

FREIDA REFT/1983

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Narrator: Freida Reft
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Interviewer: Joanne B. Mulcahy

JM Today is July 26, 1983. I'm in Anchorage talking to Freida Reft.

Q:/JM You said you were born in Kodiak?

A:/FR I was born in Kodiak in 1911. In 1912 was the big eruption--Katmai.

Q:/JM Do your parents remember that?

A:/FR Oh, yeah. My older brother, he used to tell us how people panicked 'cause they didn't know nothing, you know? They thought the world was coming to an end. Kodiak was in darkness for three days the ash was so heavy. And first thing our dad did--everybody had their own well for water--he went down and covered our well. So all the people were walking. Church is always the safest place to go, so the church bells were ringing and all the people were carrying...in Russian they call it panar, which is a lantern. They didn't have flashlights then. They used to have lanterns and it was daytime, to see where they were going. Everybody gathered in church. Just three days the ashes fell, and Kodiak was in darkness. I don't remember; this is just what I heard from my older brother. The Manning, the Coast Guard boat,

came and took all the people aboard. You know, out of the village wasn't too easy. Not like now.

Q:/JM How many people were in Kodiak?

A:/FR I don't know. I have no idea. I really don't. Everybody knew each other and everybody helped each other. It was beautiful. I think it was really more beautiful than it is now.

They say the boat moved away from Kodiak and took the people aboard for three days or so and after it cleared up, it brought them back. There's a picture in one of the books-- the Koniag, is it?--of people aboard the boat, and I spotted my dad because I remember the hat he used to wear. There was a woman with a shawl holding a baby, so I figure that was me. I said, "That must be me!"

Q:/JM What was your father's name?

A:/FR Walter. Walter Metrokin.

Q:/JM And your mother?

A:/FR Anna. Her maiden name was Kresnikof. She's from Ninilchik. My dad was born in Sitka. We got hold of our family tree from Washington, D.C. My niece had it done. She had it done so I sent for one. [Unintelligible.] My dad's people were all in Russia and I gave that to Roy because I figured he could keep it for the family. He used to be a lawyer, then he's a judge now. I just seen

in church here yesterday morning. No, Sunday morning-- today's Tuesday--him and his wife. They were just leaving to go back home.

And I stayed with, after my parents died....

Q:/JM When did they die?

A:/FR 1919, when the flu came along. And I was just seven. They say that flu killed more people than World War One did.

Q:/JM Which flu was that?

A:/FR Of 1918. Flu, they called it. Woody Island was quite a village. There were quite a few people there. It almost wiped out the village.

Q:/JM There weren't any doctors? How did you take care of people?

A:/FR Well, my older brother Eli was sick before he died, and my mother was already sick. Carl Armstrong-- you know Carl Armstrong, Jr.?

Q:/JM Um hmm.

A:/FR Well, his dad was Marshall then. His dad, Old Man Carl, used to come around with moonshine or something and they'd give dad a shot of that. Mother wouldn't take it. And after dad died--he was a big, husky man, and he was sick only a few days--he died and mother never got over it. Forty days. Forty days exactly, she died. And there I was. My aunt took me....

Q:/JM How many other children were in your family?
You had a brother Eli and...?

A:/FR My oldest sister was--they're all dead except my sister and my...--oldest sister was Elizabeth. I don't even remember her. She was the oldest in the family and I was the youngest. She left home. There was no work in Kodiak. She left home and went to Cordova to work in a cannery. Then she got married. I met her children. But, I've never really...I don't remember her. Then another sister, Mary--she's married to Charlie Madsen, that's Roy's mother--she died real young. Then my older sister, Priscilla, used to live in Anchorage. She came to Anchorage when it was just a town before it was a city. They were just building it. She got married to a Norwegian guy who was a painter and a wallpaper hanger. And the first business signs that were put up in stores, as the town was getting big, were all by him. And then he had a paint and wallpaper shop on 5th [Avenue] of his own. She lived on 7th Street, their home was. Then my other sister that's next to me, a few years older, had a home right on 4th [Avenue]. She never had children. She was married to [unintelligible because of airplane and dog barking]. And I had thirteen of them. So, I always told her, "Don't worry, I have your share."

I had thirteen from two marriages. Six years dif-

ference between the two exactly. The youngest one from my first marriage was six years old the first of June and the next one was born on his birthday. He's the only one I lost out of thirteen children. He was married and had a couple of little girls. That was about twelve years ago. The whole crew on the fishing boat went. It was a fishing accident. Over in mainland in the [unintelligible]. Girls are growing up now. They don't remember him. They were too small.

Have you been around Ouzinkie?

Q:/JM Not this time, but I've been there before.

A:/FR Well, you know Dorothy then. She's married to Bobby Marsen now.

Q:/JM I don't think I do.

A:/FR She was married to my son once. She had two girls Anna Ray and Lisa.

Q:/JM You have children everywhere on Kodiak.

A:/FR I do.

Q:/JM You know, to go back to what you were telling me about your parents....

A:/FR Oh. After they died, my friends were really kind.

We were poor but lived off the land 'cause dad was always hunting. Chiniak. He'd trap all winter and come back for the holidays rowing. They didn't have no motors to travel with.

Q:/JM He'd go hunting over in Chiniak?

A:/FR Trapping. For fur. But he'd always bring ducks. There was clams all over the place before, you know, like it is now. They didn't have to go to the island to get clams. They were right there before all those houses were built, unless you were going on the beach after that. There was everything. Summertime, berries--they'd make jam enough for the whole winter. Gardens, potatoes, and stuff, and they all had root houses where they'd keep 'em all winter.

Q:/JM They kept the vegetables preserved?

A:/FR Yes. Money went a long ways--not like now. Few dollars, you'd get the main things for winter.

Q:/JM Did people trade things more and not use money as much then?

A:/FR I don't know if they were trading around Kodiak. In the villages they were. Some people used to come and they'd trade for fur and give 'em beads and stuff to work for. I learned quite a bit about the village of Karluk after my second marriage and started living there.

Q:/JM In Kodiak was there a store then?

A:/FR Oh, yeah. There was Kraft's store and Erskine's store. There was two stores.

Anyway, I stayed with my aunt from seven until I was eleven.

Q:/JM That was Hazel Ardinger?

A:/FR Her grandmother. She was raising her other grandson, but she spoiled him. But me, I was a slave. I had to scrub. She was so clean--immaculate. And I had to scrub until I was just raw--my hands. And I learned to crochet from her daughter-in-law when I was seven. I learned to darn socks and if I didn't do right, she'd prick my fingers with a needle. She was mean. And my older brother and older sisters knew how I was treated. It's a lucky thing I wasn't legally adopted. So they had the marshall come and take me away from her when I was eleven. They were all in Knatik then. Charlie Madsen had a store there. That's where Roy was born.

Q:/JM In Connecticut?

A:/FR Um hmm. Knatik. That's down the Chain towards Chignik. They thought they struck oil so Standard Oil moved in great big tankers and people from Anchorage were coming--business people, boatloads--and starting businesses galore--clothing stores, restaurants. [Freida has short conversation with her daughter here.] My brother-in-law, Roy's father, he had a post office in the general merchandise store. Then he had a cafe that somebody was running for him. Then there was pool rooms opened up, all kinds of clothing stores. My sister and brother-in-law, the one who was a painter, they moved from here over

there and opened up a shop. They got me over there in April, and in September I went Outside to school, which was the best thing could have happened to me. They didn't believe in education; they didn't care if kids were in school or not. They'd rather keep 'em home to work.

Q:/JM You mean your aunt?

A:/FR My aunt.

Q:/JM Who took your other brothers and sisters?

A:/FR The brothers were big enough. The younger brother was sent out to school right away--same school I went to in Oregon. There was a government boarding school, Indian school. My other aunt in Valdez took my other sister, so she was raised there.

Q:/JM Did that happen a lot in Kodiak that if someone's parents died, the relatives would take them?

A:/FR Oh, yeah. And I've noticed it in villages, too. When they take a relative they slave 'em. They make slaves out of 'em.

Q:/JM Did people feel that was all right to do that?

A:/FR Well, good thing I had older.... They knew how I was treated so that's why they took me in. She was so mean. She was so different from my mother, I couldn't believe they were sisters. My mother was so kind and this woman was just the opposite. As a kid, you remember

all that and when you grow up, you wonder.

And then there was superintendent of the Chignik cannery, Mr. and Mrs. Osmon, that used to go through and pick up my older brother Eli when he was fourteen. He started out taking care of the cannery animals that they'd bring and butcher for during the season while they're canning. And these people knew my parents. So in the fall, they'd go Out from the canneries, too. And that's who I went Out with--Out to school. They took me Out to school because they knew kids from Chignik there and they'd stop and visit them. So, we went in a sailing ship. From Chignik to Astoria, Oregon. That's where the head port for the Columbia River Packer's Cannery was.

Q:/JM What was that trip like, do you remember?

A:/FR Well, it was exciting as a kid. I was eleven. Oh, I had long hair when my sisters first got me to Knatik. They didn't believe in cutting hair--even when bob style first came out, they didn't believe in it. My hair was real blond. You'd never believe it now. Oh, that felt so good. They knew I wouldn't be able to take care of it myself going Out to school.

Q:/JM Did you braid it when you were young?

A:/FR My aunt used to braid it so hard my eyes would fill up. Big ribbon.

The superintendent and his wife took me Out. The

first time I seen an automobile and a train coming I was scared. I thought it was a great big monster of some kind. And then the first car ride I had, I said, "Go faster, go faster!" Then we went to Portland and stayed overnight. I still remember the name of it. It was called the Lipton Hotel. Sometimes, I wonder if it's still there. And we were way up--I don't know what floor--but I couldn't sleep because I was at the window all night watching those cars. It all fascinated me so much.

Then I went off to school. My brother was already there and other kids from Kodiak. There was every tribe of Indian. It was called a government Indian school. Chamawaya[?]. That was six miles north of Salem between Salem and [Chemeketa?]. Of course, them days were so strict. Girl couldn't look at a boy and....

Q:/JM What was that like meeting so many different Native people?

A:/FR Oh, golly, they used to tease the Alaskans. They all thought we lived in igloos and ate seal meat and all that. They called us "seals." You couldn't convince them we had homes--real houses--to live in. There was from Montana, different tribes from Wyoming, from Oklahoma, California, all tribes had been mixed. It was a big school. So, then when I got old enough, I had chance

to go to college. If you graduated from high school, you can go the college. Government pay for that. Like when I grew up, some of my kids went to school Mt. Edgecomb. She's one [indicating the daughter who is present?], and her sister Connie that's in Karluk. They're from my second marriage. And then I had two girls went to school in Chimawaya[?], graduated. One went to school and took business. The other one went to dental. She's the one works in Kodiak; Madeline. She's a dental assistant. You met her.

Q:/JM I talked to her on the phone.

A:/FR Oh, you didn't meet her. She works for....

Q:/JM She works for KANA, doesn't she?

A:/FR Now. She used to work for Doctor Furin. And she's well liked.

No, I didn't finish high school and I been kicking myself in the butt even since. But I pushed my children. I said, "Don't be like me. Go ahead, get all you can." Cause you didn't have to pay then, not like now. You gotta pay for all the education you can get.

Q:/JM Did you like school, Frieda?

q A:/FR Yeah, but I was foolish. I came home and I was seventeen and I fell in love. My first marriage. Eighteen and I had a baby. My first baby was born here in Anchorage.

Q:/JM Who was your first husband, Freida?

A:/FR Bent. He was Eddie Bent. He was born in Gaguiak. His mother was [unintelligible] but his father was born in Kodiak from Australia. He was a goldminer. He used to goldmine and then he drowned. And then Eddie's mother died and he was raised in the orphanage in Woody Island.

Q:/JM Was that the Baptist orphanage?

A:/FR Yeah. And then he went sailing on a boat. He was a good boatman. He used to run boats. Then after we got married, we lived in Anchorage, in Seward, then we went to Bristol Bay. Naknak. I have a daughter lives over there, too. She's married. Them days they used sailing boats and I used to set-net on the beach. We had a set-net on the beach. I wish I was there this year.

Q:/JM They made a lot of money.

A:/FR I felt so tired after I had my first baby. Here she was two weeks old and I got asthma and I've been bothered by it ever since. I'm asthmatic. I don't know how I ever lived through it with all those kids. I haven't been healthy at all.

Then, the youngest one was two. I hated it up there--it was so cold and there's no trees. I don't like it cause Kodiak is just loaded with trees and I just love it. So, he asked to go down the Chain doing work running

a sub boat [unintelligible].

Q:/JM When was this?

A:/FR 1942, when the Second World War was on. And I said, "Eddie, if you're going to leave me in this cold country with all these kids, I'm gonna leave you. I'm not going to live here." And it was hard. He had to leave in December when it was cold--seventeen below--and I'm not well. The more I thought about it, he made good money and he sent me the money. I'd let the commissioner--he was my neighbor--keep it for me in a safe. He was gone fourteen months. Oh, I hated that place. When spring came I worked in the cannery. He came back, I had my divorce. I said, "I warned you." Then he used to drink a lot and I used to be against it. Now I take a drink, but I was against that. It was hard with kids. So, it took me eight hundred dollars to get out of there. And my brother had a house ready for me in Kodiak, so I stayed here then I went on to Kodiak.

And while I was gone, the Base was built!

Q:/JM The Coast Guard Base?

A:/FR Yes, it's Coast Guard, it used to be Army. The Navy took over and now it's Coast Guard. I was surprised--Kodiak grew so much. Fifteen years. God. Then the engineer on the boat told me--he's from Kodiak, Maurice Sargeant. He used to be engineer on this boat.

We came from Seward on a big boat. He says, "Freida, did you know there's an island here at Woman's Bay [where the Base is] named after your grandma?" I said, "No!" He says, "It's called Mary's Island because that's where grandma and them used to go and put up their dried fish." The boys would catch the fish in the creek and the women would split and dry it for winter. So, they names it Mary's Island after my grandma. I didn't know that. He was elderly and he knew.

Q:/JM What was your grandmother's name?

A:/FR Mary Sharavwa.

Q:/JM Do you remember her very well?

A:/FR Oh, yes, yes. Poor thing. I used to feed her after I came from school. She must have been around ninety. She was like a baby. Her husband was dead and I used to feed her bread and milk and a cup of coffee. We'd be eating and she'd go, "Chaska."

Q:/JM Chaska?

A:/FR Chaska is a cup. Chaska. I'd feed her with a spoon like a baby. I was there when she died.

Q:/JM Where was she from, do you know?

A:/FR Well, since my mother was born in Ninilchik....

Q:/JM She must have been born there?

A:/FR That was her mother, so she must have been from there, too.

Q:/JM Was that all Russian then? Did your grandmother and your mother speak Russian to you when you were growing up?

A:/FR They all did. They all spoke Russian.

Q:/JM In the town of Kodiak, did a lot of people speak Russian?

A:/FR That's all. They all spoke Russian.

Q:/JM There was still the Russian Mission then, wasn't there?

A:/FR Yeah, I remember there was a Mission there. Yeah. And I lived there. I washed dishes in the restaurant, you know. To take care of my kids, I had to.

Q:/JM When you came back to Kodiak?

A:/FR Yeah. I worked for six years there. I worked as a chambermaid. [Unintelligible exchange.] Then I got this job in Karluk to cook for about twelve fishermen. Beach seining. So I took it. The kids were all grown up except there was four I took with me. They were kind of small then. The other ones were married. So, anyway, I took this job and that's how I met my second husband, Gus Reft. He was the boss of the fishing....

Q:/JM They used to call them gangs?

A:/FR Yeah. Beef gang. I don't know how many years I cooked there and then it was all over.

Q:/JM What was Karluk like when you moved there?

A:/FR There was quite a few people there then, but a lot have moved away. They're moving to Larsen Bay. And then they all spoke Aleut. There was a Panamark there. Alek and his brother Lawrence. They were born in Kodiak, too. We'd talk Russian. But I wish I could talk Aleut especially when I was cooking. You know, I'm not a dummy. I could read. So I cooked them a lot of food they ate like what they didn't eat at home. I know how they eat at their houses, just plain cooking, boiled fish. And I could fix fish any way--Italian style. I can make chicken.

Q:/JM Oh, you like to cook?!

A:/FR Yeah. Well, like I say, I didn't serve in just one way all the time. When they didn't catch too much fish we couldn't afford to buy meat for that much of a group, so I cooked fish different ways. They were never too much for salads because they weren't getting it at home. They'd act nice and then they'd talk and laugh. I said, "Are you making fun of my cooking?" Oh, boy, I'd give anything to understand. But the storekeeper, he used to always compliment me on my food.

Q:/JM What did you use for salads? Did you get wild greens?

A:/FR Well, I'd take canned peas, carrots, and drain 'em real good and add onion to it. There was no garden

there--unless we ordered fresh stuff from Kodiak, like lettuce and tomatoes and once in awhile you'd splurge. I'd always see when we caught a lot of fish.... I was getting the fisherman's share. And we all paid for the grub. And my husband got so much for every fish extra for being the boss. [Loud airplane noise.]

Q:/JM Did you make a lot of traditional food? How do you make your perok?

A:/FR How do I make it? I make it a different way now. I used to make a crust for the bottom, then you boil your rice. Either fresh fish or you use soaked salted like they use wintertime mainly. Summertime you use fresh fish. Then a lot of them like to boil eggs, soft eggs. You put layer of rice, layer of fish, season it and slice your onion up and put over it. Slice your eggs if you want to, then another layer of rice and your top crust. But now I got a new way of making it. I got this recipe from my Russian cookbook. It's called kubliuk. Kubliuk. That's Russian. And that's what I made here the other day. It's more work. It's easy with canned salmon, if you have. You cook your rice with a can of chicken broth and season it. If you're using fresh salmon, then you boil it first, then you cool it off then you bone it and flake it. Then you chop up your vegetables. I never make it unless I have the vegetables. I use rutabagas,

celery, cabbage and onion. Chop 'em up real fine and I fry 'em with little pieces of bacon. Fry 'em till they're almost done. They don't have to be thoroughly done. And I mix all that together and season it with lemon and pepper and garlic salt. Season it to taste. Just like hash, you're making--mix it all up. Then you put your crust in a big cookie sheet pan and fill it in like a meatloaf. Put your top crust and when that's baked, you slice it like a meatloaf. And it's so different from the other way. Or you could even bake it in a square pan. I like it that way, and I notice the kids go for it more that way than the other way.

Q:/JM Has more things, too.

A:/FR The other way we use vegetables, too. But as a child they always made it plain. Fish, rice and onion. It's so much different with vegetables. There's a whole meal right there unless you want to have a green salad on the side.

I've had my days of cooking with kids. Bread! I wish I had a penny for every loaf of bread I baked.

Too bad you didn't get to see the inside of my home in Karluk.

Q:/JM I know. I was sorry you weren't there.

A:/FR I've got a great big stove--huge, great big oven. It's from a mess hall, the kind of stove they used to

[have] in sailing ships. Coal stove, but it's converted to oil. We have oil burners. It's a beauty. People came and took pictures of my stove. "Oh what a beautiful stove!" We kept it up. My husband would always keep it painted up and keep it polished up.

Q:/JM When did you marry your husband, Freida?

A:/FR In '45.

Q:/JM You'd already been cooking down in Karluk?

A:/FR That how I met him. I've never been in other villages outside of Kodiak.

Q:/JM Did you like living down there?

A:/FR Yes, I liked it. And after we got married, he fixed up his home, the one his mother left to him. He changed all the foundation. He remodeled it. He was a carpenter; he was a boat carpenter and a very good carpenter. He built that lodge out of a building he bought from Alaska Packers at Karluk River for thirty-five dollars. He got it all down, hauled up rafters. Only thing cost us was the interior part of it. Yeah, he built that. He was a hard working man compared to my first husband. I never even owned a home with him. [Unintelligible because of dog barking.] Our yard used to be so.... I used to have shrubs and all the grass used to be cut. Now when I go there all the wild things are growing right up by the house. I get so depressed I

get sick. I just can't stand it. But the Laudes, they keep it nice. They keep it mowed--the lawn.

Q:/JM You spent quite a few years in Karluk.

A:/FR Yeah, I did.

Q:/JM And you had six kids with Gus Reft?

A:/FR Six kids. Yeah, the youngest one is thirty. He's married. That's the one that lives in Eagle River. He's fishing in Larsen Bay.

Q:/JM When you were raising your kids there, I was wondering about how your kids were delivered. Were there midwives in Kodiak and Karluk?

A:/FR Oh, yeah. All those in Karluk were from midwives.

Q:/JM Who was your midwife?

A:/FR Gus' mother was for one. And then Mrs. Lactonian--she was our neighbor--she was another one.

Q:/JM I always hear such nice stories about them. Everyone seems to really like....

A:/FR They take you to banya.

Q:/JM They take care of you?

A:/FR Yeah. When your muscles soften up from the heat, they feel you. They could tell if the baby is laying right. They had an old woman who went blind. Even after she went blind, she was still delivering kids. In fact, when Eddie was born--the oldest one of my second marriage--Gus' mother was gone and the other midwife was

gone so I had to go to my neighbor and she had children of hers but she never delivered. And she was scared. I told her, "Don't be scared. Just do what I tell you to do." I told her to sterilize the scissors and boil 'em in water--string and stuff. She did what I told her. When it came to cutting, I said, "Now you tie it two inches away from...tie it tight." I says, "Tie it here again and cut in between." But the afterbirth scared me. It didn't come out for a long time so I sent Gus down to get the blind lady. And because I knew it should only take a few minutes, and this was way over an hour, I got worried. She was going to do it with her bare hands. I told this other lady, "No, no. There's rubber gloves there. You wash em out in salt and water." She took the afterbirth out. [Lots of barking.] [Unintelligible]... with not sterile hands. That's why I say I'm sure thankful that I'm able to read. I learned more by reading than I did in school.

Q:/JM I've heard about that blind midwife before. I think she was Clyda Christiansen's mother-in-law.

A:/FR Yeah. Clyda used to be married to her son.

Q:/JM I heard her talk about her mother-in-law.

A:/FR How is Clyda? Have you seen her lately? [LM and FR have a conversation about Clyda's health.]

Q:/JM I think that's where I heard about the blind

midwife. It seems that when you didn't have doctors and you didn't have all the things that you have now you learned how to do those things for yourself.

A:/FR Well, you have to learn those things--kind of be prepared because things could happen so fast, you know?

Q:/JM Do you think life was better then in Karluk when it was a smaller village and they didn't have so many conveniences?

A:/FR These children of mine, since we lived on this side and the school used to be there when my husband was young, and they used to be going to school, they went across where the school is now. There's an old cannery building--they used to go to school there. And the children never got along. There was quite a few families on our side.

Q:/JM You lived over where the lodge is now?

A:/FR Yeah. We used to have a school then but in his days when he was young he used to go across. The bridge used to be there. You never seen it when the bridge was there?

Q:/JM No.

A:/FR Oh, it's so different now. The kids never got along. And it's the same way when my girls went to school. The school was on our side and they had to come up. Oh, they kept up until the people from Juneau came

and decided where the school should be. They didn't like it at all and they didn't think about all those years when the people from this side used to go down there to go to school. Anyway, the kids used to fight. No matter what they'd wear they'd make fun of 'em because they had [unintelligible]. They're just jealous. That's all it was was jealousy. Even the dogs didn't get along! You live in a small place, there's always....

Q:/JM How about when you went to school, Freida, was that hard to learn English and not be able to speak Russian?

A:/FR It took quite a while. Then I was gone for three years and I kind of forgot Russian. I didn't come home every summer like some of them do because you had to pay your fare and pay your fare to school. So I stayed there after school and in the summertime we'd go picking berries for the farmers. They'd come and get a group of us and we always had the chaperone with us, of course. And we were picking loganberries, one girl to each side, you know how they grow in rows. There's people who follow the crop like from California--like berries, whatever is in season. They make their living, used to anyway in them years. So, next to us was some elderly people. My ears caught that they were talking Russian! [Inaudible whispers.] Just listening I understood a word here and

there. Coming home it wasn't hard to pick it up and Gus' mother talked it real good. And then my neighbor, Mrs. Lactonian, talked it real good. In no time, I had it back. We'd talk together when we didn't want the kids to understand something.

Q:/JM And your kids probably didn't learn Russian?

A:/FR No, uh uh. My son--I had two boys from my first marriage; one joined the Navy and the other one joined the Army engineers, worked in France and Germany--and he said when he was in Germany there was Russians used to shake their fists at them and go by in big trucks. "Gee!" he was saying, "I was wishing I knew how to talk Russian. I'd holler back at them." He says, "Momma, why didn't you teach me?" The other boy was stationed in Japan, Robin--that's the boy I lost. Then I had two boys from Gus; Sonny and the youngest one, Tony. He's the one that's my baby. He's thirty years old.

Q:/JM So you raised a lot of those kids alone during the time when you were divorced. That must have been hard.

A:/FR You bet. I worked, I did anything just to be able to feed 'em. Then he came several times--he wanted to get married. "Me marry you?" I says. "Look at you. You been drinking again." I says, "No way." I really did fall in love with him, though, the first time. I

really did.

Q:/JM You mean when you first met him?

A:/FR Yeah. But then now when I think, "Damn fool me, why didn't I go back Out to school and finish high school?"

Q:/JM Well, you said you learned a lot of things from reading on your own.

A:/FR Oh, yeah.

Q:/JM What kind of things did you like to read, Freida?

A:/FR I never did like that True Romance, and all that true story junk like all the young girls do. I like to read Reader's Digest and Time magazine and Life--I think it's back out now. Something that you could learn from. And I used to do a lot of crocheting. But now my fingers are..... But now that my fingers are clumsy, I could crochet with yarn, I made several afghans, but I can't crochet with fine thread, like I used to make doilies. Sometimes my fingers are numb so I just keep 'em going.

Q:/JM You said you learned when you were seven.

A:/FR Yeah, I had to. My aunt and daughter-in-law taught me how.

Q:/JM She wanted you to make things for her?

A:/FR Oh, yeah. I had to make edgings for her curtains.

Q:/JM You taught your daughters how to crochet, too?

A:/FR [Unintelligible because of barking.]

Q:/JM Did people used to do that together? When you were growing up, did women or girls get together and do things like pick berries or....?

A:/FR Oh, yeah--groups. Oh, I used to make more jams and jellies, enough for a whole winter. The kids would pick the berries--I hear there are a lot of salmonberries in Kodiak. I'd say, "None of this is touched till the first snow is on the ground!"

Q:/JM Did you use to can a lot of fish, too?

A:/FR My husband and I were about the only ones who used to. We'd dry fish, we'd smoke fish, we'd salt fish for winter. And we'd can. That's what's so disgusting. There's no reason they couldn't do that because that lagoon is full of fish and, you know, you have your subsistence, you can get all you want. 'Course, every year it's getting more stricter. And him and I would get a seine which is what we'd get all winter. Wintertime, they'd come around bumming for salt fish. I said, "My gosh, when the fish is here you have no time. You take your earning money you made on fish and go to town, blow it all up." That's the way a lot of them are in the village, then they depend on welfare.

Q:/JM When you went to Karluk, were there already a lot of government programs and welfare?

A:/FR They used to get unemployment. There was no work

there. Nothing to do after fishing was over. Now, they're getting so they have grants in the villages, but there was none of that then. There was unemployment or welfare.

Q:/JM How about when you were growing up in Kodiak, was it mainly a fishing town?

A:/FR They only had one cannery, Port Bailey. That was the only thing in summertime. Those that were able to go fishing, went fishing.

END INTERVIEW