you one.

Lon: Right.

Ter: I should try that. I mean that's a good idea you know, second career, just ask them. So what was it like what are the challenges of running that school cause you were the principal and the science teacher and what were the other teacher - did Lorraine teach at all or did -

Lon: She taught a Bible class, but she also was the school nurse and then she taught piano. That was one little benefit the kids had coming there. Anybody that wanted to take piano could get piano lessons. So we had some real good pianists that came out of there and she was a good teacher.

Ter: Did you ever run into Simeon Oliver? Do you know Simeon that wrote that book Son of the Smoky Sea? He wasn't up at Unalakleet, but you know, remember him? He was a piano player that -

Lon: Yeah I've heard of him and I don't know if I bumped him or not.

Ter: He wrote that music called the Aleutian Lullaby. I was just curious. So where did the piano come from? Did you have that shipped in or was that already there?

Lon: There was an old piano that was kind of a relic that we used at first, tuned it up a little bit, but then when I was out to the Lower 48 one of the churches offered to buy a new one and so went into Seattle and made a good deal for a - I think it was a Hamilton studio model and we had that shipped up so we had a real good piano.

Ter: And Lorraine played the piano?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Did you sing or did she play the piano in church?

Lon: No, I didn't sing. I still don't.

Ter: Well, okay, we'll be the judge of this Maynard, why don't you sing us a few bars of Amazing Grace here?

Lon: That would be amazing all right. Yeah.

Ter: But did you ever, so in services - cause actually I don't know among in the Covenant Church, do they actually sing in services like -

Lon: Oh, yeah.

Ter: Okay.

Lon: Singing is a big part of it.

Ter: Where did you get your idea - how did you handle it with you were telling us the other day - did you have a translator? How did that work when you had to give your sermons?

Lon: Well when we first got to Unalakleet, they did use a translator.

Ter: They did or didn't?

Lon: They did.

Ter: They did.

Lon: And I had a translator who took a lot of time. I'd speak a little, maybe a sentence, and then I'd almost forget where I was at by the time he got done. Asked him what he was doing? He said well I'm giving it in all three dialects here at Unalakleet. And I didn't know what to do and finally I gave him the whole long paragraph and he pulled on my coat and he said I can't remember all that. I said well that's fine, just tell them what you remember and we got along a lot better. He made it pretty short then. But Unalakleet really didn't need an interpreter by the time I got there. I think he was one of the last

ones, but down on the Yukon, Scanlon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Nunivak Island. They were still using interpreters when we'd come down there. So I got pretty used to that.

Ter: Did you ever learn any of the Native words at all or I don't know if that was something that you could ever manage?

Lon: I learned quite a few words. One winter I went out or a Native pastor went with me when we had the children's home, went out with the cat out in the woods and stayed out there for about two months cutting wood, try to get a supply ahead. And at night we'd sit there in the tent and he'd teach me words. So I learned quite a few, but I also learned that it was smart not to try to use them. Words sounded so similar that it almost got embarrassing to use them. But it came in handy because I could understand a little what people were talking about and they didn't know I understood it.

I remember one time there was a bunch of ladies down by the post office and they - actually they were talking in English. When I approached they switched to Native and I listened to them quite a while and then I broke in on the conversation. And one woman said we didn't know you understand Eskimo. And after that why they didn't revert to the Eskimo when I came around them.

But our children learned a lot. They were out with the kids playing and they picked a lot of Native words.

Ter: Well now let's so here it is 1954 or '55. You just started this school, high school. How many students did you have at first? How many students -

Lon: We had seven students the first year and the first graduating class was nine. That was a pretty good dropout record. And then the second year I think we had 13 and it went up to 17 and then the fourth year when they had the full we were up around 30 so.

Ter: Well okay you're running the school, you're the principal, and this stuff about statehood comes along. So how did you get involved in that and why did you end up, you know whose idea was it that you ran as a delegate to the constitution. What was the -

Lon: Well I want to drop back a little bit to -

Ter: Sure.

Lon: Our days at Marshall, Alaska.

Ter: Sure.

Lon: Which is also Fortuna Ledge. There was a marshal some place else in Alaska. They couldn't have two Marshalls in the post office. So the postmaster named it after his daughter Fortuna and that's how Fortuna Ledge got into it. And that was the post office and it was also the kind of government seat for that whole Wade Hampton Precinct and

they had the deputy marshal that lived there, a fellow by the name of Al Balls, who grew up in Unalakleet. He was one of the Laplander family and they were going to close the Marshal's office there and which they did, but the US Commissioner office was still maintained there. And there was a lady who was appointed US Commissioner and she had it for a little while, then she and her husband moved away.

And I was sitting down in the trading post one evening and the Deputy Marshal flew in to pick up somebody. He was going on the next day down the coast and he said we've got to get a commissioner here. He said this is ridiculous he said. I get a notice and I fly clear down to Hooper Bay or Scanlon Bay and I have to bring them clear back to Nome for a trial. And if they're released right away then they have to get their transportation back and he said we just got to get a United States Commissioner again here. And he was typing on a typewriter in the trading post and finally he said here sign this and I looked at it. And it was a letter to the judge in Nome offering my services as a commissioner if he would consider appointing me.

I don't know what I was thinking but he gave me the pen and I figured well enough nothing would come of that. And it wasn't very long until I got the appointment as US Commissioner, Justice of the Peace, Probate Judge, and the whole works. And I told the judge when I had a chance to go to Nome to visit with him I said there is one thing that is not very good. I said somebody out in a village commits what the town may think is a crime and they put in a complaint and the marshal goes down and picks him up and he is a hero coming out of his town. And you know get up before the commissioner I said is there any possibility that we can have a moving court so in other words if there is somebody down the line I can go with the marshal and try the person right there. And he said well I have a fund he said let's use. So you go with the marshal and try it out.

And that had the best affect on the whole community. We'd go down to a place and this fellow was tried right in front of his own people and what a difference it made. It was probably one of the first moving courts in Alaska. I think Jay Rabinowitz followed it up out of Fairbanks afterwards. He was telling me about it, but the need for law and order was one thing.

And then the interest in education was another thing. So when they out with invitation to file for a delegate seat, there were basically two things. One was interest in local government and the law enforcement, like even at Unalakleet. And then the second thing was education so that we got a fair shake out of that. And with that in mind why I submitted my petition and I got elected and went to the Constitutional Convention.

End of Tape 4

Lon: Trying to thing of the names of some of them.

Ter: Yeah.

Lon: I think one was Gallagher and there was a Mattson and Sadebanee for a while.

Ter: Oh, that's okay. I got to ask you too Maynard about the (inaudible), the document in that picture you know remember the one that we saw. You thought that was Yakutat with the pig, remember the -

Lon: About what?

Ter: About the pig.

Lon: That's a goat.

Ter: Oh, I thought it was a pig.

Everyone talking.

Ter: Oh, it is a goat. I thought it was one huge pig.

Man: You had strange pigs in Pennsylvania did you?

Ter: We had pigs yeah. Okay. I didn't look at it very closely. The goat and is there a duck in that picture too or I forget?

Lon: One of the pictures has a duck and a little dog and I think all four children were there and they each had something in their hands. One was holding a - that's May of '53.

Man: I got to see this pig.

Ter: I can't see unless I take my glasses off you know very well. I'm not used to doing this.

Robert: But Maynard in the future it might make a better story if you did it was a pig you know.

Ter: Right, you ready. That is sort of like the kids playing around there. That's you and Lorraine, is that Lorraine?

Lon: I think our co-worker down there, Ellie Aust got a hold of this goat and the idea of having some milk. I don't know if she ever did give milk or not.

Ter: Maybe that's why it wasn't - maybe it wasn't - like you say maybe it is a pig, but anyway. Okay, so you ran. The announcement came cause you were concerned about education and law enforcement. Really your key issue - local government?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Okay. Did this stuff - talk about statehood did you know in a way you're so far away from the urban areas I guess but you know had you thought that was a pretty good idea or what was your first feelings about that?

Lon: Well I felt that unless we got a constitution and became a state we would always be under the federal government, everything. I mean they appointed the marshals, the commissioners, everything was run by the federal government. And the only way you could get local government get any kind of local voice would be to go the statehood route. So I was pretty sold on the idea of it.

Ter: Did you as being a you know mission employee, was it frustrating dealing with the federal authorities, I mean trying to get help for stuff that you needed you know? Was there ever - was that a difficult -

Lon: You mean like what for instance?

Ter: Well I was just wondering if they ever helped out with the school or the home.

Lon: Oh, there was like for instance Army surplus, which went through the government. We were in line to get help there. We go make our trips down to the - where they had the Army surplus and you could buy things about four cents on the dollar or something like that you know. We had a couple of big ambulances that we bought and didn't have to pay much for them. Had them shipped up and used them for transportation. They were pretty good. And a lot of other things, old lumber and so on. We had our high school - Al White had a woodworking shop and went down and must have picked up about four dozen good baseball bats for practically nothing. But I mean we were eligible for getting things like that just like anybody else.

Ter: Did you, about the baseball bats, did you sort of set up a field where the kids could play or did you do anything with them?

Lon: I used them - I don't know what he would use them to make rungs for chairs and stuff and had his wood turning lathe. Later he got a metal lathe and really had fun I guess in his shop.

Ter: So the baseball bats weren't for baseball though, they were for using for other stuff, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Oh, I see, yes, so it's the wood basically.

Lon: Well we did - we played a little baseball in the summer too so we didn't let him have all the bats.

Ter: Did the kids at school since it was a boarding school -

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: You know so you had this additional responsibility constantly, you and Lorraine. Did - before you had the new teachers you didn't have any help, right? I mean it was just you two basically.

Lon: We had a fellow that was building the church and his son - he and his wife were living there and she taught English and one other class I believe. Then he taught in the springtime (inaudible) government class then for semester and then he took that time and taught shop to the kids.

Ter: And did the students - how many came from Unalakleet and how many were from outside of that first group of seven?

Lon: Well when we first they were I guess practically all Unalakleet kids, except one girl who had come from the children's home through the eighth grade and so she just stayed there and took her high school

Ter: But as time went on it was other - it was from surrounding villages and stuff the kids would come from I mean?

Lon: Oh, yeah. They - I don't know how many of the villages you know represented any given school year, but it was a lot of them from - when you figure that they probably peaked at about 130 students and half of them dorm kids. A lot of them were from the other villages.

Ter: From Nome as far north to say Bethel, between Nome and Bethel?

Lon: Nome and out from Bethel out to the coast, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay and Nunivak Island, north of Nome up to well I guess as far as maybe Teller and in that area. Then we introduced basketball at Unalakleet as our builder was in Nome and he sent word down - he said there is some Cullen huts up here we can get and they are 36 feet wide, so bigger than a Quonset and he said how many feet long do you need? And he torn this down. We got it shipped down to Unalakleet. Then we poured cement five foot walls of cement and mounted this on top so that we actually had clearance for basketball in there. But it was only 36 feet wide. So the out of bounds line, which should be four feet, was only two and a half and the town people started coming. They thought it was the greatest thing to see their kids play basketball. And they'd line up on the walls and the kid would take a ball out of bounds he'd just back into the crowd and fire it off. Sort of like the - what's that new football game?

Ter: Oh, arena foot -

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Lon: It was about like that.

Ter: So when the ball went out of bounds, people on the stands would just throw it back in play, is that right or?

Lon: No, the player had to do it.

Ter: Oh.

Lon: But he just backed into the crowd and throw it up. And the team, we really developed a good team because the kids started playing in the grade school when they were still in grade school and we had Saturday gym for them. By the time they got high school they were already good players and in 1965 we won the Western Alaska Division of Class C schools and Valdez won the Eastern Division. And I had a call from the principal and he said, it's a shame he said your champions out there and we're champions here. He said any chance to play he said we'll meet, if you want to come down to Valdez we'll give you some money or meet in Anchorage or. He called again, he said well I think it ought to be in one of our villages so that the people get a chance to see them. So we invited them up to Unalakleet. We had a three game tournament Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night. And we won the first game and they won the second one and we won the third one. So ended up with being the Class C champs of Alaska.

And the next year it was in Valdez, so we went down there and the same thing happened. They won the first. We won the second, and they won the third. So, but the people of the village just came out en mass and the radio station in Nome that we had, KICY, they sent their announcer down. We were able to run a line through the FAA some way. We made connections anyway and the game was broadcast. And I'll never forget when the announcer was telling about the gym being packed, he said and he said I want to tell you folks there is standing room only here. Well there wasn't a chair or bench in the room. They won - they built a high bench you had to climb up with practically a ladder where the scorer and timers sitting up there with - it was just standing room only.

Ter: Yeah, there's a good picture. We'll shoot that of the guy doing the interview for KICY, right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Yeah. Because basketball became a big thing in the villages. I mean it is now, right? Did you introduce - were there any other villages have basketball before Unalakleet or what -

Lon: Yeah, we were the first one out, aside from Nome, and then they started picking it up pretty fast. And the Athletic Department had quite a time to figure out how can we get every school a chance to win the state tournament. And they tried different methods. They had the Class D or what it was playoff and then the winner would go to the Class C tournament playoff and then the winner of that to B and A. And but that took a long time before it went through.

So they one year what they decided was that the A and B schools or A and AA whatever it was and then our branch where they had from the east and from the west four teams and we were of course in the Class C. And they went into Fairbanks for the tournament and one of the teams in Anchorage was rated number one. We were rated number eight and then the others in between had this playoff. And they couldn't believe that we won the first game, won the second game, ended up that third game playing one of the big schools in Anchorage. And they beat us by I think one or two points was all. I remember -

Ter: What year was that, do you think, that was '65, '66?

Lon: I wasn't there at the time. I was - we had left the area so -

Ter: So it's '66, '67, '68?

Lon: It might have been later than that when that particular tournament was excellent. The president of the University called me up and told me about the game. He says you can't believe it. He said that at half-time all the spectators moved over behind the Covenant High bench. He said I moved over behind the Covenant High bench and he said just about pulled it off.

Ter: Well that's amazing and also you had cheerleaders too. They had cheerleaders.

Lon: Oh, we had great ones.

Ter: But when - was any villages - were you the first to have the cheerleaders in the village or?

Lon: Probably.

Ter: And what was the name of the team? What was the -

Lon: Our team Wolverines.

Ter: Who picked the name?

Lon: Well I think the students wanted to name it after the most ferocious animal and that was the wolverine. Size wise they aren't.

Ter: I remember this old trapper one time telling me the wolverine is a wolf bear. That was the Athabaskan name for it was a bear the size of a wolf and you know some combination. Okay, well let's get back to the convention. So you decided you were going to run.

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: And what was district? What was the district?

Lon: My district was the Second Judicial Division so I was a delegate at large from that area. There was a local one from that area - see they had the -

Man: Stop for just a second

Ter: Maynard, just one more thing maybe about the Covenant special thing that we talked about. Tell the story a little bit about that truck and how that came to -

Lon: That truck was first used in Nome by the road building commission and was a dump truck and dual wheels and double transmission and when they finished the road out of Nome towards Safety then I don't know how far out it went but they finished that then they figured it was ready for the dump. So it ended up in the Nome dump and our missionary Paul Carlson went down there and he thought it was just too good to be in the dump so he brought it into Nome and did some repair work on it.

And then finally it got barged down to Moses Point and there it was used to bring in a lot of buildings, old Army buildings that were abandoned. And after it was used there for a while then we were able to get it barged down to Unalakleet and we had this truck down there and of course it needed a lot of repairs and Roal Almundson, who was a missionary pilot but he had his A&E license really worked the whole motor over again and honed out the cylinder walls, got an oversize pistons, and it would just - you could push it and start it that way if you wanted to. I mean it was just fired up right away. And then they had to do something about the cab it was pretty rickety. So they took it off, took the windshield off and they build a big seat about I don't know a seven, eight feet long and 2 x 4 or 2 x 12 planking and that was a pretty sturdy seat there. And then they went out to the Army dump and he got bigger tires. And huge tires in the front and then even bigger ones in the back and it was sort of like a dune buggy and it go over the sand pretty good, but it had so much power that if you didn't watch it why it would just twist off the axles and they had to replace them every now and then.

But it was a fantastic piece of machinery. And then one winter it was kind of under the snow drift waiting for spring to come and the Air Force came down to open up the road into town and they just plowed right through and they ran over the front end of it and just squashed it. And the radiator was just completely demolished and then it was Don Brockner, another pilot who had his A&E license. He jacked up the front end and welded everything together underneath. And then for a radiator he got a 25 drum and it would hold enough water so short trips in the summer it wouldn't overheat. If you went very long why it would get boiling, but it then would start steaming out and looked like a Stanley Steamer, you know that steam coming out of that barrel. And it was still serviceable.

Finally, they got a new truck, two seated - or double cab and hauled that in and it was always getting stuck. Whereas the old special could go through almost anything, but they finally hauled the special to the dump again.

Ter: Waiting to be discovered by someone.

Lon: By somebody else.

Ter: Yeah. Well okay, yeah cause that's a great paint - line drawing you have there. One of your teachers did it, is that right?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Was it - is that who did - was he an artist?

Lon: Well he was everything. I mean English teacher, shop teacher. He could letter things like when we give out diplomas he never needed to you know sketch it out first. He could just - excellent on artwork like that. But he started on that sketching type of art. Ever get a chance to go to his apartment at Mercer Island, Covenant Shores, he has got frames for his pictures that he has made that are just classic. Uses the back of a sled or something like that and he has his pictures in there. Sort of like the picture that we have here of the specialty, made it out an old iron frame there.

Ter: Did - and you used it for the high school - not hauling kids but hauling freight and -

Lon: Hauling freight. Barge would come in. We used that special to meet that and bring the groceries up to the buildings and that was great -

Ter: Was that sort of the backbone of your transportation? Is that in a way is that?

Lon: It was. Kind of got shared a little bit with the D4 cat but they made pretty good partners.

Ter: Okay, well now so back on that election. You were in the Second Judicial District, which includes Nome, northwestern Alaska sort of? How far south did that go?

Lon: All of Wade Hampton where I lived before. That was one district by itself and then the way they arranged it in order to get rural representation they divided the whole state into small communities with certain number of people in there and they could have a delegate to the convention. And then the judicial district took in more at large and then let's see there were four judicial districts. And then they had I think it was seven that were at large over the whole territory that were elected that had brought the total up to 55, which a magical number.

Ter: Why 55, what did they -

Lon: Well I think that's how many signed the federal constitution.

Ter: And did you campaign at all or what was the - what were you -

Lon: Didn't have much time for that. I had a good friend that was a pilot that flew. He was the one that got all the signatures for me and pretty much did the campaign for me. I didn't have time for that.

Ter: Who was the pilot? Do you remember who that was?

Lon: Art Johnson.

Ter: So he was your campaign manager and campaigner?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: And how many other people were running? Do you remember who?

Lon: I don't remember right offhand.

Ter: But you were an at-large guy from the Second District?

Lon: Right.

Ter: Second Judicial District, okay. So were the rest of them from Nome or the at-large folks?

Lon: Yes. McNeese was from Nome and -

Ter: Walsh I guess he -

Lon: Walsh I think.

Ter: And somebody.

Lon: Then there was one from - I guess the other ones were pretty much from right around Nome, close in there.

Ter: Well once you got elected, what did you think then? How are you going to do this?

Lon: What did I get into to, but I went there and had some good advice from a fellow that was running the trading post. He said well, be sure you pick up a good copy of Roberts Rules of Order. And he said another thing I think you will find most of the work done in the committee, in the various committees. So it's real important that you get on the right one and that is where the work is done. Otherwise it is brought into the session as a whole and first reading, second reading and final reading.

And the way it worked out we - I was with a group that helped get Bill Egan in as the president of the convention. And he knew that so after he was elected then he had to appoint a committee of committees to see that people got on the committee they wanted to get on and he put me on that. And I don't know I've have to look in the book whether I

chaired it or not, but it doesn't matter. But anyway that way everybody put down their first, second, third choice and we tried to accommodate and of course I saw to it that I got on the two committees that I wanted to get on - local government and executive committees.

Ter: Let's go back to Egan and say why did you support him? Why were you backing him?

Lon: There was just something about him when I first met him. And those that knew him affirmed that, that he was just very fair type of person and really not a politician, wasn't a lawyer, wasn't - I think he was probably a bartender down in Valdez I'm not sure.

Ter: I guess they ran a grocery store.

Lon: Ran a grocery store.

Ter: When did you first meet him? Did you first meet him when you got to Fairbanks?

Lon: Yeah. Right.

Ter: So you never met him before?

Lon: No.

Ter: Had you ever heard of him before?

Lon: No.

Ter: And he seemed like a good guy to run the -

Lon: Well the alternatives I didn't feel I could support them.

Ter: Because it was like the Rivers? They were trying to get -

Lon: Yeah. And I just thought of the group that were nominated he was - and I - you hear from ex-delegates now they'll all - that's about the first thing they mention is how fair Egan was as a chairman, president of the - there was a lot of us that didn't know the fancy Roberts Rules backwards and forwards and he could cut us off and just you are out of order you know and you'd stand there bewildered. But he would just like a good schoolteacher he would just draw it out.

Ter: Now did you -

Man: Terrence, we need to change reels.

Ter: The - do you think you were one of the - would you describe yourself as pretty apolitical I mean compared to many of the other delegates? Do you know what I mean? I mean in the sense that you weren't really actively involved in politics I guess, right?

Lon: No.

Ter: But were you registered in either of the parties or were you Independent or Republican or Democrat or how - you know?

Lon: Well I suppose I would classify myself as a Republican, but of course at the convention that wasn't brought out. You didn't run on party at all. In fact, I didn't know what party most of them belonged to. They - I think all that were running for president of the convention were from the Democratic Party.

At that time the territory was very strong Democrat, which was kind of interesting because that was one of the blocks that we thought we'd have a hurdle with the United States Senate was the Republicans didn't want Alaska in because that would give another solid Democratic candidates that would be in there and senators and representative and it would just add that many more. But it was rather interesting almost after it became a state it swung the other way and in a few years then we had Stevens, Young, and Murkowski just solid Republican representations. Alaska politics is very fascinating from that standpoint.

Ter: Yeah, turned the opposite what they expected, that's right, yeah. But at the convention you think it was sort of apolitical in the sense - I don't know if that's the right word or not, you know, political parties didn't - the people in the know I suppose knew but you were more apolitical than because you really weren't involved.

Lon: What I think that as a whole they were determined to write a constitution and not bring parties up to the extent that you would get deadlocked on issues that way. And which I believe they were very successful from that standpoint.

Ter: Where did you live when you got to Fairbanks? I mean where did you stay? Did you stay with somebody or stay at the Nordale or -

Lon: No I was in a hotel or motel for a couple of weeks and then I believe it was Warren Taylor who had an apartment and he said if you'd like to rent that he said I'll rent that. So I moved over there then.

Ter: How did you get out to the convention every day? How did you - did you take the bus or -

Lon: There was a bus that went every day. And we could ride the bus out and back or some of my friends had developed their - Les Nerland and Lawrence Johnson and a couple others that drove and they always would the night before so they said you want to ride with me in the morning. And I said sure, so I rode with them quite a bit of the time.

Ter: Was this your first trip ever to Fairbanks? Had you been to Fairbanks before?

Lon: I had yes.

Ter: How about out to the University? Had you been out there before?

Lon: Yeah, I got out there on my first trip there too.

Ter: So you kind of knew what it looked like and a little bit?

Lon: Oh, yeah, a little feel for the area. Of course in the wintertime they had the ice bridge across the river freeze up and then you just drive across on the ice.

Ter: Until spring.

Lon: Until spring.

Ter: So but the convention started and you among people that backed Egan, so were on those two committees, which were local government and education. Let's talk about those a little bit, which you know what were the certain important like on the local government commission that was the one Dick Fisher was on that one, right?

Lon: Right.

Ter: I guess he -

Lon: And that was a very interesting committee to be on. Had a good group in there that worked together to come up with the idea of local government and one of the things that we tried to steer away from was where - although that came into the legislative as well, but where you'd have overlapping tax districts. And you could be taxed as this side and that side and the other side and whether this has been the best or not I don't know but they presented it to the people in one tax package. It was sort of the town Parrish idea of local government.

Ter: What did you think of the animosity towards counties that came up?

Lon: That was weird. I mean nobody wanted to call it county and I don't know that - how many votes were taken and reconsidered and all that but they did not want it to be a county, absolutely they were just memories from other states I guess or something. And then of course what are you going to call it. They ended up with a borough.

Ter: I remember looking through the minutes. Yule Kilcher had proposed what was it now canton. No, I think he might have said cantons, I can't remember, but there is a list in there of all the terms that they had proposed. Do you remember any of those?

Lon: I don't know if - I'd have to almost go back and look over that, but we must have covered at least 10 or 20 other names that would come up and they would vote them down and vote them down. And finally ended up the borough.

Ter: Do you remember what Frank Barr said about that? There's a thing where he says he didn't want to be somebody throwing a - that's what is in the minutes anyway, going down the street and somebody going on because it was a borough, like B-O-R-O or I guess it was also debated how to say it too. Vorough or Borough, like V-U-R-R-O.

Lon: Borough.

Ter: That's okay. But so that was really the key thing that came out of the local government article, right, as a strong unified government, is that fair to say?

Lon: It was sort of the idea and then in the of course you get organized with it then your law enforcement and so many things come under that.

Ter: Well did you ever envision though as being a delegate? Because Unalakleet would still be in what's called the unorganized borough I guess. I don't think they have a borough out there, do they, I don't know? But you know I can't remember because they have the state divided up into the organized boroughs and then everything else is so-called unorganized borough.

Lon: Unorganized I think.

Ter: Which is funny way of thinking about it, but did you think that this would solve problems for a place like Unalakleet, I mean the rural areas, did you think it adequately met those needs?

Lon: Well I think that there is a lot of the problems that we faced at Unalakleet are handled through the local government organization there. They are a - I was going to say incorporated village and have a lot of (inaudible) local government.

Ter: Okay, well about - what about the Education Committee, did that same to work well?

Lon: Well that was part of the Executive Branch. I knew it was going to be so that is why I wanted to be on the Executive Committee and that was interesting too because they made Fairbanks kind of the state school or I don't know what they called it but they looked very kind on the University through the little section in the education. But of course we got into the executive part, other than the education, but then where was it I guess it was the chairman of that committee and he worked for a very, very strong executive, appointed powers and even they didn't want a lieutenant governor at the time and secretary of state did it, well that was one of the first amendments. They changed that right away. But -

Ter: Why did they go for secretary of state, what was the reason to make it a position a little weaker is that the idea?

Lon: Right, it was to make the governor stronger. There was no lieutenant governor there. He was it and sensing this coming on in the writing on the Executive Branch the strong governor I held out and got support from enough others to limit the governor to two terms consecutively.

Ter: Was that your - some people felt strongly about that, about the two terms I mean?

Lon: Well I felt very strong, but otherwise you get - if you didn't have that in there you could get a governor in for 20, 30 years if he wanted to keep running.

Ter: Was this part in mind of the example of Roosevelt? I mean FDR because the -

Lon: It came about that time, that's when they - the United States decided two terms are enough. They put it in their constitution.

Ter: So in a way did that inspire you to -

Lon: I think that had its affect on it because you saw the before the two terms for the president of the United States it just kept on until you died that's what happened?

Ter: With Roosevelt, that's right, yeah. So you know how did you think this idea - that's one of the key things of the constitution isn't it? A very strong governor, centralized authority in the governor's office. Was that sort of a response to territorial days too I mean -

Lon: I think so because in the territorial days they had an appointed governor by the United States and then you had your territorial legislature and in a sense the governor was pretty weak and they felt it was kind of a swing from that build up a strong one. Although I think that three branches of the government right now in Alaska from what I can follow do pretty good check and balance.

Ter: It certainly has not been I mean I think what Hammond said was he said you know he heard so much about how strong the governor was until he became governor and then he thought gee where did all those powers go. That was his take on it but you know cause you are always constrained by reality and stuff.

Lon: Well they can come up with their cabinet and appointees but it still had to be the department heads approved by the legislature. And the court system is - well I think they've done a pretty good job you know through the Judicial Branch in Alaska.

Ter: Now there are just a couple more questions and then we are going to be done here. What about sort of reflections on Gruening? Had you met him before the convention, you must have seen when he spoke to the -

Lon: I met Governor Gruening on an airplane between Juneau and Anchorage one time, sat and visited with him on the whole trip. He was a very - well he is an old newspaper man I think and there was a lot about Governor Gruening that I liked you know and he was interesting too you know. I think, well he wasn't the last appointed governor. I think they had was it Stepovich for just a little bit.

Ter: Heintzleman and then Stepovich, that's right, yeah.

Lon: So.

Ter: But what was it -

Lon: But Gruening had a lot of influence in the convention. He was - he gave quite a speech at the convention, but I think he was - had a pretty good understanding of what Alaska needed.

Ter: And what were the things -

End of Side A

Side B

Ter: What were the things - what were the things - what were sort of his limitations though as a leader, cause he obviously polarized a lot of people?

Lon: Well I hadn't thought about that so much. He was the one that worked with Muktuk Marsten in developing the National Guard all over Alaska and Marsten went around to every village and everybody got a gun. I got a gun. I mean I happened to be there and here you need a gun. So I had got an old 30.06. And anyway doing that, going around he really solidified the villages, the Native people, in the party, in the Democratic Party. And I think it took quite a while even after statehood then for them to realize that you know we are not that all just a National Guard villager something else.

Ter: Were that there were two parties?

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: There was another party, yeah. So you had known Marsten - you had met him when you came to Unalakleet?

Lon: Oh, yeah.

Ter: Had you met him on numerous occasions or what -

Lon: Numerous occasions. He'd show up Unalakleet and somebody said one time they walked down to the bank and couldn't figure out what that body was doing down there on the

bank and he had gone down there and curled up and went to sleep, sleeping bag. He was something else. I - of the most colorful people I suppose at the convention would be Yul Kilcher and Muktuk Marsten I mean.

Ter: What was Kilcher like? What was he -

Lon: Kilcher was a very interesting fellow - quite a musician and he'd entertain us there at recesses and stuff with his saw and different things and yeah, he had some ideas that he was pushing for there and pretty persuasive you know when he'd get up to speak.

Ter: He played the saw, did he?

Lon: Oh yes. He could play anything. He could pick up a chair and make music out of it.

Ter: Now he didn't sing did he, he was just -

Lon: Oh, he yodeled and he sang.

Ter: Did he yodel in the convention - did he -

Lon: Oh yeah. You know there would be little breaks that we'd have you know and he'd get going.

Ter: You know his granddaughter became a famous singer you know?

Lon: Jewell?

Ter: Yeah, right, yeah.

Lon: Quite a girl.

Ter: Yeah. And I guess he made some home movies. I don't know if he did anything of the convention though, right, he didn't -

Lon: I don't think so there. It was an interesting - you know we'd go around Homer and that area is Kilcher country.

Ter: Now, Maynard, what about Bob Bartlett? Had you run into him before - so you met Gruening on a plane sometime before the convention, right, I mean -

Lon: Yeah.

Ter: Had you met Bartlett before? Did he ever campaign out in Unalakleet?

Lon: See Bartlett was their delegate for a long time and we worked with Bartlett. This goes back to the education of Natives way back when the first commissioner of education

Sheldon Jackson got reindeer and gave commission stations if you would run a school. And also land grants and down at Yakutat we were supposed to get some land there, but also at Unalakleet. The land that was originally intended for the mission encompassed the whole village on both sides of the river and then as people moved in - well they didn't - the mission didn't want to keep them out of that area. They invited them to come closer to build. So then when they were surveying the villages they came in and I think we had 11 corners on our little piece of property and we were supposed to get a patent on that. And that wasn't very easy to get. Bob Bartlett helped us a lot on that. He was very good. So we worked through him. I'd go down to Anchorage to meet him or down to Juneau and visit with him. He was a good delegate there.

Ter: Did he ever come out to Unalakleet or did any of - I don't know if they ever -

Lon: As I recall I think he was out there, came out there.

Ter: I think - can you think of something else. Kind of getting late in the day here.

Man: Yeah, I can't think of it.

Ter: Let me this one final thing. Maynard, after the convention was over -

Lon: I was tired.

Ter: I bet. But I mean how do you look upon in your life as the convention as the you know - how important has that been in your life?

Lon: Well it has had I think a lot of perks that has come through that, that we never expected of course and that wasn't the reason we went there, but that's all - like the 25th anniversary and there is so many different times when they invited all the delegates back and Katie Hurley was very good at getting transportation. I remember one time when they were going to have something going on in Juneau and she got Alaska Airlines to give the transportation but she also was given so many seats and she said you might as well bring your wives too you know. So Lorraine was able to go to a lot of these functions and when you look back on it, it - why you didn't make anything as far as being a delegate but we certainly had a lot of perks out of it that have been very enjoyable you know trips like that. So it is good to still be a survivor.

Ter: Did - do you remember the day of signing the - do you remember that?

Lon: Oh definitely.

Ter: What was that like?

Lon: That was very emotional and the Dr. Langston in Nome told Lorraine you're going to go to Fairbanks for the signing and he made arrangements for her transportation. So she got to come up there and be there when we went up there and signed the constitution. But

that was quite an emotional time and I knew that nobody seemed to want to leave after it was all you know the final gavel went down they just - there had been built up such a close friendship among the delegates.

Ter: So everybody just stayed around. They just didn't want to leave.

Lon: Didn't want to leave.

Ter: This was after you had gone back over to Student Union Building, the Constitution Hall, I mean -

Lon: Yeah we were around there then. Oh I learned a lot of things while I was up there and that is that you can debate. You can passionately debate but it doesn't have to ruin a friendship and it is kind of interesting we started talking about missionary work and that but how many churches do not know how to do that. I mean they'll end up in a bitter fight or something like that, but I learned a lesson there. There were two delegates who were just passionately debating on each of an issue. And this went on for a long time, long speeches and they were debating back and forth and I had something that I wanted to inject and I thought well if I can go to this one fellow and get on his side then you know he might be on my side because he is against that other fellow. And we had a little recess and I went out in the coffee shop and here the two guys were talking about their next hunting trip they were going to take together. And I thought boy or boy you don't take anything for granted on the way they debated you know.

Ter: Who were those two guys do you remember?

Lon: I don't remember right offhand, but it was really interesting. But I mean that was a good lesson for me.

Ter: No kidding, that's a great example of being able to do something you know to limit it to the issue at hand. Who was the most fiery debater of the whole group? Was there anybody who stood out or a group of them who stood out? Who would you say?

Lon: Oh, when I think Buckalew was quite a debater. McLaughlin. There were several that were eloquent. I mean they could debate any place you know. But we were not without our humor there. They - one of our delegates sat way in the back and she was always complaining that she couldn't hear you know the speaker. And so they finally gave her a sign to hold up that said louder and she could hold that up and the speaker would amplify his voice. And a fellow got up to speak and he kept dropping his voice and dropping his voice and she grabbed for her piece of paper to hold up and somebody had slipped another one there that said lousy and she held that up you know and then this fellow stopped. You know I have to be insulted like that in this convention or something. It was really pulled that off really slick.

End of Interview