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FLAT AND IDITAROD 1993-1995 ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

edited by Rolfe G. Buzzell



Editor

Rolfe G. Buzzell is a historian with the State of Alaska's Office of History and Archaeology in Anchorage, Alaska. The oral histories were made possible through a cooperative agreement between the Bureau of Land Management and the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources. This report also listed as Office of History and Archaeology Report Number 52.

Cover Photo

City of Flat, Alaska, 1912. Office of History and Archaeology Photo Collection.

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U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Anchorage, Alaska

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Department of Natural Resources
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5921

INTRODUCTION

During July and August 1993, staff from the Office of History and Archaeology of the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation spent four weeks conducting a historic buildings survey in Flat, Iditarod and nearby mining camps (Figure 1). This work was carried out under a Cooperative Agreement between the U. S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management and the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources to document and evaluate historic properties associated with the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

One of the tasks included in the historic building survey of Flat and Iditarod was to interview individuals knowledgeable about the history of Flat and Iditarod and the buildings in those two communities. Under the project work plan, information from the oral history interviews will be used to write the historic contexts for Flat and Iditarod and to evaluate buildings and sites in those communities.

Historian Rolfe Buzzell, the principal investigator for the project, conducted the interviews. Other Office of History and Archaeology staff assisted in the interviews on a rotating basis, including historian Steve Posgate and student interns Darrell Lewis and Ursula Schwaiger. Bureau of Land Management archaeologist Julie Steele also sat in on several interviews.

Most of the interview sessions were tape recorded. In two instances, the interviews were not recorded and the interviewer took hand written notes. The transcripts that follow are interview summaries. The information provided by each individual is summarized, rather than transcribed word for word. Quotation marks are used to indicate direct quotes. Most of the comments made by the interviewers have not been included, but are noted by the use ellipses (three or four dots) signaling a break or interruption in the information provided by the informants. Care has been taken to accurately summarize the information provided by the interviewees while conveying a sense of their styles of speaking.

During the field work, the project crew used a series of site maps drawn from aerial photographs to accurately locate buildings, structures and sites inventoried during the survey of historic buildings in Flat and Iditarod. These site maps were also used during the oral history interviews to help identify the buildings and structures discussed by the interviewees. The site maps are included at the end of this publication, and map references to the specific buildings, structures and sites are indicated in brackets. The first reference in brackets in many of the interviews refers to temporary site designations. Letters of the alphabet were initially used by the survey crew in the field [i.e. Building S] to identify buildings or sites. The temporary designation was replaced in the fall of 1993 by permanent site numbers. The second reference in brackets refers to the permanent building or site designation [i.e. IDT-070] given during write up of the survey results. Permanent site numbers are listings in the Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS), the statewide inventory of prehistoric and historic sites in Alaska. The first three letters of the AHRS number refer to the United States Geological Survey quad map [i.e. IDT = Iditarod Quad]. The last three numbers of the AHRS designation refer to the number given that site within the geographic quad. For example, Building S, IDT-070 refers to the Community or Moose Hall Building in Flat. In most of the interviews, both the temporary designation and the AHRS number appears in the brackets. In a few cases, only the temporary number or the AHRS number appears in brackets. The use of temporary and permanent site designations in the interview summaries is designed to assist the reader in locating the buildings and sites discussed in the interviews.

The purpose of the 1993 field project was to identify and evaluate historic buildings in Flat and Iditarod associated with the Iditarod National Historic Trail. As a result, significant parts of these interviews dwell on specific buildings and structures. The interviewers also sought information about the history of these two communities and everyday life in Flat and

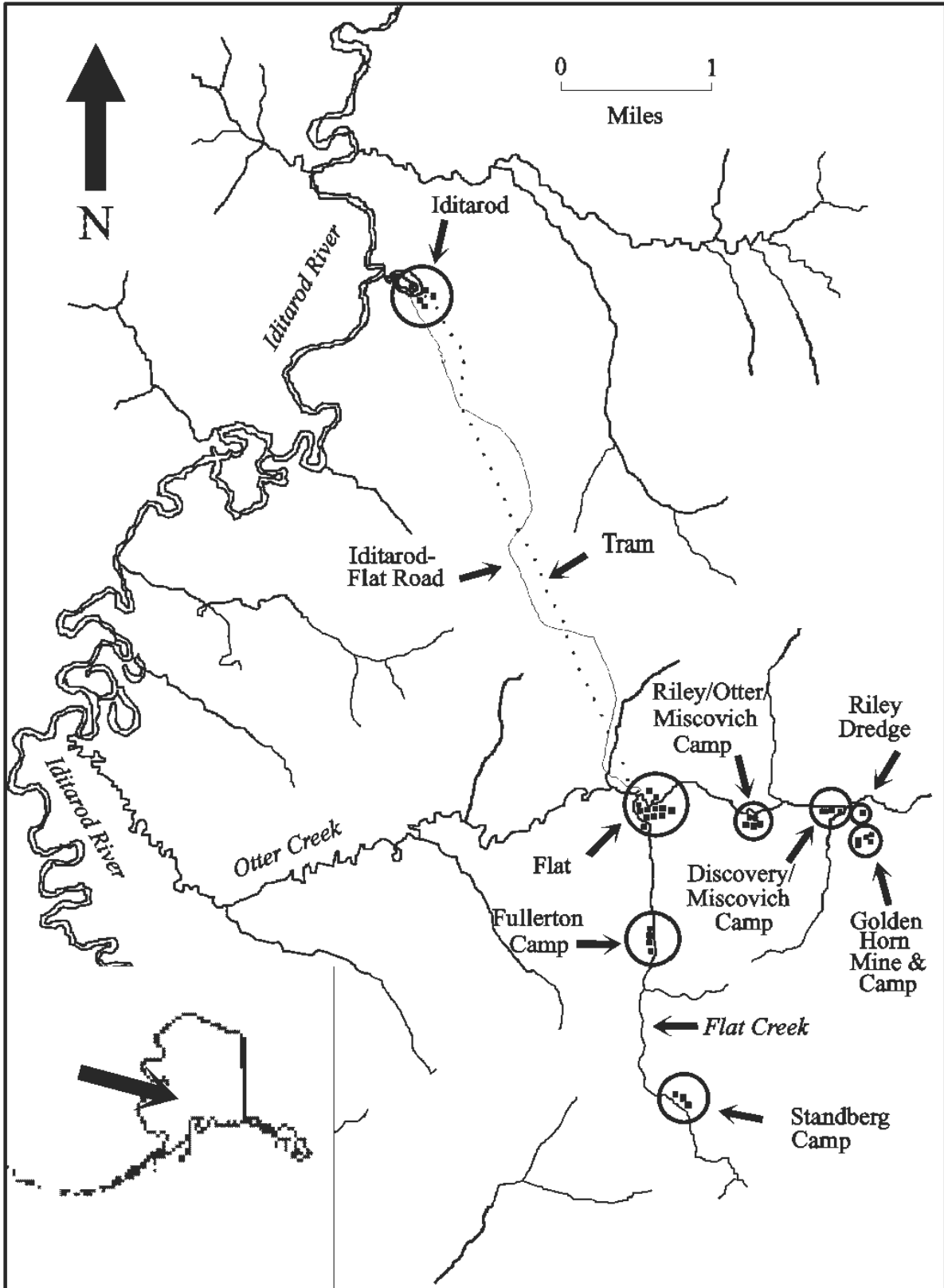


Figure 1. Map of the Flat and Iditarod area, showing selected mining camps.

Iditarod. The interviews provide a wealth of information on all aspects of the history of Flat, Iditarod and the surrounding mining camps, and the people who lived and worked in those communities. Because of the breadth and richness of the information contained in these interviews, the interview summaries were combined into this publication to make them accessible to those seeking information about the history of Flat and Iditarod.

Each person interviewed provided unique insights and perspectives about the history of the project area. John Miscovich, John Fullerton and Alvin Agoff were raised in the Flat area by parents who were part of the early development of the Iditarod mining district. All three have lived and worked in the Flat area most of their lives. Their long tenure in the project area and their familiarity with buildings, sites, and individuals associated with the community give their interviews exceptional importance. Mark and Sherry Kepler have been living in Flat with their three children since 1986-1987. The Keplers have taken an active interest in the history of Flat. They have retrieved documents and photographs from abandoned buildings and they have helped stabilize buildings important to the history of the community. As the only remaining year-round residents of the project area, their interview provides a unique perspective on Flat's past and future. Peter Bagoy's parents moved to Iditarod in 1910 when Peter was only two. The Bagoy family lived in the communities of Iditarod, Discovery and Flat until 1923, when they moved to Anchorage. Peter Bagoy's recollections of the area during the 1910s and early 1920s provides a unique contribution to this collection.

Clair (Jensen) Marks and Johanna (Jensen) Kerr were born in Iditarod and moved with their family to Flat in 1929 or 1930. They went to school in Flat in the 1930s and early 1940s, and moved to Anchorage after World War II. Dolly (Miller) Turner and Nina (Miller) Mercer were both born in Flat in the early 1930s and went to school there in the 1930s and 1940s. They moved to Anchorage in the late 1940s. Like John Miscovich, John Fullerton and Alvin Agoff, the Jensen and Miller sisters spent their formative years in Iditarod and Flat.

The final two interviewees, Catherine Weimer and Glen Barnett, are long-time Anchorage residents who each experienced Flat on a temporary, seasonal basis in the mid-1930s as part of the seasonal work force attracted to that remote mining camp. Catherine Weimer accompanied her husband to Flat during the summers of 1935 and 1936, where he worked for wages for several mining operators. Glen Barnett, a young bachelor fresh out of high school, went to Flat in 1935 looking for work and adventure. He spent three summers in the Flat area, working for various miners.

I would like to thank all of the people interviewed for their willingness to share their time, knowledge, and memories of their experiences in the Flat and Iditarod area. This collection provides a unique window on the history of Flat and Iditarod, and life in the mining camps of the Iditarod mining district.

Rolfe Buzzell
Office of History and Archaeology

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JOHN MISCOVICH INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED ON JULY 22, 1993

This interview was conducted with John Miscovich on July 22, 1993, at his mining camp near Otter Creek, two miles east of Flat, Alaska. The interview session on July 22, was conducted by historian Rolfe Buzzell and student intern Ursula Schwaiger, both of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. This is the first of four interviews with Mr. Miscovich on Flat, and the first of a total of six interviews.

The following is a summary of his comments, unless quotations marks are used.

Tape 1, Side A:

- 000 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell...
- 007 John Miscovich has lived in Flat all his life except when he was away during World War II, 75 years plus. He was born in Otter Creek which is about three miles east of Flat. His family lived in a little city called Discovery, about 3 miles east of Flat. They lived in Flat during the winter months when he was going to school and in the summer they moved back out to the mines. John's father, Peter Miscovich, came to Flat in 1910 from the States. Peter Miscovich came to the United States from Croatia in 1903. He was in the States until he heard about the stampede to Iditarod in 1910. He went to St. Michael from Seattle, then to Iditarod, Flat, and Discovery. He was not married when he came to Flat. Peter Miscovich married John's mother, Stana Bagoy in 1912. John's uncle, John Bagoy, was his mother's brother. John Bagoy had a greenhouse business in Iditarod and later in Flat. The Bagoy family sold vegetables. John Bagoy and his family, including six children, moved to Anchorage in 1921. The Bagoy family has continued to live in Anchorage.
- 040 John Miscovich has six brothers and sisters. There were four boys and three girls. John was the third oldest boy. He has an older brother in Fairbanks, George, and a younger brother, Andrew, in Fairbanks. He also has a younger brother, Howard, at Poorman near Ruby. Anne Williams, who lives part-time in Flat and part-time in Anchorage, is his only surviving sister. All were born in the Flat or Discovery. George and Eva were born in Flat, John was born in Discovery on March 7, 1918.
- 054 John's father, Peter Miscovich, talked to John a lot about what Flat was like when he moved there. There was a boom or stampede. "There were thousands of people coming and going. Iditarod was the main supply point," according to John. Flat supplied all its surrounding camps and Discovery was a supply point for the mines in that area. There

- were about 3,000 people in the area at one time. It was quite an active area with bars, hotels and all the facilities of a city. Including telephones.
- 064 Peter Miscovich, John's father, started out working as a laborer in the Iditarod-Flat area when the tramway was built from Iditarod to Flat in 1910. He was a section foreman. After that he went to work for a man in Discovery for a short time before staking his own mining ground. He was very successful and from then on he worked for himself. "There were hard times and good times," John recalls his father telling him. Without modern machinery, mining was a lot of hard work. The price of gold was only \$20 an ounce. He did quite well some years, other years were lean. It all depended on the rain because everybody needed water for mining. It was divided among all the outfits. Those that had the first water rights had plenty of water. If one had the third water rights, like the Miscovichs did, then one took the tail end of what was left over. In "a summer like we had this summer we would be out of water for 50 or 60 days or more," John stated....
- 085 Rolfe asked about the origins of Flat. John said the original town of Flat was located west of its current location. Otter Creek is not in its original location and the town was located on a bend in the Otter Creek. When it was first set up as a city, it was located at the mouth of Flat Creek, and Flat Creek came right through the middle of the town. Flat was near the mouth of Flat Creek and Boulder Creek which is about where the Matheson Dredge [Site A, IDT-118] is now. The ground had not been tested then and nobody knew the values of Flat Creek fanned out into Otter Creek the way it did. It took a lot of drilling to prove just how extensive that pay streak was. The price of gold went up, adding to the value of the mining. Before the Iditarod-Flat Tram and the Iditarod-Flat Road were built, miners carried a lot of supplies and equipment up Otter Creek from Otter City in polling boats. In those early years, there was a lot of traffic on Otter Creek. John Bagoy's farm was located west of the Alaska Road Commission complex [Building FFFF, IDT-171]. The town was never all moved at one time. It was moved piece meal. As the buildings were on pay and the ground had to be mined, the buildings would be moved.
- 117 When the Guggenheims moved in they set up their dredge at the head of Flat Creek, way up at the head, about five miles up [south] from Flat. It took several years before the Guggenheims got down to Flat. When they got to Flat, the Guggenheims started the movement of buildings.... This was in the 1910s. After the Guggenheims closed down and left, and the dredge was dismantled, another company, the Northland Development Company, which was a forerunner to the Goodnews Bay Mining Company, came into Flat. They sampled [tested] the tops of the Guggenheim tailing piles and found that the Guggenheim dredge had lost a lot of gold due to not being able to wash the type of bedrock. The Northland Development Company brought in a dragline plant and built a trestle. They remined a big portion of the Guggenheim tailings that had already been

- settled with houses. So those houses had to be moved off of where those people had located on the Gugg's tailings.
- 131 After the Northland Development Company moved off, then Alex Matheson, a manager for the North American Dredging Company, brought in a drill and started drilling through the tailings. According to John Miscovich, Matheson located very good values through the Gugg's tailings going into bedrock where the Northland Development Company had mined the surface. Alex Matheson arranged a deal with Beaton to take over the North American Dredging Company Dredge [Site A, IDT-118]. So Matheson started mining in the area of Flat with the old wooden hull dredge. Matheson saw he had a problem because the wooden hull dredge was too small and could not dig deep enough. So after making considerable money with the wooden hull dredge, Matheson brought in a new hull, super structure and processing machinery and rebuilt the dredge. Then he started again, mining around the area of Flat. He even re-mined what he had mined in the area of the store and the wireless station and the Matheson House [Building II, IDT-102]. The only area he did not mine twice was a little strip over across here [location not clear]. Alex Matheson rebuilt the dredge in 1939 or 1940 and mined a big block of ground west of where the Matheson Dredge [Site A, IDT-118] is now located.
- 164 The Matheson Dredge was rebuilt from the earlier dredge. The winches and the spuds are from the old dredge. The engines, the winches upstairs and the drive on the tumbler, the pontoons and the steel superstructure and the building are all new. The stacker and screen were also new. Matheson made quite a recovery plant out of it compared to what the old dredge was like. The Riley/Miscovich dredge [IDT-220] is the same kind of dredge that Alex Matheson had before it was rebuilt.... Matheson rebuilt the dredge in 1939-1940 because John Miscovich helped work on it, and it was before the war....
- 183 Alex Matheson did not mine the ground north of Otter Creek where the Alaska Road Commission complex [Buildings FFFF and GGGG, IDT-171 and IDT-172] and "the Line," where gals of ill repute operated, were located. That area was mined only once.... It was a flume dredge and had a short stacker. It dropped the big rocks in the pond and then the flume covered them up. The present airport is also built on flume tailings. After Alex Matheson rebuilt the dredge, he was able to dig deeper in harder bedrock. The tailing piles then became much more pronounced. He came down this side to the mouth of Rainy Gulch and down to the mouth of Cottonwood Creek. Then he crossed over where the old Road Commission Camp is, then came across into the deep ground he had.... There were ten or twelve houses of ill repute on the "line"....
- 204 When the fire burned Flat [in 1924] it burned the Moose Hall. To get another hall built the whole community got together to build the present hall [Building S, IDT-070]. The material was brought in by [Harry] Donnelley's boat operation, Day Navigation. The building is still called the Moose Hall but the Moose Lodge was disbanded many years

- ago.... The original Moose Hall was a big two story building that burned in 1924. It was located right in the middle of the old town of Flat.... It was west of its present location, on First Street, right next to Durand's Cafe. Manual Gularte's Store, Fullerton's Store, Hamilton's Tin Shop, and Judge Steer's Office were all in the heart of town [on First Street]. John's uncle [Andy Miscovich] had a saloon with a pool table that also burned down in the 1924 fire. The 1924 fire destroyed First and Second Avenue where the Grand Hotel, a big two story building with a colonial type front, was located. They gave speeches on the Fourth of July off the front of the Grand Hotel.
- 240 The barn [Building JJ, IDT-097] was located near the hotel. There isn't anything on the site of the old town of Flat. The barn was moved.... "The fire occurred in the spring, in April [of 1924]." The Moose Hall [Building S, IDT-070] was rebuilt in the fall of 1925, just north of its current location. The new Moose Hall was built in a low spot and when the glaciation [from Otter Creek freezing up] occurred in the winter there was a mess. John's uncle, Andrew Miscovich, moved his bar, "The Branch Pool Hall," in front of the Moose Hall. The community didn't like that. It was too convenient to go right from the dance into the bar. So the townspeople decided that it had to be moved farther east and up to higher ground. They moved it onto tailings that Alex Matheson had mined with the dredge.
- 273 The new Moose Hall [Building S, IDT-070] was moved to its current location in 1927 or 1928.... The addition [on the east end of the Moose Hall] was moved in there and added right after the building was moved. The addition was a separate building. The hall did not have a kitchen so a building was added and turned into a kitchen. A dressing room was also put in so there would be a place to get dressed for plays and stuff at Christmas time.... Alex Matheson, who built the Matheson House [Building II, IDT-102],--he was probably the best carpenter in the country--supervised and did all the hand work himself for the new hall. He hand cut everything. There was no electric or table saw. It was a master job putting that floor together. Every piece had to be cut to the right length and mitered into the center. "He was a first class carpenter," Miscovich states....
- 310 The Pioneer Lodge and the Moose Lodge still had active members in Flat when the War started. The budget determined how big the Moose Hall was going to be. The building is about 40 feet by 50 feet.... It turned out to be a wonderful building that has been a great help to the community. "Its called the Moose Hall but its really a community hall." There was a great deal of resentment over the name from people that were not members of the Moose Lodge but contributed to the construction of the Moose Hall. "There was a lot of discussion on whether it should be called the Moose Hall because it was not built by the Moose Lodge."

- 338 Joe Parker's Bar [Building R, IDT-072] was moved to its current location in the late 1930s. The bar was started by a man named Charlie Yost. Joe Parker worked for Awe Mining Company. Henry Durand used the building as an eating place in the restaurant. The building was located in the area [of Site Z] between Mark Kepler's Garage [Building AA, IDT-096] and the Miscovich family home [Building Y, IDT-094]. Fritz Awe came to Flat as a mechanic and drag line operator for the [Andrew, Ed and Manny] Olsons, and later went into mining for himself as a partner with Henry Durand. [Fritz] Awe and Durand decided to move the old building out of its location and set it up as a bar. Before the restaurant the old Fullerton house was in that location. After moving the restaurant they built a new two story house for Fritz Awe. All that is left in that location [Site Z] now is a sewer pipe. Fritz Awe's nephew, Charlie Awe, sold the house [Site Z] to Mike Demientieff and Demientieff tore it down and used the lumber for a boat and to build a house [Building W-1, IDT-092] right in front of the school house which he sold to [Philip] Edwards, who sold the house to Don Harris and a man from Anchorage named [Steve] Welles.
- 377 Joe Parker's Bar [Building R, IDT-072] was moved up onto the hill before the war in the late 1930s.... Joe Parker's Bar had a root cellar which was used to store beer and liquor. He got his alcohol in by boat in the fall and he stored it down in the cellar. It was not a very big place but it kept the beer cold down in the hole in the ground. The building collapsed and was torn down....
- 393 The bar had entrances on the south and east sides. The east entrance went to the outhouse.... The bar was in the back of the building and the card room was in the front [south side]. There were two big card tables in the front room. It was a gathering place for old timers to tell stories and warm their feet around a big stove. They also did that around the stove at John's uncle's [Andrew Miscovich] bar [Building Q, IDT-071]. It was a common thing to do. Anyone that had a public building, people would get in out of the cold and take advantage of someone else's wood pile. In the tailings, everyone had some sort of a cellar to keep stuff cool.
- 413 Stella Parker served sandwiches in the addition on the east side of Joe Parker's Bar [Building R, IDT-072]. It was an "L" shaped bar. The restaurant activity took place in the back end. There were two outhouses, a his and a hers. There was a little power house located next to it. When the bar was first started, they had one power plant over at Fritz Awe's shop where Mark Kepler's shop [Building AA, IDT-096] is now. Later a powerhouse [Building T, IDT-073] was built near the bar by Joe Parker. John went to Ruby in 1940 and was away until 1946. The Bar operated for a considerable time after the war. Joe Parker died and Stella ran the bar for a little while but decided to close it because she could not afford the license. She moved all of the supplies over to her house [Building BBBB, IDT-154] on the other side of Otter Creek, and sold everything in her inventory [alcohol] from her kitchen table. Nobody paid any attention

to that. The bar closed in the mid-1950s. The building was vacant after that. Stella worked for John Miscovich after that for a time as a cook for his dredge crew.

- 472 Andrew Miscovich was Peter Miscovich's brother. He had an accident in the early 1920s and lost his lower right arm on a wood saw. The townspeople got together after the fire and moved that building [Building Q, IDT-071] in there so he could start another bar. Before becoming a bar the building belonged to Peter Miscovich. It had been the family home in Discovery. Peter Miscovich bought a house [Building Y, IDT-094] from Jake Mutchler at about the same time. The Discovery home was sitting on oil drums in Flat and was not being used. After the fire it was moved to its current location and became the Andy Miscovich Bar. That was also in about 1925. Peter Miscovich supervised the moving of the building. Andrew Miscovich had a liquor license and had to have a separate building for a liquor store. He used the building next to the bar as a liquor store. The addition was built after Andrew decided that he wanted to set up a restaurant with the bar. He had a woman run the restaurant. "He was running quite an operation here for many years. Bar, restaurant and liquor store." The building had a full basement. During that time he shipped a lot of groceries for John's dad. Andrew had a wholesalers account in Seattle and it helped Peter Miscovich a lot because Peter could get groceries cheaper. That is how Andrew's Bar got started. After Andrew Miscovich got married, he and his wife ran the bar for a couple of years. At the same time he was mining over on Julian Creek. He made quite a bit of money and they decided to get out of Flat. There wasn't enough business to keep the bar going in the winter. He decided to sell it. There was a Texan named [Tex] Johnson that bought it. He never did open it up as a bar. He bought the building, but nobody knows what happened to Johnson after that. There was no record of Johnson. The building gradually fell apart. Some of the interior of the bar was taken out and moved to Alaskaland in Fairbanks when it opened. The roof was falling in, and John helped salvage material from the building and ship it Fairbanks.... The Discovery home was moved to Flat in 1921 or 1922, when John was quite young.
- 550 It was the year the Mutchlers closed the tramway [IDT-024] down and sold their house [Building Y, IDT-094]. Mrs. Mutchler was not well and wanted to move out of Flat. They had a large family. So they auctioned off the house and the Tramway, and John's dad, Peter Miscovich, bid it. Peter Miscovich got the whole tramway and the cars for \$100, and he got the house for \$500. When the Miscovich's got the new building, the other building from Discovery [Building Q, IDT-071] was not big enough, and Peter Miscovich let it sit. The Miscovich family moved into the Mutchler House. At that time the Mutchler House [Building Y, IDT-094] was located to the west [of Site U, IDT-091]. It was moved to its current location in about 1925. The bar [Building Q, IDT-071] was set up about the same time. When the Miscovich family got the new house, they let the other house sit and moved into the Mutchler house.

580 The building [Building W-1, IDT-092] in front of the school house [Building X, IDT-093] was moved to that location from across Otter Creek about the same time. The Manuel Gularte house was moved and the Gus Uotila house.... They moved it from across the river. "It was about the same time [1925]. There was a tremendous amount of activity moving buildings that winter."

586 The barn [Building W, IDT-092] that is right next to the school house belonged to John's father and was moved to Flat from [the] Discovery [/Peter Miscovich Camp]. He sold it to the guy that had the teams in Flat.

599 The Gus Uotila house [Building W-1, IDT-092] is a log building. It was moved to its current location from across Otter Creek.... Tootsie [Matty Crosby] moved from Iditarod, where she was for years, and she set up across the river, on the north side of Otter Creek. She moved into a house [Building YYY-1, IDT-151] that belonged to a prostitute named Flossie [Winters] who had moved out of Flat. Tootsie lived there in that building for a long time. Before that she lived in a small building on the left side of the road above Ray Stock's cabin [Building EEEE, IDT-159]. Tootsie moved into Flossie's house [Building YYY-1, IDT-151] after Flossie left and it burned to the ground. After that building burned and she didn't have anyplace to go, Tootsie set up in that house [Building W-1, IDT-092] which everybody calls "Tootsie's Place." But it was the Gus Uotila house. Later it was the Andrew Miscovich house [Building W-1, IDT-092]. When Andrew got married, he moved from the bar [Building Q, IDT-071] where he had a room in the liquor store part, into the house [Building W-1, IDT-092] and they were there for a number of years--Andrew and his wife. John Miscovich bought the house and sold it to one of the men that worked on Miscovich's dredge. He needed a place to stay while he was winching. After he died, his wife sold the house [Building W-1, IDT-092] to Mike Demientieff. Mike sold it to Don Harris, and this fella [Steve] Welles from Anchorage, the current owners. Its a log building but it has [metal] siding on it now. It also has a green house on top....

653 The one story addition on the north side of the Andy Miscovich Bar [Building Q, IDT-071] was the restaurant. It was a lean-to. Henry Durand had it [the addition] as an eating place. It was added shortly after the building was moved, the summer after the main building [Building Q, IDT-071] was moved.

685 [End of tape, Side A]

Tape 1, Side B:

000 Continuation from side A, introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....

- 007 Andrew Miscovich sold the bar and moved to Fairbanks just before World War II and invested in some property. The war shut down all mining activity in the area due to the L208 Order by the government. Andrew and his wife lived in Fairbanks where they invested in some apartment buildings. They lived there until he died. He died during the war, in about 1944 in Fairbanks while John was in Puerto Rico. [Tex] Johnson got the building [Building Q, IDT-071], but he never ran a bar. John does not know how Johnson got a hold of the building. He just came into Flat as a visitor and spent about a month here. He kind of liked the bar so he bought it. They [Andrew and his wife] were glad to sell it. Johnson paid \$2,500 for the bar. That was a very good price for a bar in Flat....
- 024 The floor of the Andrew Miscovich Bar was formerly John's dad's house. It was just a tongue and groove floor. It was a full basement and upstairs. In the gable part they had room for two--John and his brother George slept up there. It was a well built building. It was not unusual to have tongue and groove in a lot of buildings, in fact siding as well as flooring. Some of the siding they just turned upside down and used as flooring. That originally was the Miscovich's house. There was never a dance floor in Andrew's bar. "It wasn't big enough because he had a big poker table and then he had two pinochle tables in there and that just about took up the whole inside there, with the bar and the big stove. There wasn't any room in there for people to dance. There were fist fights in there, but I don't recall any dancing," John said.
- 038 The building [Building T, IDT-073] northeast of the Moose Hall [Building S, IDT-070] was a generator shed. It never was a barber shop. The barber chair inside the structure was moved there from the card room of the Andrew Miscovich Bar. There was a fella by the name of Leo that the Miscovichs brought in from Washington State. He ran a barber shop in the bar [Building Q, IDT-071]. His son, Harry, was married to John's sister, Anne, at one time. They ran a barber shop there. The chair that is in there [Building T] was moved there. That building never was a barber shop....
- 055 Building T [IDT-073] was a generator shed. They had a lot of Kohler [generator] plants in Flat, bolted down to the concrete stand. They had a power supply going over to the Moose Hall and it went back over to the shop. John thinks that Ralph Alderson owned the generator shed for a while and was selling power. The Moose Hall, the shop, Little John Miscovich's cabin, Peter Miscovich's house, and a number of other buildings in that area had electricity supplied by that power plant. They paid by the month. The building wasn't built there. It was moved to that location before World War II. It was probably moved in the late 1930s. It continued [generating electricity] on into the 1940s. There were people in Flat during the war that were not shut down [from mining] entirely. They were still plugging along with what they had. John's dad, Peter Miscovich, was one of them, and John Ogriz. The dredge was shut down. But there was some "snipping going on in Flat," some mining activity, during the war....

- 071 The Generator Building [Building T, IDT-073] was shut down in the early or mid 1950s, after Ralph Alderson and Lena moved out of Flat. Fritz Awe left Flat and went into the civilian service for the military. A lot of things were brought to an absolute standstill due to the World War. People couldn't get gasoline or diesel fuel. Things were pretty dull.
- 083 There was a resurgence of mining after the war was over. Tractors started to come back again. The dredges started operating again and equipment started coming in again. Alex Matheson had enough fuel and did not shut down during the war. Or at least he operated for part of the time during the war. There was a lot of equipment shipped in after World War II. It was difficult to get equipment into Flat because Day Navigation Company moved off of the Iditarod River right after the war started and began operating on the Kuskokwim River with their boats. So there was not any more river boating on the Iditarod River. It became necessary to transport freight and equipment by airplane. First they used the C-82 Boxcar and later the C-130. That brought a lot of the equipment to Flat, the D-9s and our backhoes, and pumps, and so on. "It [mining] did revive some, especially when the price of gold went up, it revived quite a bit."
- 107 The Fullerton garage [Building EE, IDT-074] was originally located up on Flat Creek. It belonged to Patty Savage and Savage moved it to that location. John believes that when the Fullertons bought Patty Savage's claims on Willow Creek they also purchased the garage. They use the garage for storage. The U. S. Bureau of Mines used it for a couple of years. They stored their drill rig and pickup in it. John Miscovich does not recall when it was moved but he believes that the garage was moved to its current location while he was in Ruby [1946-1957]....
- 121 The "Fullerton Town House" [Building FF, IDT-075] was built by a guy that worked as a cook for Henry Durand. He was involved with the Andrew Miscovich Bar for a while. John can't recall the man's name. It may have been Johnson. It was not built in that location. The house was moved there after the war. There are some things that took place while John Miscovich was in and out of Flat for a few years. He was running another operation in Poorman until 1957. John is not sure how the Fullertons acquired the building. He believes that it may have been part of the Patty Savage deal. Mary Miscovich recalled that when the Fullertons bought the cook house and everything [on Willow Creek?] Patty Savage gave the house to them. Patty Savage moved to Ruby. The Day family moved to Iditarod, Glen Day and Clyde Day, and Jack Acheson. That house may have gone over to Iditarod and come back. Just like the Agoff House [Building HH, IDT-122] in front of it, that was over in Iditarod. And the Tom Jensen House. John says that the Fullertons probably have a better understanding of the history of that house [Building FF, IDT-075]. It was the original building built by this cook working for Henry Durand. The building was in its present location when John came back from Ruby in the 1950s. John says it was built not too far from its present

- location. It had to be moved because the dredge came through there. It was moved a short ways.... The house was built in the 1930s.
- 180 Mark and Sherry Kepler just bought Building DD, [IDT-076]. Ralph Alderson moved that building to its current location. He added a lean to on the back [north side]. He added a bedroom and a wood shed and dug out the basement. He added on the Post Office addition. The Post Office used to be in the main part of the house but Alderson added the Post Office section on the east side. Later on, the Agoffs got the building and they lived there. Dave Wintz and his wife lived in the Post Office part for one winter. But the house is known as the Ralph Alderson House. Subsequent owners were the Agoffs, [Bill and Ann] Williams, and now the Keplers.
- 196 The house was not built at that location. The house was moved there in the 1930s when Lena [Alderson] became Post Mistress. They [Ralph and Lena Alderson] were living down below [near Otter Creek] and the glaciers were so bad that they had to move up onto higher ground. The building was moved from the area in front [south] of the Kepler shop [Building AA, IDT-096]. They used to have to build up snow banks to keep the glaciers from coming in the house. It was right next to "Little John" Miscovich's house [Building BB, IDT-095], which John Miscovich's brother Andrew now owns. There was another building on the other side of Little John's house that they called "the goat barn." They had goats there. That building was moved to [the] Discovery [/Peter Miscovich Camp]. The Ralph Alderson house [Building DD, IDT-076] was moved just a short distance up to the high ground in the late 1930s.... It belonged to somebody else before that but John does not recall who. The building probably dates from the 1920s. Ralph Alderson did a lot of work on the building. He practically rebuilt the thing. He was a good carpenter, himself.... It was the Post Office during the 1930s.
- 220 Lena and Ralph came to Flat in 1925. Ralph was Patty Savage's brother-in-law. Patty was married to Ralph's sister. Ralph's sister was John Miscovich's teacher for three years in the first three grades. Ralph came to Flat and worked for Patty Savage and then went to work on the dredge. When Mrs. [Anna] Fullerton, the Post Mistress, left to go to the States [about 1933], the Aldersons took over the Post Office and Lena became the Post Mistress. He became the commissioner, and was the commissioner of Flat for many years. The Post Office was in that building for about 20 years or longer. [John] Stevens had the post office in that building for a while, and Mrs. Agoff was helping him. It was the Post Office into the 1970s.... The Post Office has never been closed. It has always remained open in Flat. It was in the store for a while when Stevens took over the Post Office. When Alex closed the dredge and sold everything to Stevens, Matheson had an office that his book keeper was operating out of, which is the present post office [Building CCC, IDT-124]. Then Stevens closed the store [Building H, IDT-077] and turned Alex Matheson's little office [located at the time at Site HH-1] into the post office. It is still the post office [but in a different location].

- 247 The building [CC, IDT-076] north of the old Post Office [Building DD, IDT-076] was used as a storage shed and still has a lot of stuff in it. "Ralph Alderson had an awful lot of gadgets." There was a windmill there at one time. Ralph Alderson was the Alaska Road Commission foreman in Flat, during the summer, for a long time. He was in charge of maintenance for the territory. Alderson used that as a storage shed. In the fall he would get a moose and hang it up in there. He had a lot of junk in there....
- 263 Alderson built or moved the building [Building CC, IDT-076] there after he moved up the hill.... It has been there since the 1930s. He had a water tank tower and a windmill, and some other things, and a wood shed too.... He accumulated a lot of stuff while he was in Flat. Ralph was a good carpenter. He worked on the dredge as an engineer, and accumulated an awful lot of stuff. He had a little shop in there at one time. He was a good mechanic.
- 280 Rolfe asked about the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077]... John replied that the bank is located in the southwest corner. The Miners & Merchants Bank of Iditarod was moved to Flat and became The Miners & Merchants Bank of Flat. Everything in Iditarod was closing down. [Harry] Donnelley built the new store and he moved the banking and the assaying and the melting of gold to Flat. He operated all of the banking out of that corner of the store. All the functions of processing and assaying gold was done in Iditarod until about 1928. The gold was taken over to Iditarod in dust form and melted and taken out by boat. In the winter it went out in the mail by dog team. Donnelley moved a building in next to the store [Building H, IDT-077]. At the time, the store was located on the other side of the tailing pile [next to Building M, IDT-083].
- 300 John Stevens moved the store and bank building [H, IDT-077] when he came through with the dredge [in the late 1960s]. Stevens believed that there were some rich deposits under the store and decided to go through with the dredge. It was moved to its current location at that time. He went to a lot of work to move it and when he dredged through the area there was nothing [no gold] there at all. There was some under the Cold Storage Plant [Building J, IDT-078] but he went around it. Stevens should have moved both the cold storage plant and the warehouse, and he would have been in line with the pay streak. The Donnelley and Sheppard Store was moved in 1968 or 1969....
- 326 The store building [Building H, IDT-077] was built in the early 1930s. The Donnelley House [Building O, IDT-085] and the store building were built at the same time, in the fall. Donnelley brought in carpenters from Fairbanks to build both the store and house.
- 340 The bank and storage area on the south side of the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077] is part of the original design. That was the warm storage, dry storage next to the store, and there was a tin shop in there. The bank was also part of

- the original building. They designed it as a bank and then moved the cages there from Iditarod.
- 349 [Harry] Donnelley was the banker and dredge manager for the Riley Investment Company. He headed the Day Navigation Company and he was the Standard Oil agent and Chevrolet agent in Flat. Donnelley had a lot of interests in Flat. "There wasn't a buck that went through Flat that he didn't nibble off a little of the edge," John Miscovich concluded. Donnelley had every reason to put in quite an operation in Flat when it was booming. When Flat went dead after World War II started, Donnelley sold his operation to John Stevens. Donnelley moved to Kodiak and bought the [Wilbur J.] Erskine Store in Kodiak. He went to the states and made a lot of investments. Donnelley was a multi-millionaire when he died.
- 361 John Stevens continued to run the store [Building H, IDT-077]. He operated half a store. He closed the back end off. The wood costs got so high and the tobacco licenses were high. He had the liquor store too. And when the Red Devil Mine closed down, he lost all that business and decided not to renew his liquor license anymore. He abandoned everything and operated a wholesale store in Alex Matheson's mess hall. Food and supplies were brought in by the case and when somebody needed something they would just help themselves and write it down. Mary Miscovich said this was in the 1970s. John continued that people began shipping their groceries in by parcel post. But if they needed tooth picks or a salt shaker they expected John Stevens to have it on his shelves, and he didn't like that.
- 381 Mary Miscovich recalled that John Stevens continued to operate until the mid 1970s. John Stevens took over all of Donnelley's and Matheson's operations. He owned all the property of both the major operations that had been in Flat.... It consisted of the supply and other infrastructures necessary to support mining. There were two dredge operations in the Flat area. The store supplied the needs of both dredges that were working and all the families that worked for the dredges. They also had a big machine shop, which the Miscovich's bought from Riley Investment Company in 1959. That included purchase of the Riley Dredge [IDT-220], and the shop.
- 400 Donnelley was the supplier of everything in the way of mining supplies, food, clothing, medicine. "Anything that you wanted in Flat, you could get in Flat," John added. Donnelley probably had the best hardware store in the state. He also had teamster supplies, hay, oats and harnesses, when there were horses in Flat. Donnelley had a big warehouse in Iditarod that was care taken for years. Charlie Lovett, Cap Lamont, and Sam Applebaum stayed in Iditarod for a while to take care of the store and keep the fires going. They stored all the eggs, potatoes and other goods that came into Iditarod during the fall. They would haul it to Flat as it was needed. There wasn't enough room in Flat

- for everything that had to be shipped in during the fall. These supplies were stored in the warm storage building [Building B, IDT-175], a lean to on the main building.
- 418 Day had his ways for the boats. He and his son lived there [in Iditarod]. Jack Acheson worked for Day and was a partner, and he lived there too. Iditarod was the main water terminal and was quite a thriving place when the boats were running and the road was open. That all collapsed later on when the war [World War I] came along....
- 427 The Turner and Wood Store [Building G, IDT-086] was built in its current location, just north of the Donnelley and Sheppard Store. George Turner was a competitor of Donnelley's in the store business. He was a trader. Ira Woods was a river boat operator and he hauled the freight. They also had stores at Shageluk, Holikachuk, and Holy Cross. They traded furs with the Indians. They were competing with Donnelley, but they didn't make a big dent in the business. "If you did any business with Turner and Wood, and you needed help from Donnelley, he would give you no subsidy. So he really had you collared," according to John Miscovich. "If you needed the bank you had to go to Harry Donnelley. If you needed freight hauled, you went to Harry Donnelley. If you needed groceries and you went to Turner and you went back to Donnelley you wouldn't get any money and you wouldn't get any freight hauled! That's the way it operated here. It was a very distinct division line as to who you did business with here if you wanted to continue in business." The interest at the bank was 12 per cent at that time....
- 450 Donnelley's operation was limited to Iditarod and Flat, whereas Turner and Wood were all up and down the river.... Turner was a fur trader. He traded hundreds of thousands of dollars in furs for supplies that the natives needed. That's how he made it. He sold quite a few supplies. There were people that didn't like Harry Donnelley and didn't work for Harry Donnelley. And so they just didn't want to do any business with him. Harry and his wife, according to John, "were members of the 500 Club. If you had \$500 or more you belonged to the 500 Club; and if you had less than \$500, you belonged to the Turner club! That's how it was.... People that lived here never did get out of debt. That's how they stayed with Donnelley because he just kept adding on a little bit more." It was like a company town. The Riley Investment Company and North American Dredging Company did all their business with Harry Donnelley until their wives got into an squabble, and then never did talk to each other till their dying days. After Donnelley lost the boat business. Alex Matheson began hauling freight from Crooked Creek by sled in the winter. He got Reeve [Air?] to haul his groceries into Flat in the spring. He built the mess haul and a big walk in freezer and became independent of Harry Donnelley. It was a sad thing that happened and nobody knew what the reason for it was. It was one of those things that happened in the local community.

- 491 The Turner and Wood Store [Building G, IDT-086] was built in the late 1920s, about the same time as the Donnelley and Sheppard Store. It was there in 1931 when John left to go to high school in Fairbanks. Turner and Wood did business in Flat until World War II, when the war really shut things down. Donnelley bought out Turner and Wood right after the War. Then Donnelley had everything, and closed down the Turner and Wood Store. Turner was married to an Indian woman and had a big family. He died and the business fell apart. The Turner boys, George and Frank, went to Holy Cross. They operated a big store in Holy Cross for years. They all went to drinking heavy and that broke them all up. One of them died, another got killed.
- 531 When John Stevens took over the Donnelley businesses, he used the Turner and Wood Store [Building G, IDT-086] for storage. In 1981 or 1982, Wayne Dahl, who later got killed in an airplane accident, started taking lumber out of the inside of the Turner and Wood Store building to use for building material for a place for he and his wife. He started to fix up a building with the materials that is now a part of Mark Kepler's House [Building LL, IDT-123].... Both the Donnelley and Sheppard and Turner and Wood stores were classic store front buildings. Both had a good assortment of supplies for miners. But Turner specialized also in trapping supplies. He was an expert judge of furs.
- 551 Turner was a very big man, and a real disciplinarian. He was kind of hunched back, six foot six [inches tall], but he ruled with an iron hand. Turner lived in Flat. He had a big building [house] across the river [Otter Creek]. That building burned. It was a two story building. He had a big family, eight or nine kids. John is not sure what happened to the building, but he thinks it burned down or Violet [Wadsworth] may have set up house keeping in it. She moved it, and took it from a two story to a one story building. John does not recall what happened to Turner's building across the river.
- 584 Rolfe asked about Building I, IDT-088... John replied that there was a meat shed that was used on the barge that used to set in that area. But that building [Building I] is the Turner and Wood warehouse. He had a warehouse that he kept dog fish in and a lot of other stuff.... It was built about the same time as the store.
- 606 Turner also had the hotel [Building P, IDT-089]. He bought it from Harry Lawrence. He was a partner. Before the Donnelley and Sheppard Store was moved, that area was kind of a Turner and Wood organization. It included the bar and hotel, the store, and the warehouse. Harry Lawrence and his wife lived in the back of the hotel with their daughter.... The hotel had a bar adjoining it. The bar was a lean-to. It used to be called the Adams Hotel when George Adams owned it. Then Turner and Wood bought it and operated it as a hotel and bar. It was called the Lawrence Bar because Harry Lawrence was running it. Lawrence was the bar operator and a partner. He moved to Flat from Holy Cross, and he was in Flat for a number of years..... The bar was a one-story

building [addition on the east side of the hotel], quite a large area. It had a couple of card tables and a big long bar on the south side of the inside. There was a doorway that went right into the hotel part....

650 The warehouse [Building I, IDT-088] was built in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Donnelley used it as a warehouse, not as a store, after he bought out Turner and Wood. It currently belongs to the Dahl estate and is not being used. Harry Donnelley's objective when he bought it was to get rid of all the competition in Flat, which he did. And there was not room for another store in Flat. Donnelley used the building as storage.... There was a bunch of furniture stored in it at one time.

683 [End of Tape, and end of interview session #1.]

JOHN MISCOVICH INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED ON JULY 23, 1993

This interview was conducted with John Miscovich on July 23, 1993, at his mining camp near Otter Creek, two miles east of Flat, Alaska. The interview session on July 23, was conducted by historian Rolfe Buzzell and student intern Darrell Lewis, both of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Mary Miscovich, John's wife, was also present during the interview. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. This is the second of four interviews with Mr. Miscovich on Flat, and the second of a total of six recorded sessions. The following is a summary of his comments, unless quotation marks are used.

Tape 2, Side A:

- 000 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell.... Continuation of interview from Tape 1
- 015 The Adams Hotel [Site P, IDT-089] was built by George Adams in the late 1920s, about the same time as the building of the new Moose Hall [Building S, IDT-070]. George Adams had been in Flat for quite a while when he decided to build the hotel. He was a cripple and had one eye. He took over the hotel that was built on the site of the original hotel after the [1924] fire. The hotel that was destroyed by the fire was a two story building. The hotel that Adams took over was chopped in two and moved to make way for the dredge. The Adams Hotel was built when the old hotel was moved. The original hotel was located southwest of the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077] about where the Turner and Wood Warehouse #1 [Building F, IDT-087] is located.
- 034 There was dredging in the area of the original hotel in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Then it went through again. It went through the same area twice. The old wooden hull dredge was unable to dig up the bedrock that the Guggenheim dredge had dug. The town was on virgin ground. When the Guggenheims were in Flat they didn't move the old town. They turned the dredge around in the area of the Moose Hall and headed up stream. It stopped almost at the bridge on Flat Creek and that is where the Gugg dredge was dismantled. The town was located further to the northwest. When Alex Matheson took over the Beaton dredge is when the big movement of buildings started, both in the Guggenheim emerging bedrock and the ground underlying the city of Flat. The ground underlying the town was virgin ground--it had never been mined before.

- 055 George Adams sold the hotel to Harry Lawrence and his wife in the late 1930s. The Lawrences ran the hotel and the bar. The bar was adjoining on the north side of the building. The living quarters for the Lawrence family were on the east side of the hotel.... The bar was already torn down in 1976. It was torn down first. The bar was a lean to that extended about 20' from the building on the north. It ran the full length of the hotel.... The addition on the northeast corner was part of the living quarters.... John believes that the addition on the southeast corner was a wood shed and storage space. He also recalls that before the bar was built, George was running a bootleg operation. He made beer and moonshine there. He had a place back there where the old timers could go in and buy alcohol. When Harry Lawrence took over the hotel, he needed more space and he added on to the building for his wife and daughter.
- 083 The hotel was a two story building with a gable roof and a square [false] front. It had a lobby in front, a pretty good sized lobby, and a big stove. Heat from the big stove downstairs went through open air radiators [vents] to the rooms upstairs. There were no pipes or conduits going to each room. It was a pretty cold hotel to sleep in during the winter.... The toilet was in the very back of the second floor. "It was quite a problem back there. Everybody used five gallon gasoline cans here at that time. For a dollar a night you got a room and a towel and a wash basin and an outdoor toilet! If you didn't like it, it was your hard luck." ... It was the only hotel in town. There was a lot of noise from the bar when the bar was opened up.
- 105 There was a traveling dentist, Dr. LaRue, that used to come through town every year. He would have a dentist chair set up downstairs in the big hotel lobby. He came through every fall and fixed people's teeth.... He was from Ruby. He was called the "flying dentist." At first he traveled by dog team but later he learned to fly. He had a super cub. "A very, very wonderful dentist and also a master mechanic when it came to making all your parts. And an alcoholic on top of it." He wouldn't drink during the day but the bar was a handy place to get his anesthesia when the day's work was over!
- 115 Rolfe asks about Site AAAAA... John does not recall there ever being anything located between the hotel and the Patty Savage Garage [Building W, IDT-092]. There was a U.S. bench mark located in that area, where people surveyed from.
- 135 The Adams/Lawrence Hotel was open for 20 years or more. It closed after World War II. Harry Lawrence had a stroke and had to leave Flat. It all ended about the time George Turner died because he was the financier for the whole operation.... After Ira Wood died the boat business closed and there was nothing left to support Flat. Flat had nothing to support those businesses. Mining was shut down during the war.... It took a lot of wood to keep a place like the hotel going. The bar had a big stove in it, just like the hotel and it took a lot of wood. There was no one left cutting wood anymore. There used to be a some old timers that would spend their time cutting wood in the winter....

- but when that stopped the fuel stopped. Wood was getting to be so far away. By that time, wood had to be hauled in from Bonanza and Caribou creeks, and clear on the other side of Iditarod. Wood became expensive because they were using diesel tractors instead of horses to haul the wood by the 1940s.... Much of the wood around Flat was cut in the early days to run the steam boilers. Some was lost to forest fires. Thousands of cords were used by the residents of Flat. The average person would use eight or ten cords a winter. One burned a lot of wood when you had a big crew like the Miscovichs....
- 177 Site V [IDT-090] was part of the old hotel. It was part of the original Adams Hotel that was cut in half.... Adams operated the dog barn along with the hotel. When the mail mushers came into Flat, George Adams would bed and house their dogs over the weekend in that building. It was a dog barn. The mailmen and their teams would come in on Saturday night and leave Monday. That was the mail schedule from Aniak, Holy Cross, McGrath, Crooked Creek... The dog barn was open until the airplane took over the mail run. The first mail was brought in by airplane in 1925 or 1926. It was not long after that when the airplane took over in mail delivery, about 1927 or 1928.... The dog barn was abandoned after that, and iron siding blew off it. The roof went first, then people salvaged lumber off of it. It was never used after the late 1920s....
- 215 John does not recall who lived in Site U [IDT-091]....
- 233 John went to school for eight years in the school house [Building X, IDT-093] at Flat. He was the janitor for eight years. John was the only student during this time. He started school before he was five years old. The school was right next to the Miscovich family home [Building Y, IDT-094] and when the students were out for recess John would join them. Finally Ms. [Lena] Alderson, the teacher, invited him to join the class.... That was about 1923. The school was moved from the old town of Flat. It was across the street from the old Fullerton house in the original town of Flat. The school was moved at about the same time as the Miscovich family home [Building Y, IDT-094], the Fullerton house [Building L, IDT-133], and the Little John Miscovich house [Building BB, IDT-095] were all moved. "We were all in a cluster together there and so everybody got the notice [from the dredge operator] at the same time to move." This was in about ... 1928. John was in the third grade at the time. Everybody had to work together when there was a move. The Miscovich family was a big one. There were seven of them. John and his brother lived with another old-timer for about a month or month and a half while John's dad was jacking up the house [Building Y, IDT-094] and getting it ready to go on the sleds. It was in the spring of 1928. The school house, the Fullerton house, the Miscovich house, and "Little Johnny" Miscovich's house were all moved at the same time.

- 277 The school [Building X, IDT-093] ran for one or two years during the war and then it was closed because there were no kids in Flat.... John was gone from Flat when the school closed but he thinks it was closed in 1945 or 1946. There was no more school in Flat when John came back after the war.
- 293 The Gus Uotila house [Building W-1, IDT-092] was moved and is not in its original location. It is log cabin with siding on it. The house was moved from across the river [Otter Creek] by Gus Uotila, who was a teamster. He ran freight with his horses. He moved the building in the winter of 1928 or 1929. Gus Uotila lived in the house until World War II. He had mining operations on Slate Creek and Moore Creek. Then he moved to Ophir. He used to spend the winters in Flat but after he sold his horses and started mining and airplanes started coming in, he began leaving for a few months in the winter. He and his wife, Ina, lived in Flat from 1910 until the World War II when he went over to Ophir Creek to work a property with Eric Hard. Gus ran a team of horses in Flat for many years. He serviced the Riley Dredge and hauled all the freight for the Donnelley and Sheppard Store. He had four horses and was pretty important. Gus Uotila and his wife moved to Ophir in about 1934 or 1935 when the tractors and bulldozers began to move into the country.
- 338 John's uncle Andrew Miscovich bought the house [Building W-1, IDT-092] from Gus Uotila when he moved. Andrew sold the house to [Tex] Johnson when he bought the Miscovich Bar. When Johnson left, the locals moved Tootsie [Matty Crosby] in there. The house was not really bought, they just moved her in. John thinks that John Stevens may have made some kind of a deal because he got Tootsie and Mike Burns in there. After Tootsie moved out John Miscovich took over the house from John Stevens. Philip Edwards bought the house from John; and Mike Demientieff bought it from Philip Edwards.... John Miscovich owned the house in 1962 or 1963, after he acquired the Riley Dredge. He sold it in 1963, after a short while. Philip Edwards was a native from Holy Cross and worked for John as winch man on his dredge. Philip wanted to move his family to Flat, so John sold the house to him. Mike and Josephine Demientieff were from Holy Cross. They sold the house to Don Harris and Steve Welles of Anchorage. They still own the house. Don Harris was going to run a guiding service in Flat, so he bought it....
- 390 The Gus Uotila house was originally a log cabin. John believes that the Gus Uotila house could have been one of the original homes of Flat. It was originally located on the north side of Otter Creek and is a log building. It is the same basic cabin as it was when it was moved. The greenhouse was added by [Don Harris?]. Andrew Miscovich added the lean to. But it is basically the same building. It is likely one of the original buildings of Flat.

- 408 The barn [Building W, IDT-092] was moved to Flat from Discovery. John was born in that building when it was located in Discovery. It is the original building. It was the original Miscovich family home. Later the family moved into the other home at Discovery which is now the Andy Miscovich Bar building in Flat. As the family got bigger the space requirements grew more intense. They started out in a tent, then into the first home [Building W, IDT-092], then into the house that later became the bar [Building Q, IDT-071], and finally into the big house [Building Y, IDT-094]. The Miscovichs had three homes in the Flat and Discovery area. The barn [Building W, IDT-092] was moved to Flat in about 1920, shortly after John was born. It is currently being used as a storage shed and a wood shed. Mike Demientieff used it as a snow machine shop and wood shed. He later built the little repair shop he has right along side the shed. "Mike [Demientieff] was a very handy mechanic." He had a couple of snow machines and a track machine. He had a lot of equipment.
- 440 Andrew Miscovich added the lean-to onto the Gus Uotila house [Building W-1, IDT-092] in the late 1930s or early 1940s after he was married. Mike Demientieff put the greenhouse on the house. He and his wife just recently passed away. He died and then she passed away about a month later. She was from Crooked Creek, one of the Parent family girls. Mike is one of the old Demientieff family from Holy Cross.
- 453 Jake Mutchler built the Miscovich family home [Building Y, IDT-094]. Mutchler owned the tramway that extended from Iditarod to Flat. He became ill. When he had to leave Flat with his wife and four children, they sold everything they had in Flat. They auctioned everything off. John's father bid at the auction, and got the tramway and the building. At the time they bought it, the building was located just to the west [just west of Building U, IDT-091] of its current location. John's father moved it to its present location in 1924 or 1925 when everything was being moved. The Miscovichs were one of the first to move. The school was moved the same year. There was quite a battle to get the lots each person wanted when they had to move. When they got the notice to move they had to stake out new lots and you had to get permission from the claim owner because all they had was squatters rights. That was the agreement they had with the Guggenheims and when the Guggs left they turned everything over to Alex Matheson and [Dave] Browne. The new claim owners honored the same agreement. If they put a notice up, you had to move. You could move somewhere else on their claim as long as you didn't interfere with their dredging. There was quite a scramble for the best sites. They moved to that location because John's father wanted to be near the river. Peter Miscovich put a well in there because he wanted to open a bath house. They moved the house, raised it, put the boiler in the basement, and built the stalls upstairs. They ran a bath house and laundry there for about 20 years.
- 523 The bath house was on the north side of the main building [Building Y, IDT-094]. There were two stalls. In the middle was the washing machine that John has in the

- garage [Building N, IDT-211] at the Discovery/Otter Creek/Miscovich Camp [IDT-201]. The west addition was a bathroom and woodshed. They had a steam room and the boiler was downstairs. The boiler was moved from the first floor to the basement. Peter Miscovich built the boiler by hand. Everything was hand made. They used a gas light.
- 545 The east addition [of Building Y, IDT-094] is a bedroom, that John's father and mother lived in. The addition on the west side is the wood shed and the two seater toilet in the corner. The house had the additions when his father bought it. They moved the house with the additions right on it. They did not take anything off. Everything was left in the building when it was moved and John's mother did not move out. John's mother did not even move out of the place.
- 562 The building was moved with a six part block line from the Guggenheim Dredge. It moved very easily with a little 30 tractor. There were deadmen planted in the ice so the big blocks would come together, pull that block up and start again. There were eight sleds under the house and it was quite a job to make a turn with that many sleds. The house had to come up a slope on the bank [of Otter Creek]. It took some expert supervision, which Peter Miscovich was good at.... There were a lot of people standing around watching, and many thought John's dad was crazier than a hoot owl, but that was part of the game. When it was finally set in the right location Peter Miscovich jacked it up and set it on 100 gallon steel drums. That is the only thing holding the building up. If they were not under the building, the building would have sunk right down to the ground. If you go in there, you need to be awfully careful. The tanks are still good yet, but there is nothing else holding that building up except those tanks.... When it is windy, the building shakes pretty badly.... John tries to keep people from going in the building....
- 613 The Miscovich family moved to Fairbanks in 1931. Peter Miscovich stayed in Flat for two winters after that. They ran the bath house in the summer for several years. They would come down from Discovery [Peter Miscovich Camp] on Saturday nights and fire up the boiler. The house was occupied until 1933; his dad was there through the winter of 1933. After that the bath house was used only in the summer. They would spend the summers on Discovery and come to Flat to start the boiler on Saturday nights. The family would spend about a month there in the fall or until the dredges closed down. They had power from the power plant building [Building T, IDT-073]. It was convenient to stay in the house with electric lights. But it was not a warm building. It had no insulation, was set up high and had lots of windows. It was a very cold building....
- 650 The house was abandoned after John's father died in 1950. Peter kept it going until 1950. John was in the Ruby area, and his two younger brothers in Flat had no interest in keeping it going. His sisters had moved out..... Jake Mutchler built the house in about 1917 or 1918. It was built before John was born....

687 [End of Side A, Tape 2]

Tape 2, Side B:

002 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Side A...

006 The Miscovich house [Building Y, IDT-094] was poorly built because Jake Mutchler was financially strapped for many years. He never gained any real wealth. It was built from used lumber. The inside had cheese cloth and calcimine paper under that. There wasn't any press board walls. There wasn't any insulation. It was hard to keep the house warm. There were conduits leading to the radiators in all the bedrooms from a stove in the basement. They still had to keep the stoves in the kitchen and in his parents' bedroom going. It was a tough proposition keeping it heated. They drew water from the creek for the bath house....

030 The "Little John" Miscovich house [Building BB, IDT-095] was originally owned by Pete Michaels. Pete was a little short fella with a big mustache that lived in Flat for a number of years. When he moved out, Little John bought the place. Little John Miscovich was not related to the Peter Miscovich family. Little John bought it from Pete Michaels and moved it the same year that Peter Miscovich moved his house. The house was originally located northwest of the Adams Hotel [Building P, IDT-089] in the same cluster where the [Mutchler/] Miscovich family house had been located. Little John worked for the Miscovichs and abandoned that house at about the same time that the Miscovich family abandon its house. That was in about 1950. He moved to the states and came back in the summers for a while. He didn't spend winters in it anymore....

046 The Little John Miscovich house was built before John was born, in the 1910s in the original town of Flat. It was right across the street from the Jake Mutchler House [Building Y, IDT-094] which Peter Miscovich bought. It was one of the original houses of early Flat. That house, the Uotila House [Building W-1, IDT-092], the Mutchler /Miscovich House [Building Y, IDT-094], the School house, that cluster in there other than the garage, would be all original houses from Flat. Some of the oldest houses still standing.

060 The lean-to--bedroom--on the west side of the Little John Miscovich house [Building BB, IDT-095] was there when it was moved to its current location. John does not know whether it was part of the original house or not.... The addition on the north side is a woodshed and toilet. It was added by Little John Miscovich. He bought it from Pete Michaels before John was going to school, around 1921 or 1922.... The front porch and toilet were added after the building was moved. There was an outdoor toilet on the east side. He had a shed and there was a toilet in the back of it. It was inconvenient so he

- turned it into a wood shed. There was another little shed that was also used as a wood shed.... He added the toilet that is on the inside of the north addition. Pete Michaels sold the building to Little John, and the latter moved the building....
- 094 Rolfe referred to [Building AA, IDT-096], which is now Mark Kepler's shop.... John Miscovich indicated Site Z was Fritz Awe's house. Mike Demientieff bought Fritz Awe's house and tore it down. Charlie [Awe?] Jr. inherited it, and sold it. It belonged to Awe Mining Company. When Fritz Awe and Charlie Awe died, Charlie Jr. inherited it. Mike Demientieff bought it and used the lumber.
- 104 Fritz Awe moved [Building AA, IDT-096] into its current location. John does not know what it was before it was turned into a shop. John can not recall what the building was used for or where it was located before Fritz Awe moved it to its present location.... Fritz added the part of the building with the large garage doors [the east end] to make room for a D8 Caterpillar that he had. Awe already had a D6 Caterpillar before acquiring the D8. The addition on the east side has a high roof line.... The building was not there when John was young. The [Gustafson/Savage/] Fullerton House [Building FF, IDT-075] was there and it had a big garden in front of the house. The Post Office was there. Mrs. [Ana] Fullerton had the Post Office in the house. The shop was put there after they moved the Fullerton house. Henry Durand built his restaurant there. The old Fullerton house is still in Flat but it was moved.
- 129 John said that the workshop [Building AA, IDT-096] was constructed in 1936 or 1937.... Fritz Awe was a mechanic and welder and worked for Andrew Olson on Happy Creek. He later went into business with Henry Durand, the Fullertons step dad, and that is how he got involved with the property that they had here. They got into the wood business in the fall after the mining was over. He used his tractor to haul wood from Bonanza to the town of Flat and the dredges. He lived in Flat with his wife in the two story house [Site Z] that Mike Demientieff tore down. It was a beautiful place. Mrs. Awe was an alcoholic and they adopted two kids, a girl and a boy, that got into a lot of trouble. She died in an institution. It was really sad....
- 149 Fritz Awe came to Flat in 1935 and was in Flat until World War II. The Miscovichs and the Olsons bought their first tractors the same year. Fritz Awe came up from Los Angeles. The military wanted him to be in charge of their airport construction. He built the field at Tatalina. He was up on the northern slopes of Alaska building ice runways. He was a very capable individual.... After he went into the military, he never came back to Flat after the war.... Awe Mining Company was partners with the Fullertons on another property in Nyac. The Fullertons got the shop as part of the partnership settlement. "The properties were divided up. They got Chicken Creek, the Awes got Marble Creek...." John does not know all the details of the settlement. John Miscovich believes that the shop still belongs to the Fullertons and that they are allowing Mark

- Kepler to use it. It has been used continuously over the years. Darrell Olsen, who had the airport maintenance subcontract from John, used the building as a shop and garage prior to Mark Kepler. Ralph Alderson worked for Fritz Awe in the trucking business and he used the building as a garage before Darrell Olsen. Another reason they built the [east] addition was so they could put their big Chevrolet truck in there.... There used to be a big cast iron stove right inside the big garage door and Mark took it out. It was a big square cast iron stove. Mark still has the stove. They needed such a big stove because it was tough to keep a place like that warm....
- 197 The Fullerton Barn [Building JJ, IDT-097] is one of the original Flat buildings. It came from the old town site. It did not burn [in the 1924 fire]. Almost, but it didn't burn.... It was originally located west of the Adams Hotel and next to a couple of businesses, Gary Baker's bootleg joint and a couple other places. There was a little space between the barn and the last building that burned and that is one of the reasons why it didn't burn.... The wall on the west side is charred.... It was probably moved about the same time the hotel was built, in the late 1920s. After the fire it was easy for Alex Matheson to start hydraulicking and getting the muck off of the virgin ground that the town was on. He wanted the whole thing cleared out. The fire "made it very, very convenient." That was after the 1924 fire. Matheson was manager for Beaton, but he had the same attitude as when he later owned the dredge. The Barn has been in the same location it is now since the late 1920s.
- 229 The Mutchler brothers first owned the barn [Building JJ, IDT-097], then Gus Uotila bought their operation. Gus was the owner when it was moved. He kept horses in it for a long time after it was moved....
- 240 The old blacksmith shop [Building KK, IDT-098] was moved to that location. It was moved about the same time as the barn [Building JJ, IDT-097] was moved. The blacksmith shop used to be next to the barn building in the old town of Flat. The Mutchlers, spelled M-U-T-C-H-L-E-R, owned the blacksmith shop. The Mutchlers had horses and used it to shoe their horses and horses belonging to other people. Then Eric Hard acquired it. When Eric Hard moved to Ophir, then it went to Gus Uotila, and then became part of the Awe outfit.
- 267 Gus Uotila owned the blacksmith shop when it was moved. He used it after it was moved for a long time. It was abandoned after horses stopped being used in Flat. The Fullertons turned it into a parts garage. They had a lot of parts in there for a long time. They also had a wagon in there for a long time, in the back end. The river was cutting in there pretty close one time and almost took the corner of it. But it is a parts shed now.... The Fullertons took over from the Awe Company after the war. It was after they came to Flat from Colorado Creek in 1957. They probably owned it prior to that. John does not know when the settlement of the Awe partnership assets was made....

- 302 Rolfe asked about the shed [KK-1, IDT-099] across the road and south of the blacksmith shop. John recalled that there was a big house there that Arnold Kobler owned. It was torn down. John believes that building [Building KK-1, IDT-099] was a wing on the garage [Building N, IDT-211] that sits in front of their house [Building A,B,C,D, IDT-202] at John's present camp [IDT-201]. John wanted that garage but did not want the shed so they left it there. They moved the garage building, which was insulated with sawdust walls, to Discovery. Arnold Kobler was chief engineer on the dredge. The house where Kobler lived is not there anymore, but was located where Mark Kepler keeps all of his machinery and three tent frames. The house used to be the marshall's office before Arnold got it. It had a square [false] front on it. It was torn down. John's sister, Anne [Williams], lived in the house for a while too.... The Kobler house was located across [south] from the barn. Next to it was the [Arnold] "Dutch" DeHouse residence [Building N, IDT-211]. There was another house, the Charlie Salami house, in that area to. It was a frame building measuring 14 feet x 16 feet and it is gone too. There were three or four buildings in there.... The building that is still standing in that area [Building KK-1, IDT-099] was a shed originally attached to Kobler's garage....
- 360 Mary Miscovich recalled that they moved the garage [Building N, IDT-211] in about 1961. John did not know how Arnold Kobler acquired his house but recalls that he did not build it. Whatever Kobler owned was already built when he acquired it. John does not know if he got the jail from the territory or just who it came from. Kobler and his wife lived in it for a number of years. It had a little shop in the front of it.... The building that he lived in came from the original town site of Flat. They had a big overflow of ice from Otter Creek and about three or four feet of ice got inside the house. This at the time Anne [Williams] was living in the house. All the furniture was inside it and there was ice inside the house until August. It caused everything to rot away. It wasn't worth keeping the house.
- 391 The shed [Building KK-1, IDT-099] was built in 1927 or 1928 when [Arnold] "Dutch" DeHouse was living in Flat. He got married to one of the Twitchell girls, Elsie, and they had a child. They needed an addition. The marshall's office (Arnold Kobler's house) and the garage were built in the old town of Flat. It did not burn in the big fire so they moved it to that location. It was a marshall's office, with a big white front on it, and two big windows in front. It was a nice building until it was destroyed....
- 420 Charlie and Mary Marcell lived in the Mary Marcell House [Building VVV, IDT-100] northeast of the blacksmith shop. Mary was an Indian lady who ran a laundry. Charlie was her husband. The house was moved to that location by the Marcells from the north side of Otter Creek, near the bridge in 1927 or 1928, about the same time all of the other buildings around the Miscovich house were moved. The Marcells lived in the house before it was moved. Mrs. Marcell had a blind daughter, and another daughter, and a boy who died and is buried in the Flat cemetery. Charlie froze to death down at

- Iditarod. She died in the late 1930s. Her daughter got married to a fella named Kiefer in Flat. The blind daughter had to be taken to a Native institution somewhere. Charlie and Mary were both full blooded Indians.... Nobody lived in the house after they left. All that is left is the foundation. John does not know what happened to the building. Charlie Salami, an old Finn, was very helpful after old Charley Marcell died. He was around helping Mary Marcell. Charley Salami may have torn the building down....
- 480 The site [Building UUU] between the Blacksmith Shop and Anne Williams' House [Building TT, IDT-101] used to contain the building Ann Williams used to rebuild after a fire destroyed her house. Ann used two sides of Building UUU to put together the concoction that Ann is living in now. That is the same building that Ann is in now. Mary Miscovich recalled that Anne's house burned in 1973 or 1974. John recalls that Bill and Anne Williams moved [Building UUU] to the current location of their house and built around it. They rebuilt in 1981 or 1982. The portion of their house that used to be Building UUU is the southern part of their present house [Building TT, IDT-101]. There are additions on the north and west sides of the house. Building UUU was originally owned by the Finnish fella Charlie Salami, who sold it to Jerry Hunter. Salami sold it to Arnold Kobler, and John Miscovich bought it from Kobler. Arnold was one of the owners of Otter Dredging Company and when the Miscovichs bought Otter Dredging they got all the assets except the house. He later decided to sell the house and gave John first option to buy it, which John did. "After Anne's house burned down she took possession of it, period. And [she] moved it. And tore the sign down on the door that said no trespassing with my bill of sale on it," John added.... Charlie Salami was a winch man on the dredge and he lived in an old log cabin. He built the house [Building UUU] in the early or mid 1930s. He was a heavy drinker. John's uncle ran the bar in Flat, and Charlie would like to have his bottle replenished. And John would be asked to deliver the bottle to Charlie. He needed that drink even before he had breakfast....
- 598 John Miscovich owns the big log house [Building PPP, IDT-145] near the airstrip. John put the new roof on the building. The building was built by Julius Shaffrick in the late 1930s. Shaffrick is spelled S-H-A-F-F-R-I-C-K. He was an engineer on the Riley Investment Company dredge for many years. The way that house came to be built, Shaffrick never had any luck getting married. So he decided the best thing to do was to build a house. He thought that once he had a house it would be easy to get a wife. Once he built the house, he was such an immaculate housekeeper that every woman that came into his house decided that he didn't need a housewife. "He died [a bachelor] in the bathroom drinking wine!" A sad story. He became a wino.... The house has a concrete basement. Before John bought it, it was abandoned. John bought the house from Julius' nieces in Poland. They wanted to sell for a number of years, but they wanted too much money. They had pictures of it, but time had deteriorated it with nobody living in it. So John waited and he finally got it. He didn't have to pay the

- price. It could be fixed up into a real nice place. Snow hung up on the ladder on the north side, and John didn't know that. The roof caved in, and he had to fix it. John hasn't finished it yet. It had a basement, it had a well, and sewer and a light plant. It was a shame that it had to be let for so long, but Shaffrick's relatives were just asking too much money for it.
- 655 Julius Shaffrick died in about 1955.... The house was built as is. There were no additions made after the original construction. The building to the east was Julius' power plant building. The section on the north side was built when the original structure was constructed. It was a real well built house. He had a beautiful garden and trees.
- 687 [End of side B of Tape 2]
- Tape 3, Side A:
- 001 Continuation from Tape 2...
- 002 Shaffrick was very conscientious community wise. They had a phonograph in the Moose Hall [Building S, IDT-070] and he played the music for the dances. He maintained the Hall, kept it clean, and kept wood stocked for the fire. Shaffrick was the all around janitor and bull cook for the community hall.
- 011 The damage on the north side of the Shaffrick house [Building PPP, IDT-145] was caused when the roof caved in. It had a ladder that went up to the stove pipe on wall and up the side. The logs have rotted and the wall is partially collapsed. While there is pretty steep roof on all other sides of the roof so the snow would slide off, where the ladder is the snow hung up. The weight of the wet snow. The snow piled up there, and the roof collapsed there. The building also had a paper roof, as all roofs around Flat were paper. These paper roofs lasted only so long. They start cracking, the wind gets under them, and they start peeling off. John put aluminum sheets on the Shaffrick house and the Signal Corp Building [Building AAA, IDT-130], and they should last a long time.
- 027 Julius Shaffrick had his power plant in the shed [Building QQQ, IDT-146] just east of the house. That is an insulated building with sawdust in the walls.... The building had a lean-to on it, but John tore it down.... John jacked up the building.... Shaffrick collected a lot of steam boiler parts, as he did a little prospecting on the side. That is how Shaffrick used the small lean-to directly north of the Shaffrick house [see aerial photo]. John took that shed down when he was clearing all the brush around the Shaffrick house.... The generator shed was built at the same time as the house. Both

- the Shaffrick House [Building PPP, IDT-045] and Generator Shed [Building QQQ, IDT-146] are in good condition....
- 062 Fred Patterson lived in [Building SSS] which is now missing. He was a dredge master for the Riley Investment Company. When he moved out of Flat to go to California, Patterson sold it to Pan American Airways. They had an office in Flat, and had regularly scheduled flights into Flat every week. Their radio operator, Frank Lott, and his wife lived there for years. It went to pot. Nobody owned it after Pan American left. It was just abandoned. John took some of the lumber off of it, as he held the mining claim under it.
- 077 There was a garage [Building RRR] next to the Pan American building. There was a warehouse and garage right next to it, that were part of the Pan American property. Fred Patterson moved that building [Building SSS] to that location and added on to it. It used to have a front part and a kitchen part, and he added a lean-to and made it almost twice as big. That building was moved in there. John does not know where the building came from. It was moved there when the airport was built in 1924, 1925 or probably 1926. The first airport. The buildings [Building SSS and RRR] were torn down over a period of 8-10 years in the 1940s after World War II.... 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950. The other structures on the north edge of the airfield [BBBBB, and CCCCC] are just tanks and oil storage. There were never any buildings in there. There are a couple of pontoons from the old North American Dredge at Site BBBB.
- 112 John Stevens moved another [Building OOO, IDT-147] to its current location. John does not know where it came from but John Stevens put it in for use as a warehouse for the airport.... It was moved there in the late 1930s.... It is for everybody to use. BLM fire fighters have used it for years, and people flying in over night have used it.... It has not been used very much in recent years....
- 129 Another building [Building OOO-1, IDT-148] is the BLM storage shed. Mary Miscovich recalled that it was built in 1972 or 1973.... "Hate to tell you what that cost the government to put in. They brought a crew in, six in a DC-3! The carpenters. They built it. And they came back and moved them out, then they brought a paint crew in! We really got a kick out of that!"
- 142 John said the Fullerton hanger [Building TT, IDT-149] was built when the Fullertons moved to Flat from Colorado Creek in 1958 or 1959. It was built in the fall when [John] Ogriz still had the dredge. He helped them. It was built in 1956 or 1957. It was built out of a bunch of scrap that they picked up here and there.... Last winter gave it the final test [roof caved in]. The Flemings boys inherited the building and they put the beam across the top. The beam was one of the wireless post's radio antennas and it buckled in the middle. It wasn't designed to stand up to the weather in Flat, wind or

- weather. The Flemings Brothers, Jimmy and Shawn, are down in Bethel now. John believes that the Fullertons allowed the two Flemings brothers to use it. They have abandoned it now, and they have left Flat. That is the way things go here....
- 167 The Guggenheim Machine Shop [Building WWWW-1, IDT-143] up on Flat Creek Road is one of the real original buildings in Flat.... It was one of the finest machine shops in Alaska. It was used by the Guggenheims when they set the dredge up and built their power plant. The original wood in that is all, all a little bit of history. Unfortunately it should have stayed the way it was. But Bob [Browne] being not too ambitious and short of wood, rather than let the building stand as it was, he started tearing it down for firewood at his place [Building FFFFF, IDT-171]. The roof caved but it still had a good frame.... It must have been constructed in 1910, because that is when the Guggs started in at Flat, and that is when they started their power plant and brought in all the equipment they needed for their dredge operation.... It was a big parts warehouse and equipment workshop. They did some big, heavy work in that shop.... Dave Browne, Bob Browne's father, owned the building after the Guggenheims. He sold hardware out of it for years, bolts, hardware, steel. When old man Browne left Flat, it was abandoned. That was in the 1930s. Bob Browne inherited the building from his father, and was salvaging lumber out of it. John always felt it should have been left alone, because it was quite a building in its hey day....
- 217 There was a building shown on one of the aerial photographs on the east side of the road, just past the Guggenheim shop going south. That building does not exist anymore. A fella by the name of Jack Russell that lived up there. He went crazy and they had to take him out of Flat.... The building was torn down when Alex Matheson went through there with the dredge. Russell was a laborer in Flat. He went berserk like a lot of people who live in Flat too long.... [laughs]....
- 259 When everybody lived in Flat permanently there was only the last boat out or on the mail sled if you were sick. Otherwise one was stuck in Flat unless one wanted to walk. There was always discussions about what Alex Matheson's next move was going to be. Matheson and his crew were tight lipped and close mouthed. There were a lot of strange things that happened in the transfer of mining claims. John's dad was in Flat and had all the Guggenheim property at one time. He was mining near the Matheson House [Building II, IDT-102]. Dave Browne and [G. W.] Albright and [Charles] Taylor, a couple of crooked lawyers, worked up a crooked deal where they bought the whole damned thing. John's dad had a royalty agreement. They bought the whole thing for \$10,000. Peter Miscovich got a notice in 1944 to move off the claims, pipelines, hydraulic equipment and all. The Miscovichs had to move the pipelines and all the other equipment in a hurry. That was one of the rawest deals ever pulled in Flat. Dave Browne, who was not too ambitious and never did any work, was the commissioner. His wife was a nurse. John does not know how they got the Guggenheim Dredge and

- all the claims. It is still a mystery. Browne got hundreds of thousands of dollars in royalties from gold production. Bob Browne's dad never turned a hand as far as working after that. He had a fella helping him when he tore the timbers off the dredge.
- 292 When the town started to move, everybody need blocking, timber, and long bolts. Browne's dredge was coming apart, but he sold every piece of timber, hardware and lumber on the dredge. He made a fortune on it! Part of the dredge went to Ophir and some of it is in Iditarod if you know where to look for it. There is a great big ladder section just off the end of the road into Iditarod. Browne sold everything on the dredge except the bucket line. Several buckets are near [Building FFFFF, IDT-127]. They are six cubic foot buckets.... They are near Bill Burns house [Building BBB, IDT-128].... Mary Miscovich said that Mark and Sherry Kepler tore down the Bill Burns house.... Bill Burns house is the small house with the hipped roof.... The dredge buckets [IDT-236] from the Gugg Dredge are just south of the Bill Burns house.
- 338 Conclusion of interview session 2, and arrangements for next interview session....
- 350 [End of Session 2].

JOHN MISCOVICH INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED JULY 24, 1993

This interview was conducted with John and Mary Miscovich on July 24, 1993, at his mining camp near Otter Creek, two miles east of Flat, Alaska. The interview session on July 24, was conducted by historian Rolfe Buzzell and Steve Posgate, both of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. This is the third of four interviews with Mr. Miscovich on Flat, and the third of a total of six interviews. The following is a summary of his comments, unless quotation marks are used.

Tape 3, Side A:

- 352 Clair [Jensen] Marks, who lives in Anchorage, told John Miscovich that she has a lot of old photographs of Flat. She was born in Flat. Her father was [Amal] "Paprika" Jensen, a Dane married to a full blooded Indian. He had six kids. Clair told John in a letter after she read John's article in the *Anchorage Times* a couple of years ago, to come and see her. She has a bunch of pictures taken when she was a kid. Clair is younger than John by 3-5 years. She had a photo of John and herself sitting on the steps of the Miscovich House [Building Y, IDT-094].... The house had wide steps with railings on them going into that house.... Clair said she had pictures, but John has never seen them.
- 370 Rolfe Buzzell asks to borrow several of John's photos on the wall of his cook house... and John agrees.... John has additional photographs in his office at the Riley/Otter/Miscovich Camp.... John's historic photograph showing the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077] was taken about 1928, after the big fire. The photo shows the Guggs tailings, and John Anderson's house up on a high knoll on the tailings. It shows just a little runway....
- 420 Introductory remarks by interviewer, Rolfe Buzzell...
- 433 Rolfe asks about the Alex Matheson complex, which was associated with the North American Dredging Company, including the Matheson House....
- 448 The Matheson House [Building II, IDT-102] was built in the late 1920s, about 1927 or 1928.... Alex Matheson was the manager for the Beaton Dredge. John Beaton discovered the gold in the Flat area, and he had a dredge. Matheson was manager of the dredge and later bought out Beaton and renamed the outfit the North American Dredging Company. Alex bought the Beaton Dredge [Structure A, IDT-118] with

- foreknowledge of some very good ground but he did not tell Beaton. He scared Beaton into selling out by telling him there wasn't much [gold] left and that he better get out while he could. Beaton high tailed it out of Flat. Beaton's wife, Mae, didn't like it here anyway. She had two kids, Niel and Gene, and they didn't like it here. So they turned it over to Alex. When Matheson took over the dredge, he went right back over the ground that he told Beaton was no good. He made a lot of money and was able to do a lot of things for his darling Miss Day. Before she was married her [maiden] name was Marie Day. Alex Matheson built her this beautiful house [Building II, IDT-102]. He built the house by himself, and he was the carpenter.
- 486 Matheson bought out John Beaton in the late 1920s.... The house was built after he bought out Beaton.... Marie Day came into Flat as a cook for Henry Durand. She came in at about the time the town burned down. Marie was cooking in the old Henry Durand restaurant. It was the Durand Cafe and Hotel, a big two story building. They moved from that to a log cabin. At this time Alex Matheson and his men were boarding at the Durand Cafe and Hotel. So Marie Day got a pretty good handle on who she was feeding. Alex lost one of his legs up on Chicken Creek in an accident before he came down to Flat. That was in the late 1910s, 1918 or thereabouts. Matheson lost his leg, so he had a wooden leg. Everyone used to comment that the wooden leg is what made Matheson so mean and cantankerous. That they would love to take that leg off and beat him over the head with it....
- 528 The Matheson House [Building II, IDT-102] hasn't changed at all over the years.... It has always had the distinctive entry way on the east side. There was a big wood stove in the basement and took wood in through the entryway on the east side underneath the porch....
- 534 Alex Matheson built the greenhouse [directly south of the house] for Marie. She was a great lover of flowers! She was a great horticulturist. Marie had the greenhouse and a beautiful rock garden that was the envy of everybody that came through Flat.... Alex put the wind mill in the late 1920s. Harry Donnelley also put up a wind mill about the same time. There were a lot of small zenith wind chargers for radios and charging batteries. They produced 32 volt electricity for the store and his house. It was good current, because there was plenty of wind in Flat.
- 570 Matheson built the house in the fall and finished it in the winter. The Mathesons were living in his brother's house at the time. It was located about where the BLM storage shed [Building OOO-1, IDT-148] is now. There was a bench there and a frame building that they lived in.... That house gave the Mathesons a lot of trouble because it was on muck and permafrost, and it would heave in all sorts of directions. So Alex decided he would build a new home for Marie. They moved into the new house in the fall, and the greenhouse was built the following spring. The rock wall garden was progressively

- built. It started out small, then he had some of the crew working on it, and sometimes she was wheeling rocks herself. It was built step by step. The Matheson Dredge went by there. Where the rock garden is, the ground was dredged. They leveled that off and made it into the rock garden.
- 610 The little Guest House [Building II-1, IDT-103] was not there at that time and neither were the Wood Sheds nearby [Buildings II-2 and II-3, IDT-103] to the east of the guest house.... Guests who come to visit Rob Dahl stay in the guest house now.... [John] Stevens built the two Wood Sheds [Buildings II-2 and II-3, IDT-103].... John Miscovich did not realize that there was another shed next to the wood shed....
- 670 "When [John] Beaton had the dredge he didn't have much of a shop. Riley Investment Company had a beautiful shop and they did a lot of the machine work for Beaton and Matheson. When Alex took over [the dredge from Beaton], instead of paying the Riley Investment Company by the hour for doing a lot of the work in their machine shop, he built this machine shop" [Building RR, IDT-110].
- 684 [End of Side A of Tape]

Tape 3, Side B:

- 003 Continuation from Side A. Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....
- 008 The Matheson complex was developed by Alex Matheson just after he bought out John Beaton.... The Riley Investment Company machine shop was being used in Flat by just about everybody prior to the building of the [North American Dredging Company (NADC)] Machine Shop [Building RR, IDT-110] by Alex Matheson. Alex had to become independent of Harry Donnelley because there was some competition between the two of them. So Matheson built himself a fairly good shop. He put in a lathe and a power press. He got two Cats, a TD40 and a D8, so he had to have a place to do his repair work.... He had two electric generators set up in the shop. Alex put in a Parts Shed [Building RR-1, IDT-110] behind [north of] the machine shop. There was a welding shed at the northeast corner of the machine shop. Then he had a retort for retorting gold, but that is gone now. The structure [Building RR-2, IDT-110] that is now northeast of the shop was a blacksmith shop. All these buildings were built in the late 1920s.... Alex made some major changes to the business after he took over Beaton's business. He began ordering groceries direct and had Reeve [Air] bring in his meat on a DC-3. When he put in the Mess Hall [Building GG, IDT-104] he put in a walk-in deep freeze. There is a cooks quarters next to the building.... It all dates to the late 1920s and early 1930s.

- 044 Alex stored his trucks and tractors in a garage [Building UU, IDT-111]. The building to the east of the garage [Site UU-1] is gone. It may be part of Mark and Sherry Kepler's house now. There was the Bunkhouse [Site PP], which is no longer there now. It was the one Wayne Dahl was going to build up, but has been incorporated into Mark and Sherry Kepler's house [Building LL, IDT-123]. The building just south of the bunkhouse location [Building QQ, IDT-108] is a parts shed. It has a lot of dredge parts inside it now. The little building northeast of the bunkhouse location is a wash house [Building PP-1, IDT-109]. Next to the wash house is the outhouse set right over the creek. John does not know what Site SS was. It is not there now.... It was torn down....
- 077 The building on the sled [Site VV, IDT-112] is a wanigan. There was a building that Matheson's dredge master, Harry Steen, lived in, which is now up on the hill by the road [IDT-246]. Sergie Agoff moved it completely out of town. It was in the complex somewhere. There is a garage [Building WW, IDT-114]. It has a Cat TD40 [bulldozer] in it.... Rolfe called this building the "Cat" house. John said that it may have been the house that Matheson's engineer lived in, but John doesn't know for sure. Matheson's engineer and the engineer's wife lived in a house in that area. John has never been in the building since it was moved there and used as a garage. John Stevens used to store his snow machines inside it. Now it has a Cat TD-40 in it. After Matheson took over the property, Marie had a Chevrolet and it was stored in there for a long time. It was a 1931 or 1932 sedan.... Jeff Darling, who took over last year, was going to lease all of the Dahl property.
- 111 The building on the sled [Site VV, IDT-112] is a wanigan and there are two freight sleds nearby. Alex Matheson used the sleds to haul wood and oil from Crooked Creek after he got his D8 Cat. Matheson did not want to do any business with Harry Donnelley on the Iditarod River. So he had all his oil shipped up the Kuskokwim [River] to Crooked Creek and he would haul it over the winter trail in the spring. He would haul 600 or 700 barrels. There is a big pile of tanks, barrels stacked up. That is from hauling in the fuel....
- 121 Alex Matheson had a carpentry shop [Building XX, IDT-113] on skids. His dredge master and his chief engineer, anybody that worked for Alex, was allowed to use the carpentry shop. It has tools inside and is still a carpentry shop.... All these buildings date to the Matheson era (1920s and 1930s). The only thing that Beaton had was his house, which was up above the Flat Creek bridge, when the bridge was there. Beaton had nothing. He was afraid to invest in anything permanent in Flat, and he got out. Then Beaton went to Ophir and got into the dredging business there. He and [A.A.] Shonbeck of Anchorage were killed in an accident over there. Shonbeck was a big businessman in Anchorage....

- 140 John did not recall the complex of buildings [Building complex YY, IDT-115] or what it was used for.... Rolfe noted that the survey crew found a prescription bottle for Joe Mitchell in one of those buildings dating from 1955 from Fentons Pharmacy in Fairbanks.... John said he was away at Ruby for a time in the 1950s. He believed that it was probably one of Matheson's crewmen. Matheson's crew lived in that vicinity, and Steen had his house in the general vicinity, but that is gone now....
- 164 This shed [Building MM, IDT-105] was used as a garage for the Matheson's car for a long time. Then it got pretty dilapidated, and they took the car out.... Rolfe noted that there are windows in the building now, and Steve Posgate recalled seeing a table saw in the building. John said the Dahls told Mark Kepler that if he wanted the lumber out of the building, he could tear it down. It was almost ready to collapse. Rolfe noted that the addition on the south side of the building has collapsed.
- 173 John stated that the building with the ramp in the front [Building NN-1, IDT-107] is a garage. It is still being used for storage.... [Buildings MM, NN, and NN-1] are all part of the Matheson complex....
- 181 The old drill [Site VVVV, IDT-116] and the sled with a small building on it [Site UUUU, IDT-117] was also part of the Matheson complex. The sled was probably the panning sled that they had for the drill. It was "trailed along" with the drill. They would do their panning in it, take care of their [drilling] log, and eat their lunches in it....
- 194 Rolfe inquired about buildings on sleds or skids.... John stated that Matheson did not have a portable camp to move along with the dredge. Everything was permanent there. Wherever they were moved from, it was always customary to put good skids under them. They called them "go devil" skids. There was enough clearance that if one moved them in the summer time, rocks would not come up through the floor. The same thing in the winter time. One might be taking them over the tundra. If there were any stumps or nigger heads, they would not be hitting the bottom of them. Matheson did not have anything portable at all. Everything was located centrally to this shop [Building RR, IDT-110] and his home [Building II, IDT-102].
- 210 The reason there are a couple of extra buildings in the Matheson complex is because Beaton did not have a bunkhouse. Everybody had to take care of himself. They had their own house, got their own wood. If one boarded in the hotel he paid three dollars a day. If one boarded at home, one was allowed three dollars a day. So that's the way it was operated [under Beaton]. When Alex took over he could see that it was necessary to do a little bit more because he couldn't hire anyone to work if he couldn't provide housing in a little better condition. Like electricity, wood, and so on. So that is why he put in the complex to take care of those people he hired from the outside. Others that

- lived in Flat and worked for him still lived in their own homes. He had about twelve men on average working for him. He had a thawing crew, a hydraulic crew, and a dredge crew and a drilling crew. There were times when he had up to 16-18 men. They worked around the clock, ten hour shifts for the laborers; the dredge crew went two tens and four. The winch men would work ten hours, and the dredge master and chief engineer would take over for four hours in the morning. The oilers worked twelve hours and changed shifts every two weeks. That is what the Miscovichs did too. The oiler had a fairly easy job and could rest on the dredge sometimes while it was running.... They were long shifts, but they did not mind because it was an extra \$2....
- 245 The Martin Creek Ditch [IDT-142], which crosses the Flat Creek Road, was used by the Guggenheims when they were mining. Matheson used the Flat Creek Ditch [IDT-144] which runs on the east side of Flat Creek and ends near the Riley/Otter/Miscovich camp [IDT-201]. Part of Matheson's pipeline is still there.... It is passed the drill, and straight up the hill....
- 270 The boiler [Site ZZZZ] was used to thaw ground in the early years. When John Stevens took the dredge over, they had what was called a deadman that was put in the ground and used to tie to the dredge. That boiler was towed around with a D8 Caterpillar and used as a live deadman. Instead of digging a hole and burying a timber, they just hooked on to that boiler. The boiler was so big that they didn't have to bury it.... This boiler [Site ZZZZ] still has all the cables on it. They just tied the dredge to it.... Those kind of boilers were originally used in early Flat with the Bagley Scrapers.... They are a sourman [?] type scraper. They were also used for thawing. Before water thawing was introduced all the thawing was done with steam. There were dozens of boilers going in Flat, with whistles blowing. Everything was steam powered in the early years outside of the dredges. The dredges were never steam powered. At first the dredges were powered by gasoline and later by diesel engines.... They were burning this heavy crude oil, like tar....
- 305 The Matheson Dredge [Site A, IDT-118] was originally a wooden hull dredge when Beaton owned it. The hull and gantry were timber. It had limited capacity in how deep it could dig and to stack the tailing behind it. In order to dig the depth that he had to dig to re-mine the ground he had already mined and that the Guggs left all the money in, Matheson had to increase the length of the [bucket] ladder. Before he could do that, he had to increase the buoyancy capacity to float the thing; so he decided to ship in a new hull and put a steel super structure on it. He put a longer screen and a longer stacker belt on it. Matheson put a table recovery system in it, where they have tables under the screen coming out of both sides, and then a flume for going back into the pond. He made a pretty modern machine out of it, except that he put in some of the old machinery. The engine, wenches, and boiler are from the old dredge. So it was not a complete remodel.

- 325 Matheson remodeled the dredge in 1938. John put the dredge together for Matheson in the spring of that year. John came into Flat early, March to May, and did the crane work. Matheson was tough. When John worked for his dad he was paid \$1.30 an hour as an equipment operator. That was the going wage. Thirty cents an hour was deducted for board and that left you with ten dollars free and clear. When John went to settle up with Alex, Matheson gave him a dollar an hour and deducted thirty cents for board. That came out to seven dollars a day. John refused to take the check because he expected to get what his dad paid him. Matheson told John that all he had been doing was sitting there on his ass operating the crane and he wasn't worth any more. John told him what he could do with the check and left.... About two months later, while John was considering action against him, Matheson's wife came up to the Miscovich's upper camp with a check for \$1.30 an hour. "That just shows you how tough he was!" It was hard work....
- 360 With the Matheson, Donnelley, and Turner and Wood operations being so independent, there were three distinct power houses in Flat. They were always competing with each other in some way. The men that worked for Matheson, for example, sort of stayed clear of Donnelley's and Turner and Wood's outfits. "They were dedicated to Alex Matheson. And they didn't dare do anything that would ever cross paths with Alex or Marie!" Mrs. Matheson had the house up high so she could see if any of the crew were going into a house of prostitution or a bar, and she would bring it to their attention. They were conscious that if they were moving around in the day light, she had her binoculars on them. "That just shows you how bad it was." It was very uncomfortable for a lot of people and for new people who did not know and were not told just exactly what the situation was like. It was hard to come by. A lot of people didn't stay for that reason. They just couldn't be regulated that way.
- 385 Donnelley brought in several people including Bob Acheson, Milton Roper, Tom Jenson, Tom Balange. "They were absolutely dedicated to Harry Donnelley. Period! He was god!" And Paul Reimer, a little German fella they called "Budwiser," he worked for the store. Sam Applebaum came in, who started the building in Iditarod that ran the Northern Commercial Company out, and there is still part of his building there [Building G in Iditarod, IDT-181]. Sam was a Polish Jew and he was a mean son of a gun too. Budwiser was the store attendant, and Sam did not show him any respect whatsoever. And Paul would get really mad at him every once in a while. And Paul told Sam "By God, Hitler would fix you if you were over there [in Germany]." And Paul never got fired.... There is a lot of history in Flat.
- 404 The Miscovich family was independent of them when the family finally got out of debt. For a long time, the Miscovich family was controlled to a large extent by the Miners and Merchants Bank and Harry Donnelley because that was the only place to get any money. He had the boats, and he had the oil, and he had the assay office and the melting of the

- gold. "There wasn't anything you could do that did not run into him one way or another." Once the Miscovich family got out of debt, they severed the relationship. There wasn't any bitterness, but the Miscovichs went their own way..... "You would never think from looking at the pictures that Flat had such a class distinction, the city...."
- 428 The Matheson complex has not changed much over the years. Matheson had a stroke shortly after he closed down the operation. After the stroke, he was incapacitated. He was living in Seattle, in a big beautiful home in the north end. Matheson decided that the best thing to do was to get out of the mining business entirely. The dredge was shut down. Mary Miscovich recalled that the Mathesons left Flat in 1959 but the operation ran for another two years after that. The dredge was shut down when Matheson had the stroke. Mary said that John Stevens and Bill Mack bought the operation in 1960. The dredge [Site A, IDT-118] was up the road opposite the old Guggenheim boiler house. Matheson sold everything for \$20,000 cash. John Stevens was the only guy in Flat that had the cash. Matheson sold everything, the dredge, the house, everything for \$20,000.
- 455 Matheson operated the dredge in Flat for 30 years and he only shut down part time during World War II. He still plugged along part time with his dredge master. [Harry] Steen and his brother-in-law [Randall] tried to run it for a year. Mary Miscovich remembered that Alex and Marie retired to Seattle and that Alex had the stroke in Seattle. After Matheson had the stroke they decided to get out of it. Marie was heavily involved with the church in Yakima. They made a fortune, several million dollars. There was no reason to stay in Flat battling the elements. Harry Steen and a fella named Randall leased the dredge from Matheson for a couple of years before it was sold to Stevens. Randall was Matheson's right hand man and Steen was the dredge master. But they were not able to continue. So they gave it up.
- 482 John Stevens bought the property in 1960. Stevens had been in Flat for years. He was the step dad of the Dahls. He was a broken hearted romancer from the states. Some blond had taken him for a ride. He started as a laborer in the mines, then started driving a Caterpillar. He cut wood in the winter and trapped. He never spent a dime. Stevens didn't gamble or drink and he accumulated a lot of wealth. He was a wonderful martin trapper. He was the only fella that had enough cash saved up to buy Matheson out. And also Donnelley. He bought everything from Donnelley for \$5,000 cash. Stevens paid for the inventory in the store as he sold it. There is a book in the store with all the prices in it and when he took over he charged the same prices. So Stevens really got a deal.... When he died ... the Dahl family, through his step children, inherited everything without a single bit of effort on their part. It was through Bertha, that John married, that made it possible for the Dahls to get in on the whole works....

- 519 Bertha Stevens was born down river and cooked for the Miscovichs for several years. She was born down river and had been in the area many years. John Stevens was kind of taking care of her in the winter time, providing wood and stuff. She lived in a little house [Building MMMM, IDT-168] on the north side of Otter Creek. Bertha finally told John Stevens that they were either going to get married or he was going to get out. So they got married. She had all these kids, by an earlier marriage, when she and Stevens got married. John and Bertha never had any kids of their own.
- 530 John Stevens died of cancer of the lungs in Flat in 1983.... Chris Dahl was Bertha's earlier husband. Chris Dahl was from Aniak or Bethel. And the Dahls are Chris Dahl's sons and one daughter. She came to Flat and worked for the Fullertons as a cook, then worked for the Miscovichs as a cook.... Steven's property went to the Dahl kids after John and Bertha Stevens died. The Dahls are not a Flat family. They came from down river....
- 570 Stevens also bought out Harry Donnelley, but at a later date....
- 582 Harry Donnelley had all those warehouses because he handled everything from hardware, plumbing, lumber, grease and oil, gasoline, furniture, and the general store had everything in it.... Donnelley moved from Nome to Iditarod in 1910. He started as clerk in a grocery store in Iditarod. Not the N.C. Company, but another store. He was working in the store. Iditarod had a telephone system, and when Iditarod start fading away, they moved the telephone central system to Flat and Donnelley took it over. He was a pretty good lineman. He was very good at fixing telephone circuits. His wife, Mrs. Donnelley, became the telephone operator. Her mother also became an operator. They set up house keeping in Flat. Then Donnelley opened up a store in Flat. Later on he took on a partner, Harry Sheppard, who was the marshall in Flat. Sheppard was also a fairly good accountant, and served as the accountant in the store. Lee Pence, who ran the Miners and Merchants Bank in Iditarod, decided he wanted to leave. Iditarod was becoming less central to Flat and he didn't want to stay. So Harry Donnelley and his wife took over the bank and moved it to Flat, along with the assaying business.
- 633 The bank was moved to Flat in the late 1920s, at the same time they built the store in 1927 or 1928. Harry was married to Marie Day. [Glen] Day was a partner of Donnelley's. Donnelley financed the building of the Danico #1 through Danico #7. Day had seven boats and barges on the Iditarod. Donnelley was a partner in Day Navigation and an agent for Standard Oil in Flat.... Marie Day was not related to Donnelley's partner in Day Navigation. Day came to Flat as an engineer on the Riley Dredge, which Donnelley managed. When Riley was shot in 1921 Donnelley was appointed administrator of the estate of J.E. Riley. Then he became the manager and operator of the dredge. The dredge was in debt \$100,000 to the bank in Iditarod, which became his bank in Flat. Sheppard kept the dredge in debt for 25 years before it ever got....

685 [End of Side B of Tape 3]

Tape 4, Side A:

002 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell and continuation from Tape 3....

008 John Miscovich talked about a report written by a lawyer sent to Flat in the 1920s to investigate Harry Donnelley's handling of the J.E. Riley estate, and why the estate never got out of debt.... John has a copy of this diary [investigative report] written by the lawyer [in 1923]. The lawyer concluded that while he could not find any irregularities to report to the heirs, there were many unanswered questions in the operation of the Harry Donnelley enterprise and the J. E. Riley Investment Company.... The Matheson Dredge [IDT-118] had previously belonged to John Beaton. The Riley Dredge [IDT-220] is located just east of the Riley/Otter/Miscovich camp.... It has been rebuilt but is a 1914 dredge inside. All of the machinery inside, except the engine, is from the 1914 Riley Dredge. The engine dates from 1925. The Flat mining camp produced a total of about a million and a half ounces of gold.... These fellas were able to clean up on Flat. It would have been wonderful if Matheson and Donnelley had stopped and wrote the story of Flat as they knew it, because they knew it in great detail. But they dared not do it because it would have exposed a lot of things that were questionable.... They were shrewd and crooked businessmen....

042 The Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077] was built as is now. The bank was built right along with it. There were no additions later.... It was built in 1927 or 1928.

048 The Donnelley House [Building O, IDT-085] was built about the same time as the store, because all of the materials came during the same time. The Donnelley House was probably built the next year. Donnelley lived in a house located south of the Flat Creek Road.... He lived about 100 yards south of Tom Balange's House [Building FFF, IDT-132] prior to the construction of the Donnelley House. Donnelley's first house was heaving around on the permafrost, and he wanted to be down by the bank and the store. That is why Donnelley built his house down by the store....

060 The green house [Building O-1, IDT-085] was built at about the same time, or shortly thereafter. Mrs. Donnelley was also a great horticulturist. Donnelley and Matheson were competing... on a couple of different levels.... The house has never been moved. The only changes have been work on the foundation. Kenny Dahl did some work on the foundation, but the house is in the exact same place where it was built.

- 070 Rolfe inquired about the Pipe Warehouse [Building M, IDT-083] and the Standard Oil Warehouse [Building N, IDT-084]... John replied that there was a warehouse in the area of the pipe warehouse which is gone now. The Assay Office [Building J-1, IDT-079] was located north of the warehouse.... The Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077] was located north of the Assay Office [Building J-1, IDT-079]. John Stevens moved the Assay Office to its current location. The Warehouse [Building N, IDT-084] is now being used as a powerhouse. Building M [IDT-083] was used as a warehouse for hay, flour, and livestock. There was and still is a pipe rack on the east side of the building.... When this 1927 or 1928 photo of the Donnelley complex (Figure 2) was taken, the Donnelley House had not been built yet. The dredge was going through there and Donnelley did not want to build until they were finished dredging. The pipes running south of the warehouse in the photo are water thawing pipes using water from Flat Creek.... The Donnelley House was built about a year after the store.... The Northland Development Company went through with their dragline outfit right by the store and worked these top tailings. Then Alex Matheson came along and worked them again with his dredge. Donnelley did not want to settle down there until all that mining activity was finally done.
- 111 The warehouse in the photo is the Donnelley/Standard Oil Warehouse [Building N, IDT-084], except it is oriented in a different direction.... At that time the warehouse was turned around and the gable ran north-south. The large dark colored building in the upper left corner is the Adams Hotel [Building P, IDT-089]. The Andrew Miscovich pool hall with the restaurant on the west end [Building Q, IDT-071] is visible between the Donnelley and Sheppard Store and the Adams Hotel. Durand's Cafe, the Little John Miscovich House, and the Alderson House are all visible in the photo. The photo was taken before those houses were moved.... The old marshall's office is shown in the photo where Mark Kepler's shop is now [Building AA, IDT-096]....
- 135 The Matheson Dredge went through in 1928 or 1929 and the Donnelley House [Building O, IDT-085] was built in about 1930.... In the photo, the Standard Oil sign was on the back side of the warehouse [Building N, IDT-084]....
- 149 The Lumber Warehouse [Building K, IDT-082] is located across the street from the Donnelley House.... It was built shortly after the Donnelley Store [Building H, IDT-077] because Donnelley shipped in a lot of lumber during that time.... There was a big demand for lumber in Flat and he had a nice inventory of it.
- 161 The Hardware Warehouse [Building WWW, IDT-080] is located just north of the lumber warehouse. It had hardware, stove pipes, and nuts and bolts, and stuff.... John believed that the warehouse was moved to Flat from Iditarod.... It was moved to its current location. When they got trucks in Flat they were able to haul freight directly from Iditarod as the boats came in, so they didn't have to double handle it moving it into



Figure 2. The Donnelley and Sheppard Store, Flat City, 1927 or 1928. Photo courtesy of John Miscovich.

- warehouses in Iditarod then to warehouses in Flat. They unloaded right off the boats and took the stuff to Flat. There was a fella that had three trucks that was hauling freight for Donnelley and others. Donnelley originally had warehouses in Iditarod. But when the river changed course and created the oxbow lake, the warehouses were isolated. Instead of trucking everything from the landing to the warehouses in Iditarod, Donnelley just took it on to Flat and warehoused it there. The only thing left in Iditarod was the Warm Storage Building. He ran that for years.
- 186 The Iditarod River changed course in the late 1920s or early 1930s. When Peter Miscovich brought in their drag line in 1935, the river had already cut across.... Flat became the commercial center after that. The airplane also made a difference on what came to Flat as freight. Donnelley shipped his canned goods by boat, but a lot of food and other things started coming in by airplane.
- 197 The cold storage plant that is inside this building [Building J, IDT-078] used to be on a barge. That cold storage plant used to be on a barge. They would load it up with meat in Nenana and then bring it down the Yukon and then up the Iditarod River. They would unload the meat into the cold storage in Iditarod. They decided to take the unit off the barge, bring it to Flat, and stopped shipping meat by boat. They flew their meat in on a DC-3. The building was originally located northeast of Building M [IDT-083] on the road. It was moved when the Northland Development Company started mining the tailings. Matheson had to get it out of the way. John Stevens moved the store when he started dredging but he should have gone around the store because that is where the values were.
- 218 Steve Posgate inquired about the Hardware Building [Building WWW, IDT-086]... John replied that it had stove pipe and fittings of all sizes in it, and still does. There are nuts and bolts in the back of the building.... It was not built in Flat....
- 214 Rolfe inquired about Building K-1 [IDT-081]... John said the Assay Office [Building J-1, IDT-079] was moved to its location next to the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [see photograph of Donnelley and Sheppard complex, ca 1927 or 1928] from another place in Flat.... John did not know what the building was prior to that. He thinks it may be from the old town of Flat. It was originally a residence. Donnelley turned it into an assay office. John did not recall what Building K-1 [IDT-081] was.
- 249 Dave Wintz's House [Building C, IDT-121] is behind [west of] the Donnelley commercial complex. They have a house [Building C] and a shop [Building D] and a dog house or goat barn [Building D-1]. The Agoffs owned the house previously. It was located to the west of the [Matheson] Dredge and had to be moved when the dredge started coming through the area. Dave Wintz built the shop [Building D]. The

- buildings were moved in the 1960s by Alvin Agoff. It was in the way of the dredge. It was the old Agoff house....
- 274 [The tape was turned off for a few minutes for a break in the interview.]
- 275 Most of the buildings in the Donnelley complex were in place by the 1930s. Mary Miscovich recalled that Donnelley operated the store and the bank until 1955.... Donnelley moved out because he had health problems. Mary said that the business was not very good because there were not many people in Flat. "He moved out because the store in Kodiak came up for sale and business was dropping off [in Flat] so he bought the Kodiak store, from [Wilbur J.] Erskine." He made another bundle! John added that he took the same people from Flat to work for him. Bob Acheson and Tom Balange went with him. Then the [1964] earthquake caused a tidal wave and it washed his store off its foundation. He made another bundle on the insurance. Donnelley had a heart attack and sold the Erskine store. He went to Seattle and bought a large piece of property on Ural Point, across the lake. Then he died, and his wife died. Very little was said about them after they died. Amazing, the history they had. John Stevens bought Donnelley's property in Flat. When Stevens died, the Dahls got it....
- 313 Johnny Stevens "was a very fine man, but he was all business. He didn't give out any nickels unless he thought it was sure they were going to get him something." He was a real businessman.... all business. He was post master, operated a dredge, operated a store, and took care of the airport. He was a great caretaker for Flat for many years. "If it wasn't for John Stevens," John Miscovich said, "I wouldn't be talking to you here now. He kept Flat alive." He continued to operate the Donnelley and Sheppard Store for a while but there wasn't enough business to keep it going.... People were shipping in most of their supplies and he just couldn't keep the store going. John got tired of dealing with liquor and tobacco. He was selling liquor at the beginning and he did not want to be bothered with cigarettes although he smoked cigars himself. There were a few alcoholics in Flat and they would bother him at all hours of the night to get liquor. When the Red Devil mine--a mercury mine--closed there wasn't enough to keep the business going. There was no more traffic from Red Devil, about 50 miles away. John Stevens did very well while he operated the store.
- 343 Mary Miscovich recalled that John Stevens closed the store in 1974 or 1975. He didn't sell anything after 1977. He quit the grocery business after he moved the store.
- 355 Rolfe asked about how buildings were moved in Flat.... John said it wasn't very difficult because they were all experienced riggers and movers. They had a lot of sleds and big timbers for "go devil" skids. "They would tear out around the sides" of buildings. Places with basements were easy because you could get underneath and set up the jacks. You had to jack up each corner a little at a time. They used screw jacks and step jacks.

- The screw jacks were used for a long time and were very popular. They put big cheaters on them. They would raise the building high enough to slide the sleds or skids under it. Then they put the front and rear bunker spreader on and brace it, put the cables on, and it was ready to go when you let it down. They didn't tie them down to the skids or anything. They just used the weight of the building. It was held in front by a notched timber to keep the skids from coming together when you pulled the two cables. There were some awful hand men in Flat to do those things.
- 387 The Riley/Miscovich Dredge [IDT-220] was moved down from Black Creek on sleds. It took eight horses to move it. "They took all the machinery off but the main dredge was moved." The Guggenheim Dredge was moved by sled. The buckets [IDT-236] from the Guggenheim Dredge are southwest of Bill Burns Bungalow [Building BBB, IDT-128]. The timbers were very big.... Most buildings were moved with four or eight horses, side by side.... The road to Iditarod was a two lane highway [IDT-040] and in some places it was three lanes.
- 411 They hauled a lot of stuff on the [Iditarod-Flat] tramway [IDT-024]. It had wooden rails and iron wheels and flat decks. They hauled boilers and buckets and a lot of stuff on the tramway.... John's father bought the old tramway for the wood. He used the lumber for the bath house.... For years John's job was buck sawing the ties and pulling out the nails, to keep the fire going for the family's bath house [Building Y, IDT-094].... In the spring they would go out and tear up the ties. They were all buried. When the Tramway operated, they had the mules that walked between the narrow gage rails. They didn't make any changes to the track when they started using engines. There was a lot of good wood that came from some of the trestles, like the bridge across Otter Creek and some of the sloughs. There was an awful lot of timber in that tramway. For 100 bucks, it was a real deal. They rented a mule to haul the timbers.
- 443 All of the timber for the building of the tramway was cut locally. They had a couple of sawmills in Flat, and they made all the rails in Flat. All the ties were cut by axe men in Flat.
- 450 Steve Posgate asked about a large timber southeast of the Matheson Dredge [Site A, IDT-118].... John replied that is an old wooden spud from the dredge, not part of the tramway. They had old wooden spuds and then converted to steel spuds. They had a steel nose on the spuds, but the main part of the spud was wood.... There was a big problem with breaking spuds, even with the steel spuds bending and breaking in two. There was an awful lot of pressure against that spud when digging with a bucket line....
- 470 The Agoff House [Building HH, IDT-122] was built by Tom Jensen. Jensen worked for Donnelley.... It was built in that location in the 1930s. The structure [Site HH-1, IDT-

- 122] that used to be southeast of the house is the same building as the Post Office [Building CCC, IDT-124]. It was also the post office in that location before it was moved. It was the accountant's office for Matheson.... John Stevens used it there for a while when it was in that location. It was built at about the same time that Alex Matheson built everything else, in the early 1930s. He finally had to get a book keeper or accountant.... Tom Jenson was Donnelley's accountant and worked in the store. After Sheppard died Donnelley brought in Bob Acheson. Acheson's father ran a butcher shop in Iditarod in the early years. That used to be the Wexler Brothers, when they were driving cattle through Alaska. Tom Jenson was an old friend of Donnelley's from Nome. Jensen was available, and Donnelley brought him to Flat to be his accountant. Tom Jensen, Milton Roper, Bob Acheson, and another guy were all brought in by Donnelley. You never learned anything from any of them about the Donnelley enterprise. They were as closed mouth as they possibly could be. "They all operated under the thumb of Harry Donnelley." They all made fortunes....
- 550 John Miscovich moved the Post Office [Building CCC, originally at Site HH-1] for Mike Demientieff. John moved it to the area between the Peter Miscovich House [Building Y, IDT-094] and the School House [Building X, IDT-093] for Mike and Josephine Demientieff when they were running the Post Office. It was moved to its current location across from the Kepler House [Building LL, IDT-123] in 1985 or 1986, Mary Miscovich recalled.
- 584 John stated that Fred Demientieff lived in a house [Building C, IDT-121] on the edge of the tailing piles. He used to trap in the winter time. His wife's name was Marie. They are both dead now.... The building was moved there but John doesn't know where it came from.... It was moved quite early. This ground was mined twice by the Matheson Dredge. It was there in the 1940s, but John doesn't know when it was moved there....
- 631 The building [Building F, IDT-087] across from the Turner and Wood Store [Building G, IDT-086] is a warehouse. The warehouse belonged to Turner and Wood. They also had another warehouse [Building I, IDT-088] which had dog fish and stuff in it.... It is raised so they could backup to it with a truck.... John believes that [Building F, IDT-087] was moved over to Flat from Iditarod. A lot of buildings were moved to Flat from Iditarod. It was moved in the early 1930s. They didn't start moving any buildings from Iditarod to Flat until tractors were brought in.... Turner stored a lot of case gasoline and kerosene in there. That would have been after the horses left.... It was used from the time that Turner started his [ends abruptly, sentence cut off].
- 683 [End of Side A]

Tape 4, Side B:

- 001 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Side A....
- 006 The Turner and Wood operation was bought out by Donnelley right after World War II.... The warehouse [Building F, IDT-087] was not used after that time. It was abandoned and [the roof was] leaking very bad. There were some dog sleds stored in the warehouse for a while. During the summer months they used the warehouse to store sleds for the dog teams. But the building was never used by Donnelley....
- 023 This building [Building E, IDT-120] is a garage that belongs to the Agoffs. Building E-1 [IDT-120] was moved. The garage originally belonged to Turner when he had the D7s and the D8s. Turner was in the mining business as well as in the store business. He built that garage for his equipment. The parts shed [Building E-1] was located behind the garage. Site E-2 [IDT-120] is an old wood saw on skids, with an engine on it. Turner built the garage [Building E, IDT-120] in the late 1930s or early 1940s before the war.... It was abandoned when Turner went out of business but Alvin Agoff made a deal with Frankie Turner [Turner's son] to take over the garage and equipment.... Alvin made a deal with the Turner boys, Frank and Harry who lived in Holy Cross and inherited Turner's estate, to take it over.... Alvin Agoff took over the garage in the late 1940s.... It is still being used by Alvin Agoff, who sometimes brings his cat into Flat in the spring.... Agoff put a new roof on the building last year. A contractor, Dave Wintz, came in and put a new roof on it....
- 062 This building [Building B, IDT-119] was a pump station that Alex Matheson had for the dredge. There is a Washington Iron Works diesel engine inside it. It was a permanent pump station.... It has always been in that location. It did not move around with the dredge. When Matheson was thawing the area southwest of the dredge it was too far to run a line from the Flat Creek Ditch [IDT-144], so he used the pump station to get water to that area.... The pump station was built in the late 1930s. Before that he used a gas powered V8 Ford engine to run the pump.... He used the pump station until he quit. He needed the water. He had a couple of old timers on the point crew, driving point....
- 085 The Guggenheim tailing piles had to be thawed when they were reminded. Without much snow the ground would freeze down to bedrock. Not all over, but they had a testing method where they would drive a bar down to tell where there were thawed and frozen areas. It was a two man job. The ground had to be thawed. "This ground, if you do not have much snow, it will freeze all the way to bedrock." This caused "slicking under the dredge tailings," the next layer under the tailings would freeze and when the sun comes out and no matter how hot it got, it would not thaw out. That was tough work.... They had guys that worked ten hours a day pounding thaw points into the ground with ten pound hammers. The guys would crawl up a ladder and pound it few

- times, then go to the next one while the water thawed a few inches. Afterwards they had to pull all the points out. Some were 20 feet long. Then they would put in a "sweater," a point to just circulate the water. A hell of a job....
- 105 The workers in Flat came from all over. "We had the damnedest melting pot you ever did see. They came from every part of the world." Europe, Australia, China, Japan, we had everything in here. Canadians. If there ever was a testing ground to get along with so many nationalities and backgrounds, Flat was it. Many of the laborers did not speak English very well. People got along fine in Flat. Whenever they had the big get togethers in the winter everybody participated.
- 121 There was a lot of friction over property in Flat. "If you had a claim that was up the first of July and you didn't record it, then it was open for re-staking. They would watch the commissioner's office down there, and if you were a little late you lost your claim." John's dad was able to stake ground above the Riley/Otter/Miscovich camp because they had their stakes ready. "When the clock struck twelve out we'd go and put the stakes in!"
- 130 There was a mixed group of people in Flat, they came from all parts of the country. "A lot of Irish, a lot of Scandinavian, lot of Finnish people, lot of German people, there was Welsh. Oh Christ! We had a hell of a population of Russians!" Steve Posgate asked if different ethnic groups did different jobs... John replied that they did to some degree. The Germans were all mechanics and machinists and top notched blacksmiths. "The Finns were great wood workers." They made sleds, skis and snowshoes. The Russians were the best gamblers you ever saw and the most crooked you ever saw. Some were excellent card sharks and card markers.... "The Chinese and Japanese did cooking and laundry. [Jujiro] Wada, a Jap, ran a laundry. Chinese were good cooks." There were Hawaiians and Indians (from East Asia). Flat and Iditarod never had a church, but they had about every nationality.
- 158 "Mrs. Matheson came closest to having a church in her house." She insisted that the people that worked for her take part in her little community gatherings. She played piano and sang, served tea and cookies to the men before they headed back to the bar.... The bars on the south side [of Otter Creek] were just a stepping stone to the operations [red light district] on the other side of the river [Otter Creek]....
- 168 Concluding remarks.... Discussion of subjects for next interview sessions....
- 204 [End of interview session].

JOHN MISCOVICH INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED ON JULY 26, 1993

This interview was conducted with John Miscovich on July 26, 1993, at his mining camp near Otter Creek, two miles east of Flat, Alaska. The interview session on July 26, was conducted by historians Rolfe Buzzell and Steve Posgate, both of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and Julia Steel, archaeologist with the Anchorage District of the Bureau of Land Management. Also present was Mary Miscovich, John's wife. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. This is the fourth of four interviews with Mr. Miscovich on the history of Flat and Flat's historic buildings, and the fourth of a total of six interviews with Mr. Miscovich. The following is a summary of his comments, unless quotation marks are used.

Tape 4, Side B:

- 207 [The tape begins with John Miscovich already talking about the tramway between Flat and Iditarod.] ...The tramway connected up again at 5 mile, then took a straight shot again as the road made a turn and goes by the old gravel pit. Then it went down the hill on the right side of the road as you are going into Iditarod.... The road and tramway crossed at Cottonwood. It crossed after passing the grave yard and then again at the [Alaska] Road Commission camp at Three Mile. Then it crossed again near the top, and went on the left side after passing Cottonwood Creek where the culvert is. Then it crossed it again. The tramway carried a pretty nice grade. It had to because when they were using mules to pull it, that's all the power that they had. Then when they put the model "T" on, they weren't much better but were much more convenient. It was a good, gentle grade. A lot of people walked it too. It was good walking. The mules walked it first with their feet between the ties. And it was good walking.
- 228 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....
- 239 John says there is no "t" in the Miscovich name. It is spelled M-I-S-C-O-V-I-C-H....
- 251 John Miscovich moved the Signal Corps Building [AAA, IDT-130]. After the Signal Corps closed the building, it was decided to put it up for bid with the understanding that who ever bid it would move it. The [Matheson] Dredge wanted to dig where the building was originally located. No one in Flat wanted to bid because no one had the facilities to move it. So John bid it with the understanding that he would move it. It was originally built about 300 feet southwest of where the building is located now.... It was built about the same time or after the [Donnelley and Sheppard] store was built.

- John Felix was the manager of the Signal Corps station at the time. He was a Signal Corps man. That must have been in the early 1930s.... It was built quite a bit prior to World War II....
- 277 Before that Signal Corps building was constructed, there was a an earlier Signal Corps building up on the road going to Flat Creek. It was the old Harry Donnelley residence that Donnelley had before he built the [Donnelley] House [Building O, IDT-085] next to the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [H, IDT-077]. The old Harry Donnelley House no longer exists. There may be some remnants of it [vicinity of NNN, IDT-141]. The old Donnelley House [Site DDDDD] was on the east side of the road.... There was only one Signal Corps person stationed in Flat. Lon French was in Iditarod for a long time, then he moved out to Flat in the 1930s. Then another fella came in for a while, Jimmy Nielson or Nelson with his wife.... Then the Felix family. Then there was another fella, a big fella, but John could not recall his name.
- 302 The Signal Corps shut down when the radio phones started to be developed all over the districts. They did not have any reason to have the government operating in Flat, especially as big as that one. Rolfe asked why the second building was so large if only one person was stationed there?
- 307 John replied that the living quarters for the Signal Corps were upstairs for John [Felix] and his wife and daughter, in one section. Then they had an area where the radio, transmitter and typewriter were located. They had a big power house, but that has been moved. John used it as his shop [IDT-223] up at Discovery [IDT-221].... That is the way Felix designed the building, and Donnelley was all for it because he sold all the lumber and supplies, and hauled all the materials on the boats. It was a deal that Felix and Donnelley put together between themselves, that Flat needed a mansion like that. The building they moved out of was only a front room, a back room, and a little kitchen. That happened lots of times....
- 322 The Signal Corps people were military. The Signal Corps got quite a reputation for its historic work in communications, and they did a lot of pioneering in communications in Alaska. They were all over the territory. At one time, they may have had two people stationed in Flat, a helper, but for a short time only. There was no reason to have two....
- 333 The building was moved just before World War II. John was not there when the building was moved, he was in Poorman at the time the building was moved. John went over to Poorman in 1940, and he thinks the building was moved in the Fall of 1940 or 1941. Everybody went into the [U. S.] Army, John's four brothers. It was moved before they went into the Army. It was moved by John's family. John's brothers Howard and Andrew were in Flat at that time operating with his father. At that time, they had

- formed Peter Miscovich and sons. John was put in charge of the operation over at Ruby. John went back and forth a lot. In the fall of 1940, when the family took over the Ruby property, John went over to Poorman. The military took John in 1941, and he did not get back to Flat until after the war. He was in Flat in November of 1945....
- 356 The Signal Corps Building [AAA, IDT-130] has been sitting at the same location since early 1940s on the tailing piles.... John leveled the ground around the building last fall. It had just two big skids under it, and it settled and got pretty well out of shape. So John leveled it up and pulled the skids out from under it, and put blocking and tanks [barrels], and put a new roof on it. Now it is in fairly good shape, although John will do some work this fall. Some of the blocks in the center.... Any building that is that heavy, one has to keep working on it a little bit all the time. Otherwise it will start settling again. The doors are opening good. Everything upstairs is in pretty good shape yet. It was a well built building....
- 372 John did not know how the design of the building came about for the Signal Corps Building in Flat. There was a lot of discussion going on when they shipped all that lumber in and the carpenters to build it. And the type of building too. It has all those fire proof shingles on the outside. It is a heavy building. Those shingles are heavy, and everything in it is heavy duty timbers, measuring 2 inches x 10 inches and 2 inches x 12 inches. It would never have stood the moving that it did. With the settling, it would have cracked apart. It was a well-built building.... Rolfe asked if the building has been used in recent years.
- 388 John replied that the USGS [U. S. Geological Survey] used it. BLM used it. Fire fighters have used it. The contractors for Placer Dome [Mining Company] looking at various mining properties used it. Placer Dome with their geologists, and other people. John used the building for putting up those people. Because of the space in the building, it is well suited for mapping or engineering work. It does not have the water and toilet facilities that it used to have. Those are all disconnected. But it is wired up for a power plant, which the Signal Corps had for its radios.... Others have thought about using for the Iditarod Dog Sled Races, but John refused to get involved during the winter time because of the fire hazard. John did not have insurance on it, and could not get any insurance on it. Insurance companies are very particular about what they will insure out in the bush.... Spacing, wiring, watchmen, a lot of things that they look at when they insure a building.... The premiums would be so high that the cost would be prohibitive to afford insurance on the building....
- 418 There has never been any fire fighting equipment in Flat. Iditarod had a little old wagon that is in the [Donnelley and Sheppard] store [IDT-077] now. It was pulled by hand. There was never any fire equipment of any kind in Flat except buckets. They used a lot of buckets and snow to fight fires.... Very effective in the winter time, when they could

- shovel snow onto a fire. Or save a building along side a burning building.... Whenever there was a fire [there was an alarm]. "There was a lot of people watching your smoke stack, because most fires in Flat were caused by creosote from burning green wood [chimney fires]. Bad pipes, not keeping them clean. There are certain weather conditions when creosote forms the most, and ignites at the most odd times. The fire can be out in the stove, and there would be an internal combustion type thing start.... Mark [Kepler] almost lost his new house that way...." John and Mary Miscovich almost lost their place [IDT-202] from a fire in the short length of pipe that vents the stove in the kitchen.... Creosote build up is a very dangerous thing....
- 463 Building L [IDT-133] was the old Fullerton House. The Fullertons moved it to its present location and Donnelley moved it to house Harold Byrd and Milton Roper and Roper's wife.... Mrs. Fullerton owned it first. She had it over by the garage that Mark Kepler uses now [Building AA, IDT-096]. It was sitting there near where the front end of the garage is now.... The Fullertons were neighbors of the Miscovichs.... The old Fullerton House [Building L, IDT-133] was moved from that location to its present location in the 1930s.... Julia Steele noted that the house was nicely fixed up inside, including nicely painted walls. John said that Bess[ie] Byrd did that. She was very interior decorator minded. The house had a nice kitchen.... The people who worked for Donnelley were able to fix up their homes nicely on the insides because they had access to paint and supplies and the money to do that. Harry Donnelley had a warehouse full of everything.
- 503 [Harold] Byrd was a banker, an accountant that worked in the bank. His job was working for Donnelley in the bank, doing the accounting. Only in the last year or so did Byrd take any part in the store. That was in the evenings. The store would stay open until 10 PM. Byrd would come in and he would fill orders for those coming in from Chicken, Happy, and Willow Creeks and Discovery.... Byrd would come out and help out....
- 516 The Fullertons were no longer living in the house [Building L, IDT-133] when it was moved to its present location. The Fullertons had already left for the states.... John was not sure who bought the house from Mrs. Fullerton.... He does not have any recollection of who moved the house.... The house was abandoned about the same time that the Donnelley and Sheppard Store was abandoned. Donnelley went out of business and nobody was here anymore to live in the house. In the 1950s, Byrd bought it from Roper. John does not recall who bought it from Byrd or when. It has been abandoned for many years, since the store was abandoned....
- 545 Building GGG [IDT-134] was the Demientieff house. Mike Demientieff was going to move into that house when he first moved to Flat from Holy Cross. Johnny Baquir had the house before Mike Demientieff. Demientieff was only there a week or so before he

- gave up trying to renovate the house. Mike then bought the house in front of the school house [Building W-1, IDT-092]. His brother-in-law, Johnny Baquir, had the house [Building GGG, IDT-134] before Mike Demientieff tried to fix it up. Johnny was married to Mike Demientieff's sister, Lutka. So they told Mike to go ahead and move into the house if he wanted to fix it up. But it was a big job.... The Demientieffs are the old Yukon River family. Its spelled T-I-E-F. There may be some Russian history behind them. The father of Mike Demientieff was a full blooded Indian. There were a whole bunch of Demientieffs. Johnny, Freddie, Tasiana... there were eight or nine of them in one family. It is an old time Holy Cross family.
- 592 Mike Demientieff was wanting to move back to Flat and set up house keeping. They did not get along with their family down at Holy Cross.... He was at Reindeer Lake in partnership with another Demientieff there in a cabin.... They did not get along primarily because of his wife, Josephine, who was not from the Yukon. She was from Crooked Creek. There was a great deal of internal wrangling going on. So they chose Flat.... They came to Flat in the middle of the 1970s, after the Miscovichs shut the [Riley] dredge down. And they left Flat in the 1980s, according to Mary Miscovich....
- 620 Johnny Baquir had Building GGG [IDT-134] before Mike Demientieff.... He used to mine in Flat in partnership with George Turner. Turner and [Frankie] Hatten. And Hatten and Baquir. They were mining on Slate Creek, then on Chicken Creek, then on Willow Creek, and on Happy Creek. They were not successful. After George Turner died, there was no one in Flat to finance Hatten and Baquir or keep them going. With the price of gold at that time, the property they had was just not worth looking at. They quit Flat entirely. Frankie Hatten moved back to Yakima. And Johnny Baquir moved to Anchorage. Johnny died, and his wife died. Frankie is still alive.
- 643 Johnny Baquir did not build the house [Building GG, IDT-134]. That house was moved from another location. Before Baquir got it, Black Bear and Bill Duffy used it for a while. But John Miscovich does not know the original location of that house or whether it was just a one frame section at first and the addition put on later. Johnny had a family. Before that a fella named Al Remmington was living in the house. He had five girls. The additions were put on when Al lived in the house.... That would have been in the late 1930s. Al worked for the Miscovichs ... as a mechanic. The house was moved to its present location in the 1930s... Now it is abandoned....
- 684 [The tape runs out, end of Side B, Tape 4]
- Tape 5, Side A:
- 000 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell after the changing of the tape....

- 007 John Miscovich does not recall anyone living in the house referred to on the site map as Building HHH [IDT-135]. It was moved there, and he does not recall anyone living there. He does not recall where it was located before it was moved to that site.... John stated that it was never banked up around the sides. It was sitting on blocks. It was moved because it was in the way of the [Matheson] Dredge, and it was moved there from another location up above on the other side of the [Flat Creek] road.
- 019 John said it may be associated with the house on the other side of the road, the [John] Ogriz House [Building FFF, IDT-132]. A preacher came in and bought that [Building FFF]. There were two of them, a fella named Glen Johnson from Soldotna had it first, then he sold it to another friend of his from Soldotna, who owns it now.... They fixed it up, put a roof on it, and fixed it up pretty nice....
- 029 Crabtree, a contractor from Soldotna, owns the building [HHHH, IDT-170] across from the old Alaska Road Commission buildings.... The preacher from Soldotna also owns it. It was sold to him by Ernie Norman, known as "Big Foot," or "Big Foot Norman." Ernie passed away. These buildings [pointing to map at sites FFF, HHHH, AAAA, NNNN, MMMM, KKKK, and OOOO] are all owned by the preacher combination from Soldotna. All of these buildings were owned by [Glen] Johnson, who was the first hunter/preacher who came to Flat from Soldotna. And he brought his friends in, and he liked them. When Johnson could not fly anymore because of health problems, he decided to split up his empire. He also owned the old Stella Parker House [BBBB, IDT-154]. He acquired quite a few buildings in Flat, and then started releasing [selling] them to his friends. And they still come to Flat during moose hunting season.... Johnson was coming to Flat back in the late 1960s and 1970s, from Aniak. Glen Johnson's wife's name is Dorothy.
- 068 Building FFF [IDT-132] was owned by John Ogriz before Glen Johnson bought it. Ogriz was a resident of Flat for many years, since 1910. He worked on the dredges in Flat. He married the school teacher. She was John's school teacher. Then they went mining after he left his dredge winching job. He mined on Slate Creek and Moore Creek, and in the Ophir district. He was mining until he retired.... O-G-R-I-Z is how it is spelled. Everyone called him "John Gear Grease" and some called him "John Bear Grease." Ogriz did not build FFF. The building was moved there, according to John Miscovich. Ogriz built on to it. He built the front part of it after he was married. John Miscovich did not recall who built it. It was an old building that was moved there in about the late 1930s.... Ogriz married in the late 1930s, so he added onto the building, the front porch and south side kitchen addition, before World War II.
- 096 John Miscovich believed that Site EEE [just north of FFF, IDT-132] was not an outbuilding of FFF.... John could not recall what took place with EEE, if anything.

- 110 Site III [IDT-136] is the remnants of ... the Sopoff family house. The Sopoffs lived right on the edge of Flat Creek. The house was quite a long building, but III is a short, one room building.... The Sopoff family used to live in that location. Their house was a little closer to the road. Site III may be what is left of the Sopoff residence. Nick Sopoff, spelled S-O-P-O-F-F. He worked for Alex Matheson [dredging operation] on the thawing crew and the hydraulic plant. He later moved his family down to Stuyahok, down near Holy Cross. Sopoff lived in Flat in the 1920s and the early 1930s. After the Sopoffs moved out of Building III, John Beaton's wife lived there. This was before John Beaton sold out to Alex Matheson. Beaton brought his wife, Mae, and two kids to Flat, and they lived in the house. They were there for a couple of summers, not in the winter time. But it was also a permafrost location, and it was an "up and down area." No one wanted anything to do with a house that was on permafrost.... The area had not been mined. The [Matheson] dredge went along side of it; there are tailing piles just to the south of it.... It has been abandoned since the 1940s...
- 150 Tom Balange, who worked for Donnelley, lived at the building remains listed as JJJ and JJJ-1 [IDT-137] for quite a while.
- 159 Further up the road Harry Kardanoff, who was married to Tasiana Demientieff, lived at Building KKK (?) [IDT-138].... Before Tom Balange, Silas McConeghy lived there [Building JJJ, IDT-137], who worked for Donnelley.... The house with the four sided [hipped] roof was the building where Tom Balange lived....
- 176 Julia Steele asked John if a person had to get approval to build a house in Flat. John replied that the only approval to build a house in Flat that anyone ever got was from the dredge operator because one did not want to build ... if there was a possibility that one would have to move again. Of course that happened [having to move] with practically everybody. They thought they were safe, but they were not. As the dredge companies kept drilling and the price of gold went up and machinery improved.... One got squatter's rights from the claim owner to build a house. That is the way Flat started with the Guggenheims. Flat was pretty well laid out as a little city, as one can see in the photograph in Tom Bundtzen's report..... It was laid out pretty uniformly. Now the way Flat is laid out is because the dredge was chasing them [the houses]....
- 197 Rolfe asked about the two buildings shown on the 1977 aerial photograph. John said one of the houses at Site JJJ was moved since the aerial photo was taken, and it was not there anymore.... Rolfe asked if one of those buildings was moved to HHH, and John agreed.... Silas McConeghy's House, JJJ [IDT-137], had a roof with four sides, a hipped roof. That was moved. Donnelley was the administrator of McConeghy's estate. McConeghy had a lot of money; he was an unmarried wood cutter. He worked in Flat every summer. He had no relations, but no one knows whatever happened. He had a great love for Mrs. Donnelley, and there were rumors that he left everything to Mrs.

- Donnelley. And she was the only one who could go in the house before he died. He had pneumonia. He would not let anyone else in the house. He was there for a couple of months. She was the only one who went in to take care of him. He died in bed. He did not want to go out, did not want any help. McConeghy died in the 1940s or late 1930s. Then Tom Balange lived in the house after McConeghy....
- 244 Cap Becker, who mined on lower Chicken Creek, had a little log cabin on Flat Creek Road [possibly the Building KKK, IDT-138]. He would come to Flat every once in a while with fish for sale. He was an old German, from Germany. Apparently he was a sea captain at one time. On the Fourth of July, he would wear his sea captain hat and get good and soused. He had a big beard and a couple of dogs, that lived with him right in the house. They washed his dishes for him. He was really a character. He just put the dishes on the floor and his dogs would lick them up.... He had pack sacks for the dogs in the summer time, and in the winter time he had a sled. Cap was up on that [west] side of Flat Creek Road, but John Miscovich could not recall if that [Building KKK] is the particular place. It was a little log cabin that Cap lived in.
- 269 Henry Crook had a house on the upper part of Flat Creek Road that was built up off the ground. It had a lean-to on it. One entered through the front. It might be Building LLL [IDT-139]. John can not be sure, as he had not been out to look at those old places for a long time, even though he drove by there frequently. Henry Crook had a pretty good sized place, possibly MMM [IDT-140]. It is still standing, and was a pretty good sized building yet....
- 280 Milo Caughrean lived up there [on upper Flat Creek Road] too. He was an engineer on the dredge. He lived in the same building that Henry Crook had. Milo and his wife.
290 Bob Acheson lived on the other side of the road [pointing to the area of NNN, IDT-141, and DDDDD]. Acheson and his wife Betty and family lived there for years....
- 300 Acheson and Caughrean lived on Flat Creek Road in the 1930s and worked for Harry Donnelley. Henry Crook worked for Frank Manley, Willow Creek Mining Company, out on Willow Creek. Tom Balange worked in the [Donnelley and Sheppard] store. Cap Becker worked by himself [mining] on lower Chicken Creek. Bob Acheson was a partner, and worked in the Donnelley and Sheppard complex. He had an interest in it.... Henry Crook may have built his house [MMM, IDT-140]. When he first started in at Flat, [Frank] Manley had a 30 tractor that he used to haul wood in the winter time. John Miscovich was quite young when Henry Crook moved to Flat, and John does not remember whether he built that place [MMM] or not. Crook was in Flat in the 1920s. But it is an old building..., and it has never been moved. It had to be built there.

- 327 The Acheson Building [identified by interviewers as NNN, but is actually Site WWWW], a brown building, was added on to by Mr. Acheson as he had a large family. Dave Browne lived there with his wife and two boys, Bob and Dave. That building was torn down too, according to John Miscovich. Very little is left of it. Originally it was a log building. One portion of it was log.
- 343 Loui Miller lived in Building NNN [IDT-141], along with his wife. He had a big family of seven or eight children. That building was all torn down. Loui Miller was French Canadian, and he also worked for Frank Manley and Pete Jensen out at Willow Creek. Miller had a big family. His daughter lives in Anchorage and is a nurse for Doctor Towers.... She might have some old photographs.... She is married to a carpenter, but John could not recall her first name or married name. The Miller family lived in Flat the late 1920s and 1930s. Later Loui worked on the dredge. He drowned on the dredge, fell into the [dredge] pond.
- 380 Rolfe asked about Site WWWW. The last family that John Miscovich recalled living on that road was the Acheson family. Beyond that point, John could not recall anyone ever living there during his time.
- 393 The Guggenheim Parts Shop Building [WWW-1, IDT-143] is located further up the road [on opposite side of road from Site WWWW]. Bob Acheson had a bunch of dogs in the building [pointing at Site WWWW]. He had a bunch of dogs and was a great dog enthusiast. He never ran the mail. He had beautiful dogs. He just died this spring.
- 411 Julia Steele asked if there was a part of town with dog barns. John replied that there were dog boxes or dog barns over across the river [Otter Creek] at the place that Ray Stock has [EEEE, IDT-159]. That is a dog barn. Joe Cummings had it years ago. Joe had 12-14 dogs. It was much more convenient to have a dog barn, if you had a lot of dogs than the dog boxes. Where you had drifting snow, it was a terrible problem to keep the dog boxes open.... That [the dog barn building] was moved when that log building was moved from below. The dogs used for delivering mail were always kept in the Adams complex [Building V, IDT-090], the guy who had the hotel.... Building V has stalls in it for dogs....
- 436 Rolfe asked about buildings DDD and DDD-1 [IDT-131]. John identified these as the Frankie Hatten buildings. Hatten and his family lived there. The house was moved in there from somewhere else. Frankie Hatten lived there for a number of years. He had a big family of five or six. The house was moved to that location in the early 1930s. Hatten was a cat operator and he was a miner in partnership with [Johnny] Baquir and George Turner. [The partnership was called] Hatten and Baquir. Hatten left about the time the war started, when they shut down all mining. John Miscovich could not recall anyone living in the house after the Hattens. There may have been a fella working for

- Alex [Matheson] living there, but John is not sure. John was gone from Flat, over at Ruby, for a number of years, and people could have lived there that he does not know about. He does not recall anyone else living there....
- 480 Rolfe asked about BBB, [IDT-128], which has a hipped roof. John identified the house as the old Bill Burns House. Burns had a little place along side it, which he moved there from down below. It was down just north of where the [Matheson] dredge is now. When Bill left Flat, a boy named Alfred Miller from Manley Hot Springs bought it. He had a wife and kid. The Keplers bought it from the Miller family.... Bill Burns moved out of Flat in the late 1960s or early 1970s. He went to Anchorage and died there.... Bill Burns lived in Flat for thirty years or more. He was a trapper and a miner. He worked in the mines. He worked for John's dad [Peter Miscovich] for years, and for Alex Matheson for years. Bill Burns did not build the house [Building BBB, IDT-128]. The house was built elsewhere. Nellie Beatty [also Nellie Bates], the "Black Bear," had the house. Bill Burns got the house after she left Flat. It was moved in anticipation of the [Matheson] dredge coming in quite close to it. It was moved from the vicinity of where the Matheson Dredge is currently located.... Bill Burns lived in the house [Building BBB] for many years.... The house was moved in the 1930s [to its current location]. It was in the 1930s when all of the activity by the Northland Development Company dragline operation and the Beaton Dredge operation occurred.
- 542 The [Alfred] Millers were only in Flat a couple of years. They became disgruntled and Miller was going to set up house keeping in Flat and trap. He was in Flat one winter, John recalls, then they moved to Tanana. She [Alfred Miller's wife] was a nurse, and she is still a nurse at the native hospital [in Tanana]. She was Native, and he was part Native. Loui Miller was married to a part Native lady and Loui was a French Canadian. She moved back to Tanana and they divorced.
- 559 Julia Steele asks John if Nellie Beatty had the house [BBB, IDT-128] long. Nellie Beatty [the "Black Bear"] was operating a "house" [of prostitution] down on the "line" for many years in the 1920s and the late 1910s. John was quite young, and does not recall what dates she started in at Flat. She was there in the late 1910s and was in Flat in the 1920s when the big mail robbery took place. That trial was in 1924 in Fairbanks. She lived in Flat quite a while. The house [Building BBB, IDT-128] started out as a house of ill repute, although they did not call them houses of ill repute around Flat. They were the "red light" district. Nellie later became quite a prominent figure in Flat, mining and so on.... on Chicken Creek. She went into mining with her husband, Bill Duffy, who was also involved in the mail robbery. When they got married, they went into mining and she quit prostitution. She was still running a poker game and selling booze, but she was out of the [prostitution] business after she married Bill. Then she moved out of Flat and went to California. She died in Caliente. They were at Santa Anita raising horses, and then they went to Caliente down near the Mexican border.

- They both died there. They were very horse-minded. They loved horses and raised them. They had some fairly good race horses.... "Crime paid. That is one case where you are innocent until proven guilty," John stated. "They [Nellie and Duffy] were guilty [of the mail robbery] but proven innocent...."
- 610 Bill Burns used BBB [IDT-128] as a residence. Bill Burns tore down the kitchen, which was a lean-to. The lean-to had a kitchen that Bill had built on, but it had fallen apart. It was just a small addition [that was torn down]. Bill lived there during the summers when he worked in Flat. Then when he was trapping in the winter time, he would come back and forth. He lived there [Building BBB, IDT-128], [used it] as a residence. He was not married.... The kitchen and wood shed parts are now all gone [torn down]. There are still some remnants of the additions that are left around the building.... The toilet was in between the wood shed and the house. They had it added on to, like a bunch of cardboard houses. Bill was not much of a carpenter, but it was convenient....
- 640 Rolfe asked about building EEEEE [IDT-129], a partially collapsed shed located just northwest of building BBB, and due north of the bucket line [IDT-236] from the Guggenheim Dredge. John did not know what that structure was....
- 659 [Stopped to turn over the tape].
- Side B, Tape #5:
- 001 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....
- 005 Rolfe asked about a building shown on the 1970s aerial photograph very close to the location of the current Building FFFFF [IDT-127]. John recalled that the earlier building was moved in there. When Loui Miller was in Bill Burns' place [Building BBB, IDT-128]. That building [FFFFF, IDT-127] was first moved in there by Harry Brink. It was a little.... John does not recall where it came from. The little building next to the tent [frame] was moved there. That was the building that was previously in the location of current Building FFFFF. Then he moved that building away from there, and they moved this other building [FFFFF] in there. This fella and his wife added the bedroom edition and the front porch. Originally Building FFFFF was only a small 12 foot x 14 foot or 12 foot x 16 foot building where the kitchen stove and heater are located. This fella, Curt and his wife Kim [Spratt], made the additions to the present buildings. That building [FFFFF] could be the building that was down by Bill Burns' place, because there is no building there now. There was a fairly good building along side of Bill Burns' place. Mark Kepler would be the person who would know where FFFFF was before it was moved to its present location.... The two buildings that were there originally are about the same as the storage shed building with the Iditarod [Race] sign that is next to the tent frame.... John recalled that he [Bill Burns?] started out with

- a single dwelling there as a place to stay. Harry Brink had moved that building in there from some other location when Bill Burns bought the Brink house. John did not follow the movement of those buildings too closely. Mark Kepler would know the details.... That building [FFFFF] was a single dwelling that was added on to.... The original building on the 1970s aerial photo is not the building that is there now....
- 055 Rolfe asked about the buildings that were behind the CCC complex [IDT-124]. The building next to the Brink House [on the aerial photo] went across the street and was rebuilt into the existing photo shed [Library Building, CCC-1, IDT-125]. Another shed [in the original CCC complex] was used as a warehouse [LL-1]. There was a shed there that Ernie Norman used as a pig pen; he raised a pig in it. There was a long shed with a lean-to [slanted] roof on it. He tore that down. Ernie had snow machines in there [CCC-3 on the 1970s aerial photo]. There are no buildings any more in the original CCC site. They are all gone. John tore the buildings down and used the lumber. They were really just sheds, really dilapidated. There was a shed [in the vicinity of CCC-3]. John had a building that he bought after "Big Foot," Ernie Norman, died. John and others bid on the buildings at an auction they had on Norman's buildings. John got the buildings on the other side of the road [from the CCC complex] and he got a long shed type warehouse. John gave the building to Mark Kepler when Mark moved to Flat and got Harry Brink's original house. John tore down part of the other buildings, and moved all of the hardware, plumbing materials, etc from the buildings to the field. Everything of Ernie Norman's went on the auction block, including the house [Brink House] that later burned down. Mark Kepler was not the bidder. Someone else bought that house [and Mark bought it later].
- 097 The buildings at the present CCC complex date from the 1930s. They were moved there. No one was living in them when they were moved there. One of them [CCC-1 on the 1970s aerial photo], the pig pen, someone lived in before it was moved. It had two rooms. That one was later turned into the pig pen. Freddie and Marie Demientieff lived in it for a while. And Frankie Turner. That was in the early 1930s. In Flat, if one raised a pig, after they raised it they became so fond of it, one hated to kill it. They killed them late in the winter time.... They are awfully friendly animals....
- 115 Rolfe asked about the original buildings at site LL. Harry Brink had a wood shed. He also had another shed that Minnie [Brink] turned into a living quarters with black paper all over it. That was the log cabin that Randall had before Brink bought it. Randall added a kitchen on to it. Harry Brink added a laundry room onto it. After Mark Kepler moved into the building, it burned down. Mark Kepler tore down a building and used the frame and floor in the current house [LL]. He moved the floor all in one piece. Another building Minnie Brink used as a guest house [LL-1] for her sons and a couple of other people who came to visit her. Another building [LL-2] at the original LL

- complex was a big wood shed and storage shed.... LL-2 was torn down. It used to be just north of where the Kepler's chicken coup is now, where the swing is now.
- 138 The Brink House [which burned down, but was in location of LL] was built in the early years. It was a log building, and moved there. Then it was added onto. Randall, who worked for Alex Matheson on the [Matheson] dredge, bought it from someone else who moved it. John could not recall who had the building before Randall bought it. Then Brink moved in after Randall. Randall lived there in the 1930s and early 1940s. Brink came in after the Matheson Dredge was closed down. He came up from Aniak. Brink owned those properties across the river [Otter Creek] that the preachers now have [Building AAAA-1, IDT-155]. Harry Brink lived there. It was later bought by the Flemings, then sold to the preacher [Glen Johnson]....
- 157 There were no preachers in Flat in the early days....
- 165 Rolfe asked if different parts of Flat had names? John replied that the "line" had a name, but other geographic areas of the town did not have specific names. The road up Flat Creek was at one time called the "500 club" because everybody that lived up there was pretty wealthy. The bankers, and Acheson, and others. But it was not an official name that people referred to. It was a kind of sarcastic nickname. The town never had a divided description, probably because it was so well divided that it did not need a description.
- 180 Building AAAA [IDT-156], just northwest of the foot bridge, was owned by Glen Johnson who sold it to his buddy, the preacher in Soldotna. Glen Johnson kept the log cabin [AAAA-1, IDT-155]. The building on the east side [IDT-156] was a nice frame building with an addition on the back. The other [IDT-155] was a log building with a shed on the north side that is sunk down.... The ground that the log cabin [IDT-155] was built on was reported to be the only piece of virgin ground that was not dredged. "That could be one of the original log cabins of Flat. And looking at it, it might be.... There is a little island of land that they [old timers] say that was not dredged, and the log cabin is on it.... It could be one of the real old timer's [cabins] that withstood all the dredges that went around it." The building has sunk down. When the Flemings had it, the roof had a big bow in the middle. That indicated that it was on virgin ground [i. e. structures on tailing piles do not sink]. The other building [IDT-156] was moved in along side of the log cabin. It was moved to that spot in the 1940s. A fella named Ed Weber had it. He did not move it in there. At one time it used to be the Fritz Awe Mining Company office. Wayne Hubbard lived in it, then left Flat to go to Anchorage. Hubbard sold it. John does not remember if Awe moved the building, or who moved it. It was originally located near where the post office is now. Harry Brink may have bought it and moved it along side the little old log cabin he had. But the building was moved to its present location. When the Flemings bought it, it was having problems...

- with the foundation. It had all rotted out. They had to dig it all out, jack it up, and put new joists under it. Flemings owned it in the 1970s, and worked for John Miscovich. He was there for only a couple of years. He sold the building to Glen Johnson.
- 240 Rolfe asked about site LLLL on the site map. John explained that no one lived there. That was a shack that was associated with the dredge when it was operating in that area. It is probably not there now.... It was an old warehouse shed or blacksmith shop shed, or something like that....
- 250 Bertha Stevens owned MMMM [IDT-168], where "Freight Train" later lived. Bertha lived there before she married John Stevens. She was cooking at the mines for a number of years. Buildings KKKK and KKKK-1 [IDT-169] are two sheds, and there was a lot of stuff stored in them. The sheds were owned by Freight Train. Before he got the sheds, another fella had them. That fella was a crazy nut, who cut wood, Emil [Gustafson ?]. Freight Train now owns both sheds. Emil was only there a short while. He sold the property to Darrell Olsen, who was known as "Freight Train" and was from Wasilla. "He is called Freight Train because he is a big guy, and could push a freight train, or hold a locomotive back. It is a nickname."
- 292 Bertha Stevens lived in Building MMMM [IDT-168] during the 1960s.... Gertrude Stenberg, a great big lady, lived in the house before that.... Her husband, Sturey, was over on the George River and died. He was a prospector and miner.... It is like Steinberg or Stenberg. She had the building for years. She was a cook, and she cooked in John Miscovich's uncle's bar, Andy Miscovich's Bar [Building Q, IDT-071]. This was while her husband was alive. She was not the original owner [of Building MMMM, IDT-168]. John could not recall who owned it before her, which was in the 1930s....
- 338 Building PPPP [IDT-164] was owned by Stella Parker. First Dan Dukich had it in the 1930s, then Stella Parker. Then the preacher got it.... Dan Dukich was a laborer in Flat for the dredge operators and the miners. He was in Flat from 1910 until he retired in 1962 and went to Seattle. He got the building from Stella Parker. He did not live in that place the entire time. He lived in other cabins, such as up on Discovery and down at Flat. He was there for a number of years. In the 1930s, Stella was in the complex on the other side of the road [BBBB, IDT-154] from Building PPPP. Stella spent one winter in that place [PPPP] after Dan left, and damned near froze to death.
- 371 Building BBBB [IDT-154] is the Joe and Stella Parker place. It was owned prior to them by [Amal] "Paprika" Jensen, who had a large family of Native children. NNNN [IDT-167] was moved to its present location from another place. It was a nice little frame building. Building OOOO [IDT-166] was also moved in there [to its present location] in the 1930s. It was owned by the Flemings boys....

- 390 The ground along the north side of Otter Creek was only mined once, and with a flume dredge. The ground was very poor, it was easy bedrock, and they did a fairly good job of mining it. So people knew there was not much [gold] left to [warrant] going back in a second time. So that block of ground has never been mined a second time. It was a very weak section of the pay streak. It was mined in the 1920s. That is when the old flume dredge went through there.... The "line" existed there in the late 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.... Before that, there was nothing there. The "line" was [originally] further down stream, near where the [Matheson] dredge is now. The prostitutes moved out of that location because of mining activity in the late 1920s and 1930s.... The town of Flat shifted to the east during that time....
- 429 That first building [Building PPPP, IDT-164] was Jim Flemings' building. He was the son of Jim Flemings, Sr.... That is the garage [Building QQQQ, IDT-163]. Shawn Flemings had Building PPPP [IDT-164]. He was Jim's brother. John Stevens, the old trapper and store keeper, owned Building QQQQ [IDT-163]. Jule Stuver had it, then the preacher [from Soldotna, Glen Johnson] acquired it. John Miscovich owns the little log cabin TTTT [IDT-161] with the addition on the back. It has a sod roof and lean-to porch on the back side. The dog shed [YYYY, IDT-161] is next to it. Next to that was one of the gals that had a "house," that was Finn Annie [DDDD, IDT-160]. A gal lived in the small building [RRRR, no longer standing].... This was in the late 1920s, the 1930s and the 1940s....
- 479 Ray Stock from Bethel is using the log building with the new aluminum roof [EEEE-1, IDT-159].... He is retired, ex-Bethel city manager and engineer. He is not too well right now. He wanted to move to Flat. He has an airplane and likes Flat very much. John let him use that house [Building EEEE-1, IDT-159] to live in, and he added onto it. He fixed it up real nice before he got sick with a bad kidney problem. He is waiting now for a kidney replacement. Building EEEE-1 was never a house of prostitution. Before Ray Stock started using it, the house was owned by Joe Loranger, spelled L-O-R-A-N-G-E-R, a long time pioneer of Flat from Willow Creek. That is who John Miscovich bought the house from. Loranger had it for years. He was French Canadian. Before that Joe Cummings, spelled C-U-M-M-I-N-G-S, had the building. Joe Cummings had the building for years. He moved it. It was [originally located] down by where the [Matheson] dredge is now. Joe Cummings had the building way early, long before John was born. Joe used to pole up the river, up Otter Creek from the City of Otter. He had the building for years. When he [Loranger] moved to the Pioneers Home, that is when John Miscovich bought the building....
- 526 Steve Posgate noted that the corners of Building TTTT [IDT-161] are unusual. The logs butt up against 2 inch x 10 inch boards, as the logs are not actually joined. John stated that is the way they did them when they moved log buildings. They sawed the corners off square and put 2 inch x 10 inch boards at 90 degree angles. That is what was done

- when the building was moved from down near where the [Matheson] dredge is now to the building's present location....
- 536 The building at site DDDD [IDT-160] is no longer there.... John did not remember what the building was that was formerly at that site.... Steve Posgate noted that there is a foundation with sill logs at the site....
- 573 Violet's [Violet Wadsworth] house was at site YYY [IDT-150].... That was a beautiful place, and it is gone [now].... It was torn down.... Dave Wintz tore it down and built a very nice workshop and carpenter shop out of it. It is next to his house over there back of the store now [Buildings D and D-1, IDT-121].... Violet built the house at YYY in the 1930s.... John could not recall Violet's last name.... Rolfe and Steve noted that the lumber from the roof and walls of DDDD [IDT-160] have been salvaged and that a photo borrowed from Rob Dahl taken in the late 1950s shows the building still standing at that time.... John could not recall what DDDD was before it was torn down....
- 678 [Stopped interview to change the tape].

Tape #6, Side A:

- 003 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....
- 010 Site ZZZZ [IDT-152]... was an old log cabin. There were some Russian fellas living there. Michael Teatoff and Harry Menzoff and Harry Scott. That is where they lived, not far from Stella's [Parker] place [Building BBBB, IDT-154]....
- 024 Site CCCC [IDT-153] is an old house that Amal "Paprika" Jensen had also. He had that for quite a while. They called him "Paprika". He was a Dane [from Denmark]. He worked on the river boats for years, and also on the dredge.... He had red hair. He lived there [Site CCCC] in the 1920s and 1930s....
- 037 Flossie's [Flossie Winters] Place was right across the river [north side of Otter Creek], which Rolfe identified as site YYY-1 [IDT-151].... John said that Flossie's place burned down long before 1976. It burned down when old Tootsie, Matty Crosby, was living in it. Her pimp set it on fire, with a smoking pipe or cigar that fell on the davenport that he slept on. His name was old Mike Burns.... The house burned down in the 1940s or early 1950s. After it burned down, Tootsie moved into that house that Mike and Josephine Demientieff lived in [W-1, IDT-092]. Tootsie lived there in the 1950s. John's sister, Olga, was married in Flat in 1947. The Miscovichs came over for the wedding from Poorman. And they had a big shindig in Tootsie's Place that evening [at YYY-1, IDT-151]. She cooked the big dinner. That would have been in 1947. In the

- 1920s and 1930s, the building was Flossie's Place. Flossie was down on the "line" and it [the building] was moved there [to the location of the present site].... It was moved from the "line" area just west of where the [Matheson] dredge is located now.
- 070 John Miscovich was a delivery boy in Flat when he was a kid, delivering groceries down a long wood sidewalk. It [the boardwalk] ran all the way down [the "line"], half a mile long and six feet wide.... There was just one and two... a very decent operation. The prostitutes stayed down there [on the "line"] where they didn't bother anybody.... They minded their own business. Some were [served as] sort of a mental, psychiatric ward for a lot of these guys around here. People accepted it. Nobody questioned it, except when Marie Matheson built that house up on the knoll there [Building II, IDT-102], everybody used to say they could almost feel her eyes on their backs [when they went down to the "line"]. "They had big wood piles. Gus Uotila was hauling wood, and he would pile this wood up eight feet high, and the wood pile would go from the area all the way up there, along the road, see. That damned house of hers was high enough that she could see over the wood piles [vicinity of DDDD, IDT-160]. In the summer time it was day light. In the winter time it wasn't so bad. But in summer time it was day light. But the wood piles were purposely put there [to conceal from Mrs. Matheson the men going back and forth from the "line"]. "Imagine, there were no willows anywhere [at that time]....," John stated. "If you went down on your hands and your knees, or your belly, you still could not hide.... No willows and no grass...."
- 105 The Ray Stock cabin is here [pointing to TTTT, IDT-161], and that's the little dog shed along side of it [YYYY, IDT-161]. And Ray added onto it [Building TTTT] on the back side....
- 107 This [Site DDDD, IDT-160] was Finn Annie's House. She had a big complex there. Another gal lived with her there.... Ray's [Stock] place [Building EEEE, IDT-159] is the first house around the bend of this road on the left side. These two roads join.... Ray just moved in a couple of years ago. It was vacant all these years. Since Joe Loranger left its been idle. And John did not have anybody in it.... Ray moved this building [from Site XXX, IDT-157] over to here [Building EEEE-2, IDT-158] and it is his shop and garage. The building used to belong to Ernie Norman, who had this complex here [Site XXX, IDT-157] and used it as a garage for his snow track machine.... Joe Loranger lived in the log cabin in the 1930s and 1940s and 1950s, after Joe Cummings left. Joe Cummings was in Flat from 1911 or 1912, and he had the cabin down here somewhere [location unclear] and moved it to where it is now.... That cabin [EEEE, IDT-159] is one of the earliest cabins. The logs in it are from one of the original log cabins of the Flat stampede. It was built in 1910. John was told that by many people. A fella had it across the way there. After Joe Cummings and before Joe Loranger, John Popovich had it. The fella worked for the Miscovich family. It was in

- its original location when he was living in it down by where the [Matheson] dredge is now.... Joe Cummings moved the building to its present location in the early 1930s....
- 158 Building EEEE-1 [IDT-158] is the dog barn. Inside, it had stalls for eight or nine dogs that Joe Cummings had.... It looks like a little house, but it was a dog barn. It has very low walls and has a gable roof.... It was a dog barn.... It was also moved with the log cabin. It is a frame building made out of lumber. Joe had it when he was down here [pointing to vicinity of the Matheson Dredge at Site A, IDT-118]. Ray Stock is now using it as a shed. Ray has some stuff stored in it, and John also has some stuff stored in it that came with the shed when he acquired it. There was some snow shoes. John has not been in the shed for several years. There was a lot of stuff there that was "antiquish." John just left the stuff in there after he bought the shed.... John has given Ray Stock the right to live there as long as he lives. Ray wanted to put an addition on the cabin, and John agreed with the understanding that when Ray leaves the scene the addition goes with the house.... Inside, Ray insulated the house and put wiring in and electricity. "He did a hell of a job," John said. "He's a nice fella.... Ray Stock bought all of the snow machines and four wheelers [that are around the buildings] at the Bethel junk yard.... Ray uses them for parts, and thought he might be able to rent them out. He has some good machines there...."
- 199 John did not remember when the building that was at Site XXX [IDT-157] was constructed. It was not built there. It was moved there from somewhere else. Ernie Norman, "Big Foot," acquired it there at that location. There was a fella living in it named Patty Marshall. He had it, but John did not know how Marshall acquired it.... That was in the late 1920s and early 1930s....
- 215 Ernie Norman, known as "Big Foot," had the buildings at HHHH and HHHH-1 [IDT-170], which are now owned by the preacher in Soldotna. That includes the wood shed out in back [HHHH-1]. Rolfe asked about the three buildings at site III [shown on the 1970s aerial photograph], and John said that he does not think those buildings are there now. There is a dump truck parked there now, but the other buildings are missing. There was a shed there, but he could not recall what other buildings or structures were located at site III....
- 235 The buildings at HHHH were not part of the Alaska Road Commission camp. Jess Blackwell built HHHH. He worked for Alex Matheson. Blackwell sold it to Fred Pierson, who was a wood cutter in Flat and worked also in the mines. Pierson sold it to Ernie Norman, and the preacher [Glen Johnson] bid it from the auction after Ernie's death.... Blackwell was in Flat during the era of Alex Matheson's dredge operations, in the late 1930s. Blackwell was in Flat three or four years. Fred Pierson was in Flat in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, and left Flat about 1964.... He worked for the Miscovichs cutting wood. He lived in Flat a long time....

- 267 Building GGGG [IDT-172], the black building, was a garage, storing a dump truck with a big tank on it and a little tractor for the Alaska Road Commission. It is covered on the outside with Celotex. It is pretty well shot up. The building across the road [FFFF, IDT-171] was a repair shop. It was a big garage that they repaired their trucks in. It had stalls inside for the trucks. And they had a place inside for the foreman, Harry Panter, to live. It is the building Bob Browne lives in when he comes to Flat. Harry Panter was the foreman of the [Alaska] Road Commission in Flat for many years during territorial days.... Bob was without a place to stay, so John told him that he did not see how the State [of Alaska] could do anything, they don't have it [the building] on the books. So John recommended Bob Browne just go in and set up housekeeping, which Browne did. John tried to negotiate a deal with the state so Mark Kepler could use them for his work as a maintenance man [for the State airfield], but nothing has ever come through on the paperwork.... John recommended that the black building [GGGG, IDT-172] be moved closer [to the airport] for Kepler to keep his grader in, as he has no place to keep his grader.... Kepler keeps the grader out in the open....
- 297 The two [Alaska] Road Commission buildings [IDT-171 and IDT-172] were built in the early 1930s. The Road Commission continued to occupy the buildings until the territory became a state. Mary Miscovich noted that the buildings were closed in 1959. Pete Bagoy was in Flat about 1959 [inventorying Alaska Road Commission property and equipment] when the State closed them. John noted that they closed the Road Commission about 1955, before statehood, because they had no money for the operation. Bill Williams was the last Alaska Road Commission employee stationed in Flat, and John thinks that was in 1951 or 1952. Bill Williams worked for the Miscovichs on their dredge in 1958, 1959 or 1960. The buildings were the Alaska Road Commission headquarters until Alaska became a state, and then they were abandoned. In the last couple of years of the territorial period, Flat did not get any money for roads and airport maintenance. John Stevens was doing the field work himself with his own caterpillar.... There was no one stationed at the Road Commission buildings [those last few years of the territorial era]. They had no foreman. The Road Commission did that with a lot of places because it was so short of money....
- 335 Working for the [Alaska] Road Commission was a good job to have. If one got a job with the Road Commission, one was not pushed. Everybody working for the [mining] camps were working 10 or 12 hours a day. Road Commission employees worked eight hours. They got paid for going and coming to work, and they had Sundays off, which is something that the miners just envied. On top of that, the Road Commission people worked at their own pace, unlike at the mines. There were a lot of fellas that worked every day on the dump trucks--they had three of them--and a number two shovel. And they would go to the gravel pit, and guys would be waiting for them there. Like up at the pit, going to Iditarod, the big gravel pit where the old airfield was, so that was a haul for a couple of miles. They would load up and then they would sit and wait until the

- truck came back. They had three trucks but they didn't just follow each other. The workers would load a truck and then sit down and wait [for the next one].... "No one had a whip on them, so some of the fellas were leaning on their shovels pretty heavy." Tony Gularte did that for quite a few years. He worked for the [Alaska] Road Commission, loading trucks with a number two shovel.... Guys who worked for the government, worked for \$6 per day for eight hours work. The Road Commission had their own camp. They set it up at the three mile post and they also had one at the five mile post [of the Flat-Iditarod Road, IDT-040]. They had a cook and their tents, and had everything set up just like a regular camp. They had a nice camp at Cottonwood, at Three Mile. There are some remnants of tent frames there even now. "Just as you make the turn, they were on the opposite side of the road, on the right side of the road," John said. "They were there for years.... for the summer season."
- 378 The structure on the road near the dump going out of Flat was a warm storage building constructed in the hillside [Building IIII-1, IDT-173]. It has timbers out in front, and timbers that have caved in. That was a warm storage for years.... Manuel Gularte put it in when he had the store. Later on, Donnelley and Sheppard took it over. They had a beautiful winter storage there for their produce. They kept it at a temperature with gas lanterns when it got cold enough. It was a beautiful root cellar.... Potatoes and onions. It was built in the very early stages of Flat, almost in the beginning.... it was built real early. Donnelley and Sheppard took it over and operated it until refrigeration came in. When Donnelley and Sheppard built the new store [Building H, IDT-077], on that side that the bank is on, on the back end, that was their winter storage. Out at the log cabin winter storage.....
- 412 Eggs came to Flat by boat, coming in up the [Iditarod] river in the fall. "They would keep those eggs until spring. They got pretty raunchy by spring. We had scrambled eggs every day...."
- 426 Steve Posgate noted that the interviewers still have questions about Building BBBB [IDT-154] and several buildings across the street from the Stella Parker place, but will try to do that at another time. It is 10:45 PM. ...
- 441 [Closing comments, as the session ends....]
- 442 [End of interview session].

JOHN MISCOVICH INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED ON AUGUST 5, 1993

This interview was conducted with John Miscovich on August 5, 1993, at his mining camp near Otter Creek, two miles east of Flat, Alaska. The interview session on August 5, was conducted by historians Rolfe Buzzell and Steve Posgate, and student intern Darrell Lewis, all from the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Also present was Mary Miscovich, John's wife. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Iditarod and historic buildings in that community. This is the fifth of six interviews with Mr. Miscovich on Flat, Iditarod, and various mining camps in the Flat vicinity. The following is a summary of his comments, unless quotation marks are used.

Tape #6, Side A:

- 449 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell... The purpose of this interview is to gather information about historic buildings in Iditarod....
- 470 According to John Miscovich, the Northern Commercial Company Store Building [Building A, IDT-174] was built in the spring and summer of 1910, according to John's father. Bonnie Richmond Sr, was head of the Northern Commercial Company empire in Alaska and the Yukon territories. The Northern Commercial Company operated in Iditarod for several years until Sam Applebaum opened up a store. Applebaum expanded what he opened up into a much larger store, then he actually forced the Northern Commercial Company to close and sell out... They could see that there was no way they could compete with Sam. Rather than run a loosing enterprise, they sold out to Sam, and [Sam sold] later to Donnelley and Sheppard.... The Northern Commercial Company sold out to Applebaum in the late 1910s, somewhere about 1918, 1919 or 1920. John was not born until 1918....
- 502 Lee Pence was in there [Iditarod]. They had the bank in Iditarod, and Lee Pence was the banker. Applebaum had the store. Then it went from Applebaum to Donnelley and Sheppard. John Miscovich is not sure of how the business transaction took place. Donnelley and Sheppard were running the store [at Building A, IDT-174] as early as John was able to remember it. They had a fella, Jim Finegan, who was the store keeper there for them for years. Two things happened. Iditarod began to fizzle out, of course. It was not as active as when they built the store. The stores in Flat began to take over in the very early 1920s, when Manuel Gulate and Jim Fullerton came in. Then Donnelley and Sheppard took over the Jim Fullerton [store] operation [in Flat]. At the

- time, John Fullerton and Richard Fullerton were very small boys. It was in the early 1920s.
- 543 The Northern Commercial Company store was abandoned when Harry Donnelley sold out to John Stevens, and John Stevens did not see fit to run it. There was nobody in Iditarod [by that time]. So Stevens moved out everything that he could. There were boats coming up the Iditarod River that took a lot of stuff out by barge from the store. People in float planes were coming in and taking stuff out of the store. It was just a free-for-all for years. John sold a lot of stuff to fellas named Guthery and Bailey in Fairbanks who started a bar in Alaskaland. They moved it out by truck and boxcar into Fairbanks. Counters, cash registers, safes, [and] all the horse paraphernalia.
- 574 For years, the upstairs of the building was just a stopover place for people going through Iditarod, hunting or coming to Iditarod. There were a couple of rooms upstairs that they used. It was abandoned in the early 1950s. It was impossible to do anything with it out there. John doesn't remember when Senator [Mike] Gravel wanted to put a bill through Congress to make it a historic site.... Gravel was a Senator in the middle 1960s.
- 598 That was about the same time that they moved the printing presses out of Iditarod to Anchorage from the paper they had been publishing in Iditarod. John Stevens had [helped sponsor] an exercise here with the National Guard with a helicopter. They came in during the spring with a helicopter and commissioned him as an official army reservist. They made several trips back and forth to Iditarod. One of those was moving that printing press out. There was quite a bit of publicity about that. Then when they had the fire in Anchorage, the printing press burned up. It was in the fire, and badly damaged. So it was in the 1960s.
- 616 The Flemings were out there then. They lived over across on the island there in this house [WW, IDT-196], which used to be the Day House. It used to be a two story building. It was a building that was off the ground by one story. Flemings [not clear which one, Jimmy or Shawn] was over there [in Iditarod] in the early 1970s. He lived there for two or three years, then moved out to Flat and abandoned it [the cabin in Iditarod]. Then Danny Crammer bought the log cabin just across the slough there that is next to the ways.... The dog mushers use it. That is Crammer's cabin.
- 650 The Northern Commercial Company store [Building B, IDT-174] was abandoned some time in the 1960s, because John Miscovich was running the [Riley] Dredge when it was abandoned.... Donnelley stored stuff in the NCC Store Building until World War II. It had the warm storage there [Building B, IDT-175] along side the NCC store building. The big lean-to, right next to the store building. It is torn down now.... The foundation is probably left there.... It was a big addition.... It opened right into the store.... The

warm storage [building] was used to store eggs and potatoes, anything that had to be kept from freezing. It was a well insulated [End of tape]

688 [End of Side A].

Tape #6, Side B:

001 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, continuing from Side A....

007 The back end of the NCC store [Building A, IDT-174] has a stairwell in the back, with living quarters upstairs.... Rolfe asked about the building next door, with the shed roof and false front. John replied that that was the warm storage part of the NCC store [Building B, IDT-175]. That was the warm storage part of the store [complex].... The front of the [main] store [Building A, IDT-174] had big windows and living quarters upstairs. Inside the main store building, Charlie Lovett was living. He had a kitchen... in the back end. And there was a stairwell that went up [in the back of the building]. The whole store upstairs was living quarters. Then there was a warehouse [Building C, IDT-176] next to it... that is still standing. It was a hay and oats warehouse....

031 There was a stairwell that went up on the outside that went into the building [Building A, IDT-175].... John was not familiar with the stairwell fronting the main street between Building A and Building B. He doubted that it was used in later years.... Rolfe asked about Building B-1, where there is only a floor left [between Buildings B and C].... They had horse shoes and a lot of heavy parts in there, John said. That was not the warm storage part [of the store complex]. It was a well built building because the horseshoes were not light. There were barrels of the horseshoes, harnesses and what not.... The only entrance to the main NCC store that John recalls is the main entrance. When one went inside, then there was a stairwell inside in the back end. There was a stairway in the back, but the section of the warm storage building has been torn down.... There was a great big door [on the main street] to the warm storage building [Building B, IDT-175]....

062 Rolfe asked about the open area behind the main NCC store building, where there once was a warehouse.... That must have been an extension of the main building. John replied that he has not been to Iditarod in many years. A lot of stuff was moved out of there. Some of it was moved to Flat. Whether [John] Stevens moved some of it. [Richard] Wilmarth moved some of it. Mark Kepler got some of it.... It was abandoned. After John Stevens became ill--he had cancer--the store buildings went to the Dahl family... through the mother [Bertha Stevens] over to the family. There was no way you could lease it. People came up from Holikachuk, Shageluk and Holy Cross.... There was a lot of traffic coming into Iditarod [by boat] that nobody knew

- anything about, just helping themselves. It was a beautiful place for float planes.... They could land in the Iditarod River and taxi up the river when the water was high...
- 094 John did not know what Building C [IDT-176], which had sawdust insulation in the walls, was used for. The Warm Storage Building [Building B, IDT-175] had a big door directly into the main store. They would cart their crates into the store from the warm storage building through that door. It was not practical to have a warm storage separated from the store, because everything they were selling in the store had to be kept under wraps. When Sam Applebaum himself lived in Iditarod again, after 1929--he came back there in about 1931 or 1932 or 1933--he went flat broke in Chicago after making a million here [in Iditarod] in the beginning--he went out there and lived in Iditarod as a watchman for Harry Donnelley in the 1930s. Applebaum was there for two or three years. Then Harry Donnelley brought Applebaum out to Flat to be the manager of the Flat store. He was manager and purchasing agent of the Donnelley and Sheppard Store in Flat [Building H, IDT-077]. Applebaum gradually built himself up another million dollars in Flat.
- 110 John Miscovich was in the Warm Storage Building [Building B, IDT-175] many times, even when he was young, when they would bring in the stuff that would freeze. They had sleds and these big horse blankets. They would put the eggs and stuff in the sleds and wrap them up, then come out from Iditarod on sleds to the store in Flat. When the trucks came to Flat, the Warm Storage Building [in Iditarod] lost it's usefulness. They had everything in the new store [in Flat]. Up until the new store in Flat [Building H, IDT-077], the Warm Storage Building [Building B, IDT-175] was a very important in Iditarod. When the last boat would come into the landing dock at Iditarod, the cable tram that went back and forth was used to unload the boat. John does not know if there are any remnants left of the cable tram at Iditarod. In the early years, everyone coming to Iditarod could get a job stevedoring when the boats came in. Unloading barges with handcarts, taking it up the side walks, which came right up and across the street to the Northern Commercial Company....
- 128 There were several docks [in Iditarod]. There was a big warehouse on the dock here [pointing to river front], and three or four warehouses here [pointing again to river front area] where the boats would dock right up to them....
- 131 This ["Casket"] Warehouse [Building I, IDT-183] was a funeral parlor in Iditarod. There was one [a warehouse] just as you came into town that had a big red sheet iron roof and sides. [John] Stevens later stored a bunch of old barrels with old oil and grease in it there. Steve Posgate noted that is the building where there are leaking barrels of grease and loose dynamite laying on the floor of the building.... It was a big warehouse....

- 140 Steve asked John about winching equipment near Building I. Was that equipment used to dock boats as well? John replied yes. When Ira Woods lived in Iditarod, he and his wife [Josephine] had a roadhouse there. They put their boats up in Iditarod over on this side [the east side of the river]. They had a couple of boats. The "Nancy Bell" and "Sea Wolf"....
- 152 Rolfe asked about the Bank Vault [Building D-1, IDT-177]. John noted that it is right along side the wood board walk.... The bank building sat atop the large foundation posts that are still present around three sides of the bank vault. The bank was a big building. It was also an assay office. It had a very large facility there for melting gold and storing gold. All of the gold went through that bank. The vault has not been moved. It just settled where it is. It was higher up, but it has settled right into the ground. The bank was built in 1910, because John's dad [Peter Miscovich] had an account there.... Maybe the bank papers are all gone now. John has a bunch of the bank papers over in his office [at the Riley/Otter/Miscovich Camp]. They had all of the accounts that they had in Flat over at the bank in Iditarod....
- 168 Clyde Baker operated the bank in Iditarod. The bank was heavily involved in the Riley Investment Company that built the [Riley] dredge [IDT-220] that John Miscovich has. The J. E. Riley Investment Company owed the bank about \$100,000 when George Riley got shot.... The Miners and Merchants Bank was very active. Hundreds of thousands of dollars in gold going out of here, and there was no bank in Flat or Discovery. It was the only bank in the area.... There was no bank in Flat until they closed the bank in Iditarod and Harry Donnelley moved it to Flat. Lee Pence was running the bank. He was a school teacher that came to Flat. Then Donnelley hired him to run the bank in Iditarod. When Pence left to go to California, Donnelley moved the bank to Flat.... in the 1930s. Donnelley built that bank section in his store [Building H, IDT-077]... in 1932.... They moved the cages out and the big safe over to Flat....
- 193 The Iditarod bank building was torn down There was a fella in Iditarod that lived there for years. His name was Cap Lamont. He was the only individual living in Iditarod for a long, long time except Charlie Marcell. Lumber was needed in Flat, and Cap Lamont was tearing a lot of the buildings down that were left standing in Iditarod. Lamont was living in Iditarod until just before the war, in the 1930s.... The [Iditarod] bank has been gone for a long while....
- 211 John recalled that the Iditarod bank was probably a one story building.... Peter Bagoy in Anchorage would know how tall the bank building was.... Iditarod as a town was practically on its way out when John Miscovich was born.
- 223 The small frame building [Building E, IDT-179] next to the bank vault was Cap Lamont's place. He lived in Iditarod from 1910 until the late 1930s. He became ill, and

- they had to take him out of Iditarod. John does not recall where Cap died. Cap was in Iditarod for years.
- 233 The small building [Building D-2, IDT-178] within the bank foundation and next to the bank vault was not built by Cap Lamont. After Lamont died, a full blooded-Indian named Charlie Marcell was trapping down below Iditarod. Marcell would use that place.... The building behind the bank [Building E, IDT-179] that had a kitchen and back bedroom ... was Cap Lamont's place. He had a very nice place. John was not familiar with the shed [Building D-2, IDT-178] located a few feet from the vault....
- 252 Joe Mitchell was in Iditarod tending the [NCC] Warm Storage Warehouse [Building B, IDT-175] for Harry Donnelley. He lived there [in Building E, IDT-179] long after Cap Lamont died.... Cap Lamont lived there first, then Charlie Marcell, then Joe Mitchell. Joe Mitchell only lived there a couple of years before he moved to Flat. Joe became a resident of Flat.
- 265 The building popularly called the Jewelry Store [Building F, IDT-180] was a printing press office. Sam Applebaum had a false front on his place [Building G, IDT-181].... There was jeweler in Iditarod who was called "Whiskey Kris." Later on he moved to Fairbanks. He was in Fairbanks when John went to Fairbanks in 1931. He was a partner to Browne in Fairbanks, and they had a jewelry store on First Avenue right off Cushman Street. That would be the Jewelry Store [Building F, IDT-180] that Whiskey Kris had.... That store was built in the early years of Iditarod.
- 283 Ike Bayles, from Anchorage, was in Iditarod, and he had a clothing store. [A. A.] Shonbeck, who was a prominent businessman in Anchorage, was also in Iditarod. He was connected up with the old Northern Commercial Store at one time after they went out of business.... A. A. Shonbeck drowned in Ophir with John Beaton in a pickup truck accident. Shonbeck was a prominent Anchorage businessman on Fourth Avenue.... John does not remember Whiskey Kris' last name. John was too young to remember Iditarod. Whiskey Kris went to Fairbanks from Iditarod. John's dad knew him very well.
- 316 Applebaum's store building [Building G, IDT-181] used to have a false front. On top of the false front was written "Sam Applebaum Store." It was a grocery and clothing store. That was when he first started out. He started the movement that pushed the N.C.C out.... Applebaum's store dated from 1910. The boats were frozen in the river down a ways from Iditarod. Sam Applebaum had a great big dog and sled. The N.C. C.'s supplies were frozen in on river. The N.C.C. gave Sam permission to go down and unload the supplies from the barge, and he did. There was hay and oats, sugar, etc. He got enough stuff off that boat to get himself started in business. And that is what started

Sam Applebaum [in the store business]. Sam was a great big guy. He was a Polish Jew immigrant....

341 Applebaum's store [Building G, IDT-181] was used until Sam came over to Flat in about the 1920s. There were still people in Iditarod yet. He used the building until the 1920s.

350 Sam got involved and kept his foot in the door, when the Riley Dredge [IDT-220] needed to have the new Enterprise engine in 1924, Sam was well healed in Iditarod. Sam loaned the J. E. Riley Investment Company \$8,000 to buy that engine. Harry Donnelley was the administrator of the Riley Investment Company at the time. That gave Applebaum a hold on the dredge, and when the estate of Riley was settled, and heirs of Riley wanted to get out of the business, the dredge was put up for auction in Flat down at the old Commissioner's house. The Bank had \$50,000 in cash, the dredge, the ground, all the assets, and the machine shop. Sam Applebaum came in and bid it. So Applebaum got the dredge and everything that the Riley Investment Company had. Applebaum ran the dredge for a couple of years after the estate was closed out. Applebaum got tired of it. John Ogriz, who was winching on the dredge, and Harry Steen, who was dredge master for Alex Matheson, bought Sam Applebaum out. When Harry Steen died, Arnold Kobler, who was the chief engineer, bought Steen's interest. Ogriz and Kobler ran Otter Dredging Company. Then Miscovich Brothers bought John Ogriz and Arnold Kobler out in 1959.... The Miscovichs resented the sale of Riley Investment Company, because the estate sale was pulled off without anyone else knowing what was going on. It was an in-house deal between Harry Donnelley and the Riley heirs and Sam Applebaum. There was no one there at the auction to bid on the dredge because the auction was not made public. John's dad, Peter Miscovich was very riled up over it, as he would have bid on it.... The cash that went with the auction was hard to believe.... It was a very sweet deal.

402 There is a very long historical diary [report] written by the attorney who was sent to Flat from Seattle, who came up by boat at that time, to investigate Harry Donnelley's handling of the Riley Investment Company estate. The attorney spent all summer [in 1923] in Flat. The diary, which John has at his home in Orange [California], is a very interesting document. The diary tells a lot about Flat. John will make a copy and send it to Rolfe. It has great detail....

420 Building I [IDT-183] was a warehouse for storing caskets. There were a whole bunch of caskets in it. There was also cases of gasoline and kerosene, which came in by the hundreds of cases. There were some pretty nice caskets there.... The grease and oil was shipped into Iditarod by Standard Oil for Caterpillar tractors, and the grease did not prove very successful. So John [Stevens] got the whole works. It has to be cleaned up.... It has been sitting there since the 1940s, after the war.... There was a shed roof on the addition on the north side of the building. It was a lean-to, and that is the part that

- had the boxes of cans of gasoline and kerosene.... It was enclosed. There was hay in there too. An awful lot of hay was shipped into Iditarod. They had warehouses full of hay. They had to ship the hay in the fall and keep it for the horse teams in the winter. They shipped a lot of hay and oats....
- 469 The whole waterfront [on the east side of the Iditarod River] had boats in front of the warehouses. That was one big line of warehouses on pilings and sidewalks that were connected up, and skips that went down to the boats.... They were all warehouse [along the waterfront]. They were big, long warehouses.... It opened up on the end. The big warehouse that Donnelley used had a big front on it, and there was a skipway from the boat up into the warehouse. They did not loose any space in the warehouse by having the entrance on the outside of the gables in front.... They came in [from the water side] and went around the building to the front of the building. They had floating skips, as the water [level] went up and down. Spring of the year the boats were right up level with the door of the warehouses.... The river level might fluctuate 20 feet. It never flooded the warehouses out. When the river came through the town during the spring of the year, the island [west bank of Iditarod] would flood. That is why Day put his skips over there. They went right down to the edge of the water. He brought his boats right up along side of them, greased the skids, and slid them up sideways....
- 525 Rolfe asked when the Iditarod River changed course creating an oxbow lake. John replied that it was about 1931 or 1932 that the river got cut off from Iditarod.... Day Navigation put in a Bagley scraper and had all kinds of ideas to keep to keep the mud from filling in on the end.... Finally the beavers blocked it off. In the low water, the willows start growing, and it became a slough.... [Glen] Day continued to keep the waterway open all the way to Iditarod until World War II. Then the war came along shutting down mining. And there was no reason to have boats on the Iditarod River anymore. So Day took his boats off the Iditarod and went over to the Kuskokwim River. The "Danico # 1" is still on the Kuskokwim River. Day had seven boats, Danico #1-7. Each one smaller than the other. As the water got lower, Day would lighter. Dikeman was the first point where they would stop off when the water got low. And they would lighter from Dikeman up to Iditarod. When they had the mail contract, before the use of airplanes, there were times when they would come up river with just an outboard motor on a small boat to bring the mail. The river would be that low.
- 585 After the river pinched off the oxbow lake at Iditarod, a new landing for boats was created on the Iditarod River a short distance from where the river made the turn. Before the road that was built that is now graveled, it was one hell of a road, but that is where they had to go to get the freight. Through the mud, right down to the landing. Its just called the "landing." Day was hauling barrel oil into Flat, and he had a great big storage area for barrel oil [just to the northeast of the N.C.C. store]. And that's what he put that cable tramway in for. Then he put a big conveyor belt to unload barrels, that

- had wheels on it. John has the wheels under his crusher at his [the Riley/Otter/Miscovich] camp. Day would pull the conveyor out to the barge in the water. The conveyor had large flat iron wheels. And the fellas on the barge would roll the barrels, the conveyor would pick them up. The conveyor had cleats so the barrels could not roll back. When the barrels got to the end of the conveyor, they would roll off. Day had a couple of Natives rolling the barrels and standing them up out there on the mud. Then John would go there and haul the barrels to Flat by truck. All the heavy machinery that came on the Iditarod River, Day would put the barges cross ways, and they built a ramp between the bank of the river and the barge. They would then "walk everything off" the steel barges. It was much more convenient.... They had a heck of time getting a road appropriation so the Alaska Road Commission could gravel it and make a good highway down there.... The road was put in the early 1930s....
- 638 Day gave up fighting to keep the river/slough open to Iditarod before the war. He took his big boat up to Nenana, did his repair work up there, then loaded up his barge in the spring up there. Day used to do that, when he first started, with the big cold storage, which is in Flat now [inside Building J, IDT-078]. It was on a barge. Day would load it up with meat and bring it into Iditarod and pull it off. He would bring frozen meat to Iditarod that way.... The cold storage is now covered over with a shed [Building J, IDT-078]. Day did not have the shed on the barge. The shed was built to keep the sun off the cold storage unit....
- 672 Day Navigation [Building XX, IDT-194] was the machine shop for Day's operations. It was at the head of the ways. It was a big machine shop.... It is up on pilings.... Day built that machine shop little by little. That dates back to...
- 685 [End of tape, side B]

Tape #7, Side A:

- 002 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Tape 6....
- 007 Building XX [IDT-194] was the Day Navigation building. Rolfe asked where Day had his headquarters in Iditarod. John replied that Day had his house across the river, but it has been moved to Flat. The house was near the casket warehouse [Building I, IDT-183] and Applebaum's Store [Building G, IDT-181]. The house was moved to Flat. Day's son, Clyde, also had a house there.... They had their headquarters in Seattle in the winter for a while. He was buying a lot of equipment for his boating operation, so he spent a lot of time in Seattle. They did not anticipate the war and they put a tremendous investment into Iditarod believing that the mines in Flat were going to continue operating and there would be no interruption. If he had known what [Order]

- L-208 did, he would never have made such an investment. "He said that many times." He had an airplane and learned to fly. He almost killed himself going through Rainy Pass. He was missing for several weeks. He had a small pontoon plane. He made a sled out of the pontoon and made his way back to McGrath. He was a tough little guy. He only weighed about 140 pounds at the most....
- 026 At a time when Iditarod was in decline, Day was building up because of the freight. When Alex Matheson and Harry Donnelley rebuilt their dredges, there was a lot of stuff shipped up the river. There were a number of draglines shipped in. Willow Creek was booming. Pete Jensen put in a big dragline there. And there was anticipation that Flat was going to continue for many years as an active mining camp.... There were no airplanes in the 1930s that could haul that kind of heavy freight. The best they had were the Fairchild, the Balanca, and the old Stinson... There weren't any C-130s or DC-6s. Donnelley and Matheson were on the outs for some reason. So Matheson said to hell with Day Navigation. He began shipping his freight up the Kuskokwim to Crooked Creek and then overland by three freight sleds pulled by a D8 cat. That cut into Day's business a whole lot. Alvin Agoff started doing the same thing, because it's closer to Prince Creek than it was to go all the way to Iditarod. Prince Creek was closer to Crooked Creek. So Day lost that account. There was a B-18 that started hauling oil from McGrath just after the war. It was hauling 1,500 gallons. Day had a tremendous overhead and there was not enough freight business to keep all the boats moving....
- 059 The boats on the west side of Iditarod [Site YY and Site ZZ, IDT-193] are not Day's boats.... Those boats are early history boats. None of those boats belonged to Day. Everything that Day had was moved out over to the Kuskokwim [River].... Those boats are pre-1930. [George] Turner and Ira Woods were the only other freight haulers on the Iditarod River. There was nobody else. "It had to be connected up with Ira Woods." There were other boats before. [One of the boats is called the "Prairie Bell"] John recalled boats called the "Nancy Bell" and the "Sea Wolf." They were stern-wheelers. [The "Prairie Bell" is a stern-wheeler].... Ira Woods was the only one. They had to be before Day. Ira Woods did not use the ways that Day had. Day and Donnelley bought out and took over Ira Woods' operation. When the stores were sold to Donnelley, there was no reason for Woods to keep boats on the river.... The stern-wheelers are old timers. The "Sea Wolf" was a stern-wheeler, and also the government boats on the Yukon River were stern-wheelers....
- 095 [Building WW, IDT-196] is Dan Crammer's cabin.... Rolfe noted that there are several small sheds in the area and a raised platform that was used by Mark and Sherry Kepler for their "Iditadog" stand during the 1992 Iditarod Dog Sled Race.
- 101 Rolfe noted that to the west of Building WW are a series of subterranean buildings, Sites UU and VV. All that are left of each of them is a large depression and a covered

- entry that faces the river. One of them has an entry that was built with logs and was covered.... John thought that these features may have been root cellars.... Rolfe noted that they had entry ways that went right down to the water level. If the river came up they would have easily flooded. John was never over there to see what they were.... Rolfe added that one of them was timbered and was full of garbage.... John did not know what they were used for. He never had occasion to visit them.
- 126 Rolfe asked about several cabin foundations located west of Sites UU and VV. John recalled that there were several people living in that area in the early years. There were several trappers that would go over there and trap. John does not know anything about those buildings. It was before his time....
- 131 Rolfe asked about Site PP [IDT-184] which is a large boiler. There was a big saw mill in that area and John believes that the boiler may have been used there. The saw mill was right near the river's edge. They brought the logs in and brought them right up to the saw mill from the river.... The boiler is likely associated with the sawmill....
- 143 Site QQ [IDT-185] is a steam tractor. The steam tractor was not a manufactured product. "It was an idea that apparently a group of steam engineers got together and concocted." The Guggenheims needed something better than horses to haul wood from the Iditarod River where they had a great big log boom. The wood was floated down the Iditarod River and there they would put it out on the bank. From there it was hauled to the power plant in Flat and also up Flat Creek. The steam tractor was built to haul 100 cords of four foot wood. They built an ice road from the Iditarod River to Flat.... They had a skating rink for a road. It was all packed down. It was smooth as ice.... The tractor was used during the winter. A man by the name of Eric Hard from Ophir bought it. He is now long dead and gone. Now a lawyer in Anchorage owns it. His name is [Keith] Christenson. He bought it and they were going to ship it out of Iditarod. Eric Hard bought a lot of stuff from the old Guggenheim Dredge. There is an old big ladder right back of this building [Building A, IDT-202 at the Riley/Otter/ Miscovich Camp]. It is along the bank. John used to cut steel plate off of it for repair. And there are a lot of other big superstructure parts there from the old six foot dredge. Both the parts from the dredge and the old tractor are still there [Site QQ, IDT-185].
- 171 Christenson wanted to contract with John to move the steam tractor to Flat but it was too big of a job. Christenson dug it all out, cut the willows and dug all the mud from around the tracks.... Christenson wanted John to put it on skids and take it to Flat so Christenson could put it on a C-130 and take it to Anchorage. Christenson was going to put it in his museum. John did not want to get involved. The tractor was an ingenious wood mover.... It was in operation in the late 1910s, before John was born.... It was abandoned and has been sitting there since the Guggenheims left....

- 187 Rolfe asked about Site H, the ruins of a building on the tundra east of Applebaum's store... John responded that the Iditarod-Flat Tram terminated in the area of [Site H, IDT-182]. There were a bunch of warehouses there, and big scales. There were warehouses on both sides of the road.... The tramway ran on the west side of the road that runs from Flat into Iditarod and terminated in the area of [Site H]. The tram did not go through the town of Iditarod.... The tram terminated across the road from [southwest of] Applebaum's Store [Site G, IDT-181]....
- 227 John said that [Site Z, IDT-186] could have been the printing building, but acknowledges that all of that happened before he was born. He has never been there. John was not there when they moved the printing presses out. There were three different papers published in Iditarod.... John has never been at that particular site....
- 236 Rolfe inquired about Site P [IDT-188] which was Tootsie's Place.... John did not remember it as a two story building. One part of it was two stories. But the part that had the lean-to on the right side was one story.... The building was probably built in 1910 or 1911, because Tootsie came to Iditarod in 1910.... Tootsie [Matty Crosby] was in Iditarod until she moved to Flat in the late 1920s. She was sent to jail in Fairbanks in 1925 for bootlegging. She spent six months in jail. "She came back to Iditarod the only colored woman in Alaska...." She moved to Flat in the late 1920s or early 1930s. She lived in a place near Finn Annie's Place [Building DDDD, IDT-160], that Georgia Hagen had, on the north side of Otter Creek. After Flossie left Flat, Tootsie bought Flossie's place [Building YYY-1, IDT-151]. It burned down... and she moved into another building for a while, then she moved into the [Gus Uotila] house [Building W-1, IDT-092] that Don Harris and Steve Welles bought. It was in the late 1920s that she moved out of Iditarod.... Her place in Iditarod [Building P, IDT-188] was not used after that. It was abandoned.
- 293 Rolfe asked if Tootsie had other prostitutes working for her in Iditarod. John was never there, but he knows from "reliable sources that she had a couple or three scrubbers there...." John does not know about other prostitutes in Iditarod because that was before his time. From what John heard there were a dozen prostitutes in Iditarod. "They had a line in Iditarod just like they had in Flat." Peter Bagoy would be more knowledgeable about that time period than John because Peter lived over there.... In all probability, "the line" in Iditarod was probably located not far from Tootsie's Place. That is usually the way they operated. In Flat, the prostitutes were way to the west of Flat, below where the dredge is now....
- 315 Tootsie wrote all about her place in Iditarod in her [unpublished] diary, *Everybody Knows Tootsie*. John did not know where the diary is now. John read part of it once.... John said Tootsie's Place was probably a roadhouse when Tootsie got it. One of the early roadhouses in Iditarod when the stampede first started. The building looks like

- that. She was making booze there and had a still. The place was kind of out of the way. That is how all of the bootleggers operated. They were kind of discreet.... Bootleggers and prostitutes operated on a cash basis. Money was not a problem for someone like Tootsie. Besides prostitution she was into bootlegging. She had a reputation for making the best whiskey in the whole area. "When she was young she was a very attractive colored lady." She came in from Dawson. John remembers fellas that worked for the Miscovich family in later years. They all worked up on [the] Discovery [claim] and those on the night shift would take off in the morning and walk over to Iditarod and come back ready for another shift.... "Tootsie never did represent herself as a prostitute. She never talked about it. She was very polite." One of the things that John always respected about Tootsie was that she never wanted to let kids know what was going on in the area where she was. She made sure that they did not come around or stick around. "She was a very decent prostitute...."
- 358 Tootsie was not ostracized like other prostitutes, but she was a loner. She had a couple of pimps that lived with her for years. Mike Burns was one of them that lived with her. He froze his feet early in his experience in Flat working in the mines or cutting wood. He lived with her there taking care of her wood and water. He was the one that burned her place down, because he smoked a pipe. He was laying in her place, the beautiful place that Flossie had, and the pipe fell off him and started the couch on fire. Anyway, it burned the place down in the winter time. It was a wonder they both did not get burned. They lost everything. Patty Marshall was another one of them hanging around. And she had another fella by the name of Harry Panter. That was probably the reason she moved out to Flat. He was down there in Iditarod. He was appointed the Alaska Road Commission foreman in Flat and he built that place that is down there across the river [Otter Creek] and below the bridge [Building FFFF, IDT-171], the territorial road commission. So he moved to Flat, and she moved too in the early 1930s....
- 381 She opened up a restaurant, called "Everybody Knows Tootsie," after World War II. She would feed a lot of the miners in the fall and sometimes airplanes would get stuck and she would feed them. There was no place to eat except at Henry Durand's restaurant where he boarded men, which was only open for three meals a day. You could not get a sandwich or anything in between meals. So Tootsie ran a nice sandwich place. When John's sister got married, they had Tootsie prepare "a great big splash dinner" for twenty people for his sister's wedding at Tootsie's restaurant. She did one heck of a job, and did it all on her own. Tootsie sold drinks for a dollar each. It did not take long to pile up the dough. And she had mining claims down on Bear Creek, near Nyac. She spent thousands of dollars doing assessment work on her claims. A lot of people tried to get her claims away from her, including Harry Brink.... She kept her assessment work up every year. She took a couple or three men down there.... Somehow a hole was shot in the bottom of their boat one time when she had a couple

of men down there working and they almost drowned. That was in the story she wrote entitled Everybody Knows Tootsie.

- 413 "There were a lot of people gunning for her," John said.... because of the mining claims. That is where Charlie Awe, Jr. is mining now and he is doing real good. She really had something down on Bear Creek, but she never saw any of the money from her claims. She died in the Pioneer Home in Fairbanks.... Harry Brink and another guy staked claims when she had to drop the claims. Until the price of gold went up, there was not much use in keeping claims.... She never had kids. It is not clear where she got the name Matty Crosby. She never had a husband in Flat but she may have had one in Dawson, where she came from. She wrote in her diary that her name was Matty Crosby. She went by the name Mrs. Crosby. "Tootsie" is all John and locals every called her....
- 441 Tootsie ran the sandwich shop out of Flossie's Place [Site YYYY-1, IDT-151] before it burned down and then she had a place across from the school [Building X, IDT-093]. She had a sandwich and a dinner place. In the winter when everything was shut down in Flat, there was no place to eat. They would be playing poker and blackjack at the two places, Lawrence's bar and Andy Miscovich's bar, one could always get something at Tootsie's in the 1930s.... The celebrity part comes from the title of her book, Everybody Knows Tootsie. As Tootsie grew older, she outgrew the prostitute image and she became just a real old pioneer lady in Flat, selling bootleg booze. She would get the booze from John Stevens, who had a liquor store in Flat, and he was helping her get wood when she was living in the cabin across from the school. Finally it came to the point where Stevens could not see keeping her in Flat any longer. Stevens gave up the liquor store. So John Stevens made it a point to get her out of Flat. She went to the Pioneer Home in Sitka and she didn't like it there because there was not anybody there that she knew. So they transferred her to Fairbanks, where she eventually died. That is where John saw her last....
- 477 Rolfe asked about Building S [IDT-190] and Site V [IDT-191] in Iditarod... John did not recall what those were.... There were hundreds of buildings over there. The last time John was in Iditarod was when the Arctic Brotherhood had a big hall in Iditarod. It was called the "A.B. Hall" and it was across from the bank [Building D-1, IDT-177]. They had a big dance and the teamsters took people over on horse sled and by dog mushers. They tore the building down right after that. John was a very small boy at the time. It was in about 1920. There is a picture in John's slide collection of a horse drawn sled leaving Flat on the way to that dance.... According to John's dad, the population of Iditarod never got over 5,000. People coming and going....
- 522 Iditarod was an incorporated city.... "They sold lots just like any city...." They had records and stuff.... When Senator Gravel decided to make it a historical site, John does

- not know whatever happened to his records. It was platted and there were sidewalks all laid out....
- 551 Rolfe asked John when he thinks that the color photograph of Flat provided by Rob Dahl was taken....
- 568 John replied that the photograph appears to have been taken in the 1950s. Alex Matheson went up Flat Creek with the [Matheson] dredge, and then came back down Flat Creek. He left the dredge near the old shop. When John Stevens picked up with the dredge, it was located near the Guggenheim shop [Building WWW-1, IDT-143], down in Flat Creek below the shop. In the color photograph, the dredge is just east of the Guggenheim shop. Rolfe asked if that might be where it was abandoned for a few years before Stevens picked it up because the original photo was in color... Matheson left the dredge there in the late 1930s and Stevens picked it up after World War II.... Matheson had a couple guys running the dredge after the war. Mary Miscovich recalled that Alex sold out in the early 1950s. A banker from Seattle took it over and ran it for a season.... John Stevens put a new crank shaft in the dredge engine when he took it over and the dredge was in that location [pointing to the color photograph]. Stevens and Bill Mack and another guy ran it the first year. Bill Mack worked for the Fullertons when they were on Flat Creek in 1957.... John Stevens ran it for only two years... maybe only one year....
- 680 [Tape runs out. End of Side A.]
- Tape 7, Side B:
- 006 Continuation from Side A...
- 006 John identified buildings shown in the color photograph of Flat provided by Rob Dahl. The Turner Store is there, and the Moose Hall is there, the [Adams] hotel is there, and Miscovich's house, and Fritz Awe's place is there right next to the Miscovich house. That was the house that he built where Fullerton house used to be. The schoolhouse. John concludes that this must have been quite a late picture. Finn Annie's place is there and John's cabin [Building EEEE, IDT-159], and the little dog barn [Building EEEE-1, IDT-159]. The little shed [Building EEEE-2, IDT-158] that Ray [Stock] moved over there is now his shop. That was Violet [Wadsworth]'s house... "Then this little shack here that was just across the bridge on the left hand side, that is gone. I think that Fred Pierson was living in that at one time. That is the one down there across from the old Road Commission now. There is not too many buildings here that are not around. There is the Matheson shop [Building RR, IDT-110]." John believed that the picture was taken in the late 1940s or early 1950s.... The photo was taken before the Donnelley

- and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077] was moved.... The store was moved between 1965 and 1970.... The picture was taken before that....
- 045 Rolfe asked John about the future of Flat and suggestions about how to preserve the buildings in Flat.... "Well, if this was 25 years ago," John replied, "I could give you a lot of recommendations. But to start now, other than a few buildings that are there, even those have gone too far. The estimated cost of doing anything here to resurrect these [buildings] here so they will be preserved is going to run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. And of course this is always a big question mark when you try to raise funds for doing such a project." You have to bring in qualified carpenters and repair people and the material has to be flown in. When you start talking about foundations and floors and concrete, you're getting into a major project. So I'd like to see major buildings, like the store..., preserved. "That should have been done a long time ago, after it was moved. It should have been taken care of, but hasn't been. Its one building that really could make a nice monument of some kind to Flat. In the store we could put a lot of things that could be kept for posterity. Pictures and small things that are now strung helter-skelter. Mark and Sherry [Kepler] had that in mind at one time. They were thinking that maybe they were going to be able to work with the Dahls on it but Jimmy Dahl put a monkey wrench into the whole thing and that of course stopped it. It could be turned into a very attractive tourist type thing.... with the bank there. Now the other buildings that are around, like the old schoolhouse [Building X, IDT-093], you would almost have to start from scratch on that building."
- 078 The old Miscovich house down there [Building Y, IDT-094] "is too far gone. "[Its] way too late now to start thinking about doing what I planned to do with it, which is to bring it down one floor and a keep it the way it was. But it's beyond that stage now. It has to be torn down -- period. There is no way you can preserve a building unless the lumber has been kept dry. If it has wet rot in it, why its gone."
- 086 John put a new roof on the log building [Building PPP, IDT-145] by the airfield. "Now that's a fine building and it could be turned into a real nice place...." John had hoped that the Wireless Station Building [Building AAA, IDT-130] would be turned into a headquarters building for a major company that will be operating up here [at the Golden Horn Mine]. It would be the office and engineering facility with some additions to it. John put a new roof on it. Anything that has got a new roof on it is in pretty good shape.
- 098 The Community Hall [Building S, IDT-070] needs to be jacked up. The wood underneath the foundation now is sinking and rotting. It may be that the frost is heaving the middle, but the floor has got a big bow inside and that is usually caused by the center coming up or the outside walls' weight sinking them down into the blocking.

- 105 "That's what happened to me on the Wireless Station [Building AAA, IDT-130] just before I caught it." John said he caught it just in time. The Wireless Station did not have any windows left in it when he jacked it up. John said he has to do some jacking on it this fall because it has settled down again.
- 108 The idea of a plan of restoration in Flat reminds John of a wonderful presentation in Reno that he and Mary Miscovich saw last fall on Butte, Montana called "What do you do with Butte, Montana?" To get a consensus of opinion on what should be done is always a problem. What do the people that own the buildings want to do with them? "... George [Dahl] will tell you one thing, Jimmy [Dahl] will tell you another thing, and Ethel [Dahl] will tell you another thing. And of course they are all looking for dollars...." The buildings are not going to do them any good and if they think they are going to get dollars for them. "The buildings will stay there and rot like all the rest of them that you can't find the foundation for now." John thinks that if the Dahls were approached on the basis that there was some grant money that could be used to restore some of the buildings that are restorable, that if they deed those over lock, stock and barrel to an organization to make a historical site or a museum site of some kind, then something might get done. Until such time as a contract with the Dahls is worked out, it will go on like it is. The Dahls have a sentiment about the [Matheson] house [Building II, IDT-102], which they call mother's house.... They have this sentiment... but they do not want to do anything to protect it and make it something that their mother would have been proud of. The house needs paint. John helped George Dahl do work on the foundation, supplying timbers and the use of John's cat Otherwise that building would have been like all the rest of the buildings in Flat that are deteriorating.
- 136 Because the frost in Flat, in these buildings that have basements, unless one keeps a fire in them, the frost just rots everything out underneath. The moisture collects unless there are open windows, and if air circulates it still does not solve the problem. So that is one of the problems ... one group of people that have control of the most important buildings in Flat. There would have to be a recommendation by state or federal experts as to what could be done.
- 145 John has asked Julia [Steele] before what BLM's position will be in regards to these [historic] buildings on federal mining claims [in Flat] and if they are going to keep the mining claims. "This \$200 fee [per claim] that is coming up in the next couple or three weeks is going to hit everybody real hard. There are going to be a lot of people that are going to drop claims." Whether claim owners are going to drop any [claims] around Flat or not, John does not know. He has not heard from the [Dave] Brownes, and has not heard from Peter [?]. John does not know what they are doing or if they are going to be capable of doing anything. Dave Browne told John that maybe the claims will be turned into Doyon land or maybe it will go to the State. If it does then it'll be another stampede staking ground for the claims that people are dropping here in Flat. It will

- become state claims. "... It's a damned shame what they [BLM] did, really, to cause this chaos that is going to develop by [sic] a lot of people dropping claims where there are no surveys. There are absolutely no maps [of the existing claims]. There is absolutely nothing on record except what they did with their own hand writing that is now in the computers there in Anchorage. If anybody comes in here and starts in this brush and starts putting stakes in and cutting lines, its going to be one heck of a job...."
- 162 John stated he would like to see Flat survive as a town. "I fought hard to keep the post office here; we now have a very fine post office and post master. A post office is really the heart of a town. Everybody that comes here just loves to go there and take their picture by the Flat Post Office. They'll have post cards galore that they'll have stamped Flat, here see. When I was Post Master over there at Ruby at Poorman, bundles of them damn cards would come in that people just wanted you to stamp and mail back...." The Iditarod Dog Sled Races have made Flat come alive again. There has been a lot of publicity about Flat. If the road to Iditarod is opened again, which John is sure they will do--a contract will be let soon to clear the road--there will be a good road to Iditarod again. And to the river. That opens the possibility of jet boating up the Iditarod River. Not freight boating, but recreational boating..... "All kinds of things could be developed here."
- 185 If there is some activity on the Golden Horn [Mine] that could mean a sizable community as well in Flat. John believes that the Golden Horn Mine will be developed.... All the work that John is doing is leading in that direction. "It is going to require somebody to come into Flat and carry John's work forward.... The Dahls are going to move to St. George and they want to live in Ketchikan and in Seattle.... Rob [Dahl] said the other day that he is going to take a leave of absence from the State [Department of Correc-tions] and come in and go mining next year. He is going to try mining with the equipment that they have. He'll do like the rest of them; he will start and stop, and wish that he had never seen it....." John would like to see Flat continue....
- 202 The airfield is a very important factor in Flat.... It never floods or has problems like any of the problems airports have along the rivers. This is an emergency airport for fire fighting and for aircraft coming and going.... Its kind of a central point. "Were in a, I would say, a strategic location here! It shouldn't be abandoned."
- 212 Rolfe pointed out that buildings will not be preserved if they are not used; economic activity is crucial to preservation of those buildings that are preservable as well as the preservation of buildings that have fallen down and have interpretative value.... John states that his daughter, Sandy [Miscovich] in Anchorage, has had some experience with bed and breakfasts. Mark and Sherry [Kepler] have some buildings ... for people to use when they come through Flat or when they come for a visit. There are no other places for visitors to stay....

- 225 Mark and Sherry [Kepler] just bought the old Post Office building [Building DD, IDT-076] to fix up for people to stay in.... "Money is the problem.... The Iditarod Dog Sled Race has been a big help when it comes to promotion. There is wonderful site seeing in Flat in the winter.... It is also a wonderful place just to get away...."
- 243 "The problem is that one has to commit himself to a place like this and like it. That is a real problem. A lot of people have come and gone because they could not adjust to Flat.... Promotion is important, and Flat has never promoted anything except gold mining. There is a limit to that.... Right now Flat is on the edge as far as placer mining goes. Flat is on the very edge -- ready to fall off again like it did many times before, where mining has just absolutely died.... The pay streaks are gone, the rich ground is gone, the machinery is getting old, and the operators of the machinery are getting older! Tad [Fullerton] is the only one left in Flat that is interested in doing what his dad [John Fullerton] is doing. The problem with that is that if his dad dropped dead tomorrow, Tad would be through. There is no way that a young man can establish the credit that is required to run a gold mining operation like that today.... You have to have several hundreds of thousands of dollars ready sometimes. But there is no pay streak here any more in Flat. What you are digging is the side limits, tailings. Like the Fullertons this summer moved twice, trying to find a patch that would be profitable. Now they have moved way up at the head of the [Flat] creek. And hopefully they'll get something out of those tailings. So they're scratching. [Alvin] Agoff is scratching out there on the bench by himself. [Richard] Wilmarth on Chicken Creek is scratching deep ground, under financed." Willow Creek, where the Fullertons live, "is through. It was deep muck. And the Dahls on the top of the hill, where he [Rob] plans to go, has boulders as big as this table. It is a no win proposition." Everyone who has been up on the top of that hill [above Flat Creek] has gone broke, including [Odin] Strandberg.
- 286 "The lode potential is what has to be looked at in the future. But its going to require big bucks. It is going to require someone to come in and put together all of the pieces that people have put together on the geology--the drill logs, the cores, the geochem[ical] work, the anomalies that have been established--and make this into a picture that says: 'yes, this is a possibility.'" ... There is potential on John's claims but the Doyon Native Corporation is holding it up.... They hold the four townships in the area that adjoin his claims, and no one can make a move outside of the private landholders without dealing with Doyon. They are going to have to come down on their commitment and payment requirements. Doyon has gotten used to making money fast on drilling oil on the [North] Slope, real estate in Fairbanks, and tax rebates from some the losses on contracts they got into.... They are not required to pay any fees on the land they have while we are required to pay \$200 a claim this year for 1993 and 1994. Doyon also has a lot of other advantages when it comes to environmental regulations, land reclamation, and surface rights, etc....

- 325 "So Rolfe, you've seen it all, really. You've seen a look at Flat I think, all of you have, that very few people have. And it is going to be a story that is going to be hard to believe.... A great cartoon would be these dredge bucket lines chasing these houses around...."
- 335 "There is a picture of my uncle's [John Bagoy] place on Discovery. [J. E.] Riley actually was digging under the corner of his building. He [Bagoy] had a saloon. And he [Riley] was such a dirty rotten S. O. B. that he wanted my uncle out of business. So my uncle, John Bagoy, wasn't going to get out of business. And so he [Riley] had the dredge bucket line right under one corner of the building. And it is in the photograph.... And it was on the old N. C. Company calendar...." Pete Bagoy would be a good person to interview in Anchorage. He is knowledgeable about events in Iditarod.... He has a good memory, and is 82 or 83 years old....
- 358 John concluded that it is a problem to restore Flat.... Restoration in Flat will be costly to do, even on the good buildings.... Need for concrete block foundations....
- 382 Rolfe brought up the subject of partnerships between government and private groups to preserve historic communities....
- 390 John noted that McGrath has been going through this same issue, exploring the idea that McGrath should have some basic business besides the FAA.... McGrath is a little different from Flat, because of the location and problems getting into Flat.... "If we were to develop any kind of business in Flat, we would first have to put in a good communications system here, like we had once with Pan American.... That is one of the prerequisites to getting people in here.... Weather is a problem. Getting in and out of Flat can be difficult. One also has to have a first aid type facility to take care of people who are old and need medical attention...." Bus tours could be given once people are out here.... John can see a winter time tourist trade, associated with the Iditarod Trail and dog mushing....
- 461 The hunting for big game, like the German hunters that Steve Welles brought in to the Flat area, is not very good, John said. "This is not a big game area. There is not any trophy hunting.... The bear hunting ... there is not that kind of hunting around Flat. If a person had a helicopter stationed in Flat, there is some of the best fishing around Flat that people could go to...." Mosquitoes would be another problem for some tourists....
- 530 John said he knows a lot about preserving buildings. His dad went through a lot of work to move that building [Building Y, IDT-094], preserve it, and make a beautiful home out of it.... What John has at Flat, he has preserved, but it requires a lot of work. John preserved the [Riley] dredge [IDT-220] up near Discovery [claim]. They shut it down

- in 1966 The roof needs work. He put a new roof on it in the 1970s, but the wind made some cracks in it that are letting water in on it. John plans to put Aluminum sheeting for it.... The wind in Flat is severe. One needs sheet iron, especially sheet iron that has not had these spiral nails. Once the sheet iron starts flopping, the wind gets to working underneath it and the galvanized, straight, smooth nails get pulled out.... The whole roof of the [Donnelley and Sheppard] store [Building H, IDT-077] should be re-nailed and painted. The galvanized part of the metal roofing will eventually deteriorate if not painted....
- 565 Donnelley and Sheppard had a windmill which charged batteries. They left the batteries in the store, and when it got cold some of them froze and busted. They spilled all over the floor, rotting the floor. The light plant that Jimmy [Dahl] has in his shop was in the back end of the store after they shut the windmill down. Johnny [Stevens] got that light plant in.... Mary Miscovich added that John Stevens died in 1981, and no one has done much since to maintain the buildings.
- 584 John Miscovich notes that John Stevens was very good at maintaining the old Donnelley buildings. He insulated the Matheson House [Building II, IDT-102]. He took the walls down during the winter time and put insulation in them, and then put them back up again.... He kept the [Matheson] dredge [Structure A, IDT-118], but the present situation with maintaining the buildings Stevens owned is hopeless.
- 592 Steve Posgate asked John why he keeps coming back to Flat... John replied: "We have a major interest here, of course, but ... I've been around the world.... I've seen a lot of places, and a lot of people, and I have never been to a place that I've enjoyed as much as I've enjoyed here at Flat. That's just that simple. I raised our family with Mary here. We had a lot of fun doing it. I don't think you could have done it any place in the world and all of our children have been -- they turned out great. Never had a problem in the world with any of them. They themselves admit it, that it was Flat that did it. Because it swayed them away the problems that the kids got into starting in the 1960s and on through. Where influence steered a lot of young good kids in the wrong direction. And here we were together...." Vision is important. John's dad had vision, even years ago when he was flat broke.... Peter Miscovich told people that he would leave Flat when he got a \$100,000. "People thought he was out of his mind. And by golly, he finally made his \$100,000, and he did get out of Flat. He made more than a \$100,000. He made several hundred thousand dollars...." Every dollar Peter Miscovich made he reinvested in Alaska.
- 645 John said he could have left Flat when he had his patents and was bringing in a tremendous income. He had a good job out there in the states. But he would be dead today. "That is the reason I'm here. I would have been absolutely six feet under. As all of his buddies are that were in the rat race of big business and corporate structure....

It gets to you after a while.... Knowing you can get out of Flat is the big thing. Finish our season, then know we will be resting one way or another until spring, and working on what we will be doing next year. Flat has a lot to offer if you look at it with the beauty it has to offer.... But if you look at it today in the fog, with the rain, and the wind blowing [laughs], it isn't very beautiful...."

689 [The tape runs out. End of interview session five.]

JOHN MISCOVICH INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED ON AUGUST 8, 1993

This interview was conducted with John Miscovich on August 8, 1993, during a tour of his mining operations, the Riley/Miscovich Dredge, the Golden Horn mining camp, and the Discovery/Peter Miscovich mining camp. The interview was conducted by historians Rolfe Buzzell and Steve Posgate, and by interns Darrell Lewis and Ursula Schwaiger, all of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of the Riley/Miscovich Dredge, and the Otter Creek, Golden Horn, and Discovery/Peter Miscovich mining camps. This is the sixth of a total of six interviews with John Miscovich. The following is a summary of Mr. Miscovich's comments unless quotation marks are used.

This interview session began during an automobile tour of historic sites east of Flat. Sites visited during the tour included the Riley/Miscovich Dredge, the Discovery/Miscovich Camp, and the Golden Horn Mine. The last part of the interview took place at the Riley/Otter Creek/Miscovich Camp and focused on the buildings and structures at that camp. Since parts of the session were conducted in an automobile or while walking around, the quality of the recording is uneven. Technical difficulties with the recorder also affected the quality of the recording at the Riley/Otter Creek/Miscovich Camp. Mary Miscovich was present during the last part of the interview.

Tape 8, Side A:

00-11 [Tape is blank]

012 [The interview began on the Riley/Miscovich Dredge, IDT-220]. John Miscovich pointed out the spud for the Riley/Miscovich Dredge laying along side the dredge. John explained that a spud on a dredge bores into the ground as the dredge turns and stops when it hits the bedrock. It is called a spud because the nose of the tool looks like a potato. The spud is connected to the dredge and the dredge pivots around the spud as it digs.... There are two spuds on the dredge, one on each side of the bucket line, but only one is down at a time. The reason there are two spuds is to facilitate forward movement of the dredge.... When one is through with the step or have dug down to bedrock, then one can move forward for another cut. The "digging spud," as it is called, is pulled up and the other spud is dropped. Then the operator starts swinging the dredge in the other direction the distance he wants to move ahead, usually five feet. This motion moves the dredge in an arch and puts the dredge in a position to take another step. The operator raises that spud, drops the other spud, and is ready for another step.... By "walking with the spuds" and controls on the bow lines, the operator can control the movement of the dredge....

- 033 Darrell Lewis asked how far one could normally dig in a day... John replied that about four steps is the maximum if the ground is about 12 feet deep, like the ground around the Riley/Miscovich Dredge [IDT-220]. That is about 20 feet per shift. "If it is hard digging you don't go 20 feet a shift, you may only go 10 feet."
- 037 Rolfe asked how many buckets were on the bucket line and how big they were.... John replied that there were 56 buckets on the bucket line. Each bucket held three and a half cubic feet of dirt.... It was a big job every spring welding those segments on. They welded all the lips of each bucket that were rivetted on. They had to take the pins and bushings out, build up the eyes, and weld any cracked buckets. It was a 30 to 40 day job steady, just working on the buckets. That was the most important part of the digging operation. Of course there are the ladders that go on the tumblers....
- 047 The Riley/Miscovich Dredge [IDT-220] was originally built in 1914 by Mr. J. E. Riley. Riley brought it in from San Francisco. Union Iron Works manufactured the parts. It was a wooden hull in the beginning, and it went to Nome, but they couldn't use it there. So they brought it up the Yukon River from St. Michael to Holy Cross and then from Holy Cross to Otter Creek.
- 054 John explained how the gantry got bent on the dredge... He had a winch man that was not paying attention to his spuds and he buckled the gantry over about 30 degrees. This was in the fall of 1963. They had to straighten it back up and weld it.... "It was an awful catastrophe on the 14th of October to have that thing bent over and the whole operation shut down. They needed that last three weeks of the season.... They got it back together in three days and did not even have to take the bucket line off.
- 062 Rolfe asked the length of the dredge. John replied that the dredge is about 220 feet long and about 40 feet wide. The [metal pontoons are all in sections. They were all brought in individually and then bolted together.... The dredge has a metal hull made of pontoons. The superstructure is steel now. It used to be wood. It was converted from a wooden hulled dredge. It was rebuilt in the spring of 1938.... They rebuilt it in 30 days.
- 079 The engine on the dredge is a three cylinder Enterprise Diesel and it is in excellent condition. The dredge master was on it from 1925 until 1966, continually. Glen Day was the chief engineer on the dredge when the engine was put on, and Arnold Kobler had worked with Day in Ketchikan. Day brought Kobler to Flat. When Donnelley picked Glen Day to run the Day Navigation operation, then Arnold became the chief engineer on the dredge. In fact, Kobler owned the dredge at one time, and that is from whom the Miscovichs bought the dredge.

- 087 The engine has three cylinders, produces 125 horse power. It turns 275 rpm and runs the whole dredge. There are a lot of belts in the dredge. There is a ten kilowatts in the generator and two pumps on the main shaft. One is for high pressure and the other is for low pressure. The main jack shaft is upstairs.... There is a little compressor and a large compressor. The little compressor keeps the air tank full, because the dredge needs to start on air when it has been shut down. The large compressor is only used to start the engine the first time each spring. Everyday you shut down and grease the tumbler and make minor adjustments to the engine, and so you started it up again.
- 097 It was a beautiful sounding engine because it ran slow. Each exhaust discharge was so clear [sounding]. "If you were down in the valley on a clear day, you would think that the dredge was in your living room, early in the morning.... Depending on how hard the winch man was making the bucket line dig would change the sound of the engine. When they were digging in hard bedrock ... or in frozen ground the spuds would bang back and forth in their keepers. There was an awful lot of noise" on the dredge....
- 107 John pointed out the bell that the winch man would use to signal the engineer to shut down the pumps. There were three men on each shift when the Miscovichs took over the dredge. Then John took one man off, so only two people ran the dredge. John and the chief would run it four hours in the morning, and the combination engineer/oil man and the winch man took it for 10 hours. They ran it 24 hours a day.
- 112 Rolfe asked about kind of engine... The dredge originally had a gas engine, then it went to a type of diesel engine called a "hot head engine." It had two of these engines. After that there was a Union Iron Works diesel engine, which was not very successful, then the current engine was installed.... It is a marine diesel engine, used on boats. There are coils on the outside of the dredge that carried the water and acted as heat exchangers....
- 131 John explained that the "save all box" is used to catch the spillage from the bucket line. It catches the spillage as the buckets dump in the chute.... Sometimes as much as ten per cent of the gold comes from the save all sluice box. This boiler [pointing to a boiler] is used in the fall and sometimes in the spring.... Its necessary to have a boiler going when it gets below freezing.... The boiler used to burn wood, which was brought through the big door on the side of the dredge. John put an oil burning boiler on the dredge to replace the wood burner.... It burned six barrels of oil a day.... The oil fired boiler has an automatic switch. The engineer would inject water into the boiler.... A little boat called the "Mary Ann" carried the wood to the dredge in the days before the oil fired boiler.

- 153 The winches controlled all the movements of the dredge -- the stern... the bow.... and the spuds. Everything was controlled by these cables to shore which were controlled from the wench room upstairs. In the spring of the year, everything had to be repaired.
- 160 Rolfe asked when the dredge was last operated. John replied that it was last operated in 1966. The Miscovich family ran the dredge for seven years after they bought it. They bought it in 1958. At the time they bought it, the dredge was near their mining camp. They started dredging and took it down to the west end of the airport and then brought it back up to the east of the airport where it is now....
- 171 The trommel on the rebuilt Matheson Dredge [Site A, IDT-118] is longer and there are sluices on both sides of the chute. Donnelley took all the old equipment off the old dredge and put it back on the rebuilt dredge. He left the old flume that was on the original dredge. It was a shame that Donnelley did not put a more efficient recovery system so he could have dug ground that they had lost gold before and saved it. When one dug the ground that Donnelley had dug before, one had the same problems. The real light fine gold was going right through [the wash]. Donnelley was a little bit too cheap to invest another 25 or 30 thousand dollars....
- 185 Both the Matheson Dredge and the Riley/Donnelley Dredge have trommels in them. The Riley/Donnelley/Miscovich dredge has a very short trommel with big holes in it and the Matheson dredge has a longer trommel with smaller holes in it.... A longer trommel is better because the rock spends more time in front of the water jets and is broken up better. Once it gets past the water jets it is on its way out the back of the dredge to the tailings pile....
- 197 Every day was different. If you knew how the winch man's pattern was [on the dredge that went through the ground previously], one could tell where the gold would be [that was missed]. Some winch men were real good, and some were not. Some were drinking quite a lot of booze, and it effected their ability to do a good job.... Donnelley had some pretty rough characters working on his dredge.....
- 203 On the third level, John pointed out the jack shaft that has the clutches for the bucket line drive, the pulley for the stacker, the pulley for the screen, and the pulley for the winches. All that power is transmitted through the big belt from the lower jack shaft. It comes from the big engine.... It was a beautiful drive system that used only 125 horsepower. The belt drive slipped just enough that it would not kill the engine.... One could control the power factor very smoothly.... It was a lot of work to overhaul all of the equipment.
- 223 The [Ford] Model A engine on the second floor was used to reverse the bucket line when it picked up a rock that was too big to go through the chute. If the rock would not

- go through the chute, the bucket line had to be reversed to dump the rock in the pond.... The Model A engine only weighs about 140 pounds....
- 235 John talked about the condition of the roof of the dredge.... John plans to replace the wind torn paper roof with sheets of metal to have a better roof....
- 238 These levers control the various functions of the dredge. This is the winch room. On each lever, there is a brake and a _____ [inaudible] for every movement. Lever for power. All the control was by these levers.... Once one got acquainted with the levers, it was not all that difficult.... There were a lot of discussions in this winch room. It was a place where they discussed all the politics of the world, all the women of the world, all the gossip of the world It was very comfortable.... John installed buzzers so the oiler could hear signals from the winch room.... The bull horn was used to give orders and signals to the shoreman, the fella that dug the deadmen and the anchor points. He would receive instructions through the bull horn....
- 268 John replaced the deadman anchor with what he called a "live" deadman. They were sleds loaded with iron that could be moved with a cat.... It was faster and more efficient than burying an anchor in the ground. That saved one man. The Miscovichs ran the dredge with six people instead of the earlier twelve man crew.... It was a lot of work.... When gold was worth only \$35 per ounce, there was not value in the ground to mine ground that had been mined before to make a profit. John had to invest \$60,000 every spring before he even had a cleanup [cleaning up gold from the sluice line]. That was a lot of money. That's how Riley got in trouble. He had a thawing crew and a hydraulic crew, and a dredge crew. He ran into a tremendous debt in the spring of the year when he got shot.... They sometimes stretched the imagination, having excessive optimism about the size of the prospective cleanup....
- 291 Rolfe asked if it was very noisy when the dredge was running... John replied that it was very noisy on the dredge. It wasn't too bad in the winch room if one kept the window closed.... The bucket line would slap up and down. They had to keep the window open a lot because it could be hot weather. It could be very noisy. John put the seat on [in the winch room] as it got awfully tiring walking back and forth.... The seat made it very comfortable.
- 306 When the gantry got bent over, the operator was raising the ladder, the bucket line was still running, and he was looking back to see if the spud was coming up. As soon as the spud came up, one put the brake on it and let go of the friction. "But you never, never raised the ladder with the bucket line running!" There was some competition between him and the other winch man on the other shift. The operator was doing too many things at one time. It was at night and before he knew it, the bucket line hooked onto the beam that runs across the gantry and just pulled it over. It was a major catastrophe. The crew

- thought that was the end of the season, they were broke down, and that they were all going to quit and go home. But they didn't. They stayed on for three more weeks. John had a bonus plan where if a worker quit, the worker lost his ten per cent bonus and his transportation home. So it paid for the workers to stay to the last day. "It was a great incentive."
- 327 Dredging was a good way to mine if the ground is right. "You couldn't run a dredge with today's environmental controls because a dredge cannot run on a completely recycling water system." There has to be some water going in and some going out. Otherwise the dredge pond would be filled up with mud.... If John were to operate the dredge today, he would have to spend \$100,000 to cover all of the belts on the dredge to meet mining safety regulations. That would be a major undertaking.... Nobody ever got hurt while John was running the dredge. But it required continuous watching to make sure people did not get hurt that were working on the dredge....
- 343 John shut down the dredge because the shop burned down. They had a beautiful machine shop and warehouse; and all the parts and tools for the dredge burned. He ran one more year after the fire with a make shift operation down below there, but he could not afford to take that chance again. He could not duplicate the parts and the machinist working for John lost all of his tools in the fire. The loss affected the machinist mentally. He was so distraught over the fact that the shop was burned.... They fixed up a make shift shop, but the machinist just could not hack it.... Without the machinist, without the parts, and without the machine shop, John could not afford to take the chance to continue operating the dredge. John had another possible two years of digging ahead that would likely have been profitable ground, but he just could not take the chance.... So John decided to go back to using heavy equipment--a backhoe and bulldozer. Then he got started developing the Golden Horn property....
- 370 Steve Posgate asked how various elements of the dredge work. John explained that the ladder is the horizontal arm that the buckets run on. The gantry is the vertical structure that supports the ladder. Cables run from the gantry to the ladder and control how deep the bucket line digs. The buckets come up the ladder and dump into the chute at the head of the screen. The dredge takes a cut just long enough that when the dredge travels across the width of the pond, they get a full bucket load each time.... They lower the ladder about three inches each time they go across the pond. The depth of the ladder is indicated on the gauge.... They just keep going down.... The length of the ladder has a lot to do with how deep one can dig.... This dredge was capable of digging about 18 feet below the water.... Sometimes they could dig 20-25 feet, depending on if there was room in the back for tailings and if there was a face in the front that would cave into the pond.... If they were going up stream there was a lot more room behind the dredge for the sand, because the sand did not follow the dredge. But if they were going down-

stream, the sand crowded the dredge.... A lot of factors controlled the depth that they could dig.... The bedrock in the dredge's current location was about 16 feet deep.

- 408 In the early years, the miners did not drill deep enough. They thought bedrock was at twelve feet. That is why a lot of the bedrock that the Miscovich family mined in later years had not been taken up. The early drillers assumed twelve feet was the average depth. But when they got to the bottom of that twelve feet of ground, it was still frozen and they left it. As time went on, the ground thawed, and the Miscovich family was able to pick up three or four feet of bedrock with the dredge and, in some cases, with the backhoe.... These days, John has been using a backhoe to get at that lower depth in ground previously mined.
- 420 The town of Flat was mined two or three times with the Guggs, the same way. The Guggenheims did not dig deep enough. Alex Matheson came along [later] with a wooden hull [dredge] and went a little deeper, but he still could not go deep enough. So Matheson rebuilt his dredge [IDT-118] and went as deep as he could go. Because he extended his ladder. Matheson's dredge had a three foot bucket size, whereas the Miscovich's dredge had three and a half foot buckets.
- 427 The dredge was a good tool. It had a lot of advantages over any other way of mining because they were self contained. All the equipment was on a big barge and everything was in house.... It was a huge capital investment. Today, a dredge would probably cost 1.5 million dollars. The Miscovichs bought the whole dredge for \$20,000. They thought it was a great deal. But they were fooled. It was not profitable for them buying it at even \$20,000. Because they had to put a lot more [money] into it after they got it. And it did not prove that the ground they were dredging, especially down below, had the values that they anticipated. And the costs went up.
- 440 When the dredge was originally built, wages for a winch man were a dollar an hour. When John closed down the dredge, wages were eight dollars an hour base and time and a half for over time. They worked long hours, an eighty hour week. Taxes, insurance, everything just skyrocketed. And then he could not get the productivity out of people like they used to....
- 452 [Tape is shut off as tour of Riley/Miscovich dredge ends]
- 453 [The interview continues during a tour of the Golden Horn Mine and Camp, IDT-228]....
- 457 The two story building [IDT-232] was built by [W. E.] Dunkle of Anchorage, who took a lease and option on the Golden Horn mine property in 1934. Dunkle mined underground doing exploration work for two years. He had a twelve man crew and a

- cook that stayed in the two story building. The mine manager, Bert Needing, lived in the one story assay office [IDT-233]. In the back of the building was his assay office. He was a very good engineer....
- 472 Dunkle had a large number of mining interests in Alaska [Kantishna, Dunkle Hills, Hatcher Pass, etc]. He operated on Willow Creek where the Fullerton family has its camp. He put that big dragline in that Pete Jensen brought in to the Flat area, and Dunkle invested a lot of money in placer mining, which John asserts was a little out of Dunkle's field. Dunkle had a lot of investments. When he was operating on the Golden Horn, he had to make a \$25,000 payment, and he was paying a 25 percent royalty. He could not come up with the payment and he was in some very good ore, so they [the claim owners] forced him off. This was in 1936. The property went back to its owners, Justice Johnson and Joe Martin. They died and the property went into limbo and Bob Limen of Snowbelts and Donnelley Creek got it. John bought it from Bob Limen in 1957....
- 491 The buildings are in excellent shape. The only thing is the outside paper [covering the outside walls] has deteriorated and John needs to reside the exterior. He wants to put light aluminum sheet metal on the outside walls.... The buildings had heavy sheets of corrugated metal on the [gable] roofs, and they last. Any building with a paper roof on it does not last. The wind in the Flat area is a terrible force in the winter time with the snow blowing. The wind is what does all of the damage....
- 507 There was a boiler house at the head frame [down at the mine shafts]. When John started working on the Golden Horn, he took the boiler house down because it was caving in. Heavy snow had already caved it in, so he took it down. The bunkhouse [IDT-232] and the assay office [IDT-233] are the only two buildings that are still standing....
- 518 The two story addition on the east side of the bunkhouse building [IDT-232] was a shower. They had a water tank on the top floor and the shower was on the bottom floor. There was a cook's quarters downstairs in the kitchen part. In the front part [of the downstairs] was a washroom for the men, a mess hall table and a pantry in the back. The upstairs was all bunks. There were no partitions upstairs. They had everybody upstairs in bunks....
- 528 The foundations of the bunkhouse and assay office buildings are composed of timbers. Underneath is monzonite sand, so the buildings have withstood the test of time. The sand does not heave like permafrost does. There was a shed on the back [north side] of the two story [bunkhouse] building and John took it down because it was getting rotten.... Based on the drilling and testing that John has done, the buildings are probably in the center of the ore body, if this is to be an open pit mine. If the ore deposit is

- developed as an underground mine, that would be a different story. But John doubts that the deposit will ever be developed as an underground mine. The Golden Horn mine was originally an underground mine. The deposit has a series of parallel veins running northeast--southwest. These are enrichments, and the ground is unstable. Given the character of the mineralization and the unstable ground, John believes that the Golden Horn will ultimately be mined as an open pit mine. Underground mining would be expensive and require timbering, which the early miners did for some 2,000 feet at four different levels. Everything was new timber from the states. Square timber and a beautiful job.... All that timber is still in the underground. It is flooded now. The bridge they came over today [driving to the Golden Horn] is made from some of the timber that was shipped in by the early developers. Dunkle did things first class....
- 564 The two buildings have shiplap siding on them. Rolfe points out that the bunkhouse has really nice six light windows, and there are double hung 6/6 windows in the assay office.... John points out that the buildings are all original and they have never been moved.... The bunkhouse has settled a little bit on the southwest corner, but the doors open beautifully. It has shifted, but very little compared to most buildings that old....
- 578 [Tape is turned off, while interviewer takes photographs of the buildings.]
- 579 [Interview resumes at the original mine workings of the Golden Horn Mine].... The log cribbed vertical shaft [IDT-229] dates from 1921. That was the original shaft built by the people that discovered the ore on the Golden Horn, Rasmus Nielson. The wood framed vertical shaft [IDT-230] next to the cribbed shaft was built by Dunkle. The original owners of the claim started a shaft in the area of the wood framed vertical shaft [IDT-230] and a boiler house. When Dunkle came in he dug the shaft deeper and timbered it better. The shaft goes down through four levels. Then there is another shaft back to the southwest, which they put in, that does not come to the surface. They did a lot of work here.
- 603 [Tape is turned off.]
- 604 [Continuation of tour at the Discovery/Peter Miscovich Mining Camp].... The old or Peter Miscovich camp was built in about 1924. The mess hall [IDT-222] was built in about 1928. The original mess hall was located about 300 yards from the current bunkhouse. It was a log mess hall that Riley used. It was torn down because that area had to be mined. The camp was moved to the current location because that area had been mined well and Peter Miscovich did not think it would have to be moved again. The lumber on the exterior of the mess hall is rough cut lumber from the saw mill. They got that lumber for nothing, just by going in and picking them up with a mule.... Rolfe noted that the mess hall is a one story wood frame building with a metal gable roof. John pointed out that the building is sitting on metal tanks, and it has settled. Peter

Miscovich put it on tanks, although they have settled down.... The building was used as the mess hall and the cook's quarters.

644 Rolfe asked about the small building to the west of the mess hall, which John identified as a parts shed [IDT-226]. Rolfe noted that the building is a small one story wood frame building with a gable roof. John added that it had a dragline and cat parts in it. Now it has parts in it but John does not have the machine that the parts are for any more. The building is pretty far gone, as there is no metal roof on it.

654 Across the road from the parts shed is the workshop and garage [IDT-223], which Rolfe notes has corrugated sheet metal siding and roof, and a gable roof. John identified this as the garage and shop area with a parts room in the back. On the south side of the building is a power house from the old Wireless Station in Flat [IDT-130]. They made the old power house into another wing for repairs of tractors. They used it as a warehouse. It is was used as a garage for tractors after it was moved to the Discovery/Peter Miscovich camp. The first half of the garage was built in 1935 after they got their first tractor. Then the other half was added on later.

684 Rolfe asked about the building located southeast of the garage....

685 [End of Side A]

Tape 8, Side B:

001 Introduction by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Side A, at the Discovery/Peter Miscovich Mining Camp [IDT-221]....

004 The building to the southeast of the shop building was Peter Miscovich's office and living quarters [IDT-224]. Another two story building was in the same location earlier, but it burned down and this building [IDT-224] was moved to its present location from a site not too far away. After the building was moved, they added a porch to it. The building served as living quarters for John's father and mother.... The building was constructed in the 1920s. A man by the name of Martin Roslin owned the building previously. Roslin had some property and the Miscovichs bought him out. The original office building was destroyed by fire after World War II, in about 1947. When they bought the house it was located about 300 yards from its current location. The Miscovichs bought the building and moved it to its present location in about 1948.

019 Rolfe asked about the building [IDT-227] to the west of the garage and workshop [IDT-223].... Rolfe noted that this building is a wood frame building that is in poor condition. It has a gable roof.... John noted that this building has a lot of history. It is the

- Blacksmith Shop [IDT-227]. It used to be in Flat near the Matheson House [Building II, IDT-102] when John's dad had a lease on all of the Guggenheim's property. It was a blacksmith shop then. When the Miscovichs were asked to move off the Gugg's property, the Miscovichs moved the blacksmith shop to its present location where John's dad started a small operation. The building is the old blacksmith shop that was used in Flat in 1924. John's dad [Peter Miscovich] built the blacksmith shop in Flat and used it as a shop. He was a fairly good blacksmith. He used it as a storeroom for a long time. It has some concrete in the back that was shipped in years ago.... And it is now gone [no longer usable due to saturation by water].... They shipped in lime and concrete in years past. John's dad used concrete to build the turbine foundation. The concrete in these bags got all wet, and the concrete got hard from the winter freezing, and it deteriorates....
- 042 The Discovery/Peter Miscovich camp was abandoned in 1958 when John bought the "Riley" Dredge [IDT-220]. He moved his operation from the Old Miscovich Camp down to the [Riley/Otter Creek Mining Company/Miscovich] dredge camp [IDT-201], which is where the Miscovichs are living now.... John uses some of the buildings at the Old Miscovich Camp for storage, but he no longer has camp facilities there for crew or cooking. It was not as convenient as the other camp. The new camp is closer to the airport. Since they were dredging down there, the new camp was much more convenient....
- 050 [Tape recorder was turned off and Rolfe took photographs of the buildings].
- 051 [The interview continues several hours later at John and Mary Miscovich's cookhouse complex at the Riley/Otter Creek Dredging Company/Miscovich Mining Camp, IDT-201. Refer to the site map of that camp for the location of the following buildings in the following discussion]. Introduction by Rolfe Buzzell....
- 053 The Riley/Otter/Miscovich camp started in about 1911 or 1912 when [J. E.] Riley was running the dredge. It is not the same camp, but the location is the same. When the J. E. Riley Investment Company brought the dredge in, it built the big machine shop which is to the north of the Miscovich living quarters [Building A,B,C,D, IDT-202]. The camp remained the J. E. Riley Investment Company camp until it turned into the Otter Dredging Company. John and Mary moved into the camp in the spring of 1959....
- 063 Rolfe asked if most of the buildings were at the camp in 1959 when the Miscovichs took it over, or were the buildings somewhere else?
- 066 John replied that none of the buildings were at their present locations, except one, which is the oldest building in the camp. It is the J.E. Riley Office [Building T,U, IDT-215], which is to the east of the current bunkhouse. The Riley Office Building was across

- from the bunkhouse near where the radio pole is, and John moved the Riley Office Building to its present location. All of the buildings in the immediate area have been moved in. But generally speaking, John's present mess hall camp is in the same general location as J. E. Riley had his mess hall and his camp....
- 073 J. E. Riley's Office Building [Building T, U, IDT-215] has a lean-to shed on it. Riley's Office Building is one of the older buildings in the Flat area. That was J. E. Riley's Office. Riley started mining in 1910. John is not sure if the office was built in 1910 or 1911. It was built around 1910 before Riley even started the dredge operation. Riley and some of his partners were mining some ground they were leasing in the area using a Bagley Scraper....
- 082 The Riley's Office [Building T, U, IDT-215] was originally located in the area just north of the Miscovich mess hall [Building A, IDT-202].
- 081 Rolfe asked about Building A [IDT-202] on the site map... John replied that it is the mess hall. The building was moved from Slate Creek to this camp by John Ogriz. It came from Slate Creek, but it was located on Willow Creek before it was moved to the present Miscovich Camp. It has been moved three different times. It was already at the Riley/Otter/Miscovich camp when the Miscovich's moved there in 1959. The old mess hall was a big long building with a meat shed attached to it and living quarters for the cook attached to it. That was more of a shed type of building and it was torn down....
- 096 The current mess hall was constructed in the late 1930s, somewhere around 1937 or 1938, before the war.... It was moved to the Riley/Otter/Miscovich camp ... in the 1940s, after World War II. Before that, the Riley Investment Company did not have a mess hall. The crews ate down at Henry Durand's Restaurant in Flat. When John Ogriz took over, they set the mess hall up....
- 110 Rolfe asked about [Building B, IDT-202], which is on the east side of the present mess hall [Building A].... John replied that the building was moved from his Discovery Camp [IDT-221] and added to the mess hall after the Miscovichs moved the mess hall. They moved the mess hall back 100 yards away from Otter Creek. Then they moved another building to accommodate the family, adjoining the mess hall. There were two buildings. One [Building C] is farthest away from the bunk house and is next to the Guest House [Building E, IDT-203]. Building C came from the upper camp [Discovery/Peter Miscovich Camp, IDT-221].... Building B was an addition at the Discovery Camp to another shed [Building H-1] when it was located at the Discovery/Miscovich Camp. Building C, which has a gabled roof, came from Slate Creek before it was moved to the upper camp [Discovery/Old Miscovich Camp]....

- 130 Rolfe asked about [Building D], which is at the east end of the mess hall [Building A], and has a gabled roof that runs perpendicular to the gable on the mess hall.... John replied that Building D also came from the upper [Discovery/Old Miscovich] camp. They were all moved from the upper camp to the present camp at about the same time.
- 136 Rolfe asked about Building E [IDT-203], which is on the west side of the mess hall complex [IDT-202]... John replied that the building [Building E, IDT-203] was originally located on Willow Creek. It was built by Axel Pomgran, a partner in the Northland Development Company. He built that house for a little adopted boy that he and his wife, Georgia Aiken, who happened to be one of the girls from "the line" in Flat. They built that screened porch in front for the little boy. It was built on Willow Creek and then moved to Slate Creek. From Slate Creek it was moved to its current location. It was built in the late 1930s.
- 149 Rolfe asked about Building F [IDT-204]... John replied that it is a shed that contains a power generator. It came from Flat. It was attached to a building that was located in front of the [Mutchler/Uotila/] Fullerton Garage [Building JJ, IDT-097] in Flat, next to the [Awe/Fullerton/] Mark Kepler Shop [Building AA, IDT-096]. Building F was in Flat for years. It was a shed on the old marshall's office in Flat.... The building was moved in the late 1950s or 1960s....
- 163 Building G [IDT-205], which is east of the mess hall complex and has a gabled roof], was a bunkhouse up at Discovery [/Peter Miscovich Camp]. The Miscovichs moved it to its current location from the Discovery and use it as a bunkhouse. It was built at Discovery Camp in the early 1930s at about the same time as the mess hall.
- 171 Rolfe asked if the town of Discovery was still an active town in the 1930s.... John replied that there was no town of Discovery by that time. It had completely folded up by that time. There were a few foundations at the very far north end of the old town of Discovery, and there were still some logs [parts of walls] that were still standing on some of the buildings. There was a major forest fire in 1958 that burned that whole hillside off. As a result of the forest fire, everything that was left of the town of Discovery was completely destroyed. After the fire, there were smoldering logs there all summer long. That was in 1958. Lightening struck Boulder Mountain.... It was the first year they got the Riley Dredge. There was another forest fire before 1958, when John was young, that took a lot of it [the town of Discovery] out. The last fire, in 1958, finished it off.
- 190 Rolfe asked if the buildings brought over from Discovery Camp were the last buildings in the town of Discovery... No, John replied. Those buildings did not come from the town of Discovery at all. Building G [IDT-205] was built by John's dad [Peter Miscovich] and Building D [IDT-202] was moved in there [to its present location] from Slate Creek. The Miscovichs bought the whole Slate Creek camp. There were a number

- of buildings that they bought during that period. Some of them they moved, and there were other people in the Flat area that got some of the buildings from Slate Creek. The Slate Creek camp was dismantled piece by piece [building by building] and some of the buildings went to the Agoffs and the Fullertons, who used some buildings to salvage lumber.
- 197 Rolfe asked about Building H [IDT-206], which has a gable roof and several shed additions. John replied that is the bathhouse. It came from Slate Creek where it was built. There is a wood shed addition and a front porch [south side], which has the washing machine, and a toilet. "That is a sauna bath." The building dates back to the 1930s when the Finns moved onto Slate Creek, Gus Uotila and his partners....
- 209 Building I [IDT-208], which has a gable roof and is oriented east-west, was built up on Discovery [Camp] by John's dad. It was built for his dad's brother when his brother came up from South America. The building has black Celotex on the outside.
- 213 Building H-1 [IDT-207] is a little bunkhouse. It has a gable roof facing north and south. It was built at Discovery Camp by John in the late 1930s to be independent of the bunkhouse.... It was a two or three man bunkhouse. He used it when they were carrying on the drilling [testing] program. It has been used for years as a bunkhouse.
- 222 Rolfe asked about the complex of buildings [Buildings J, K, L and M, IDT-209].... John replied that Building L is a shed that at one time housed a diesel engine pump unit. Building J is John's office, and a lean-to attaches to the north side of the office. Building K is his laboratory. Building L is used as a shed. It has processing equipment, a table, and a gold hound. Building M is a garage that is used in the winter for one of the vehicles. In the summer they also use Building M to process concentrates.... Building J came down from Discovery [Camp]. The others [Buildings K, L, and M] were built on after Building J was moved to its current location. John built them in the 1960s and 1970s....
- 253 Building N [IDT-211] came from Flat.... It was turned into a garage in Flat and John brought it to the Riley/Otter/Miscovich Camp and used it as a garage.... It was the [Arnold] "Dutch" DeHouse residence in Flat. It used to be along side of the Arnold Kobler house. Arnold Kobler had the real old jail house that was originally in the old town of Flat. The old jail house has been torn down.... Building N [IDT-211] used to be located across from the Blacksmith Shop [Building KK, IDT-098] in Flat. Building N used to be attached to a shed [Building K-1, IDT-099] when Building N was located in Flat.... The shed [Building K-1, IDT-099] that was attached to Building N [IDT-211] might have been moved.... But Building N and K-1 were associated together in Flat.

- 271 Building N is now used for a garage and also for a supply store house. "We have a lot of, I would say, junk in it -- period!" He moved it to Discovery Camp when they took over the [Riley] dredge [in 1958]....
- 277 Building S [IDT-214] is a storage warehouse. John has some gasoline stored there. That building was left over from the old Riley Camp when the shop burned down. John does not know what it was used for at that time. When Riley was operating at the site, there was a man by the name of Fred Patterson that lived just north of the Miscovich Camp. His house was moved down to Flat and that building was left here. So the Miscovichs just acquired the building, during the movement of Patterson's house. The building did not burn, as it was to the right of the Riley [machine] shop.... The Miscovichs had a fire at their camp in 1964....
- 301 John turned the bunkhouse [Building R, IDT-213] into a shop after the fire, and then he added onto it. The welding shed [Building Q] has the little tractor in it. Building O [IDT-212] is the other shed that the big tractor is in. Building P is a lean-to, basically. The gable goes to the north. It is built onto Buildings R and Q. Building R was originally acquired from the Slate Creek Camp. The Miscovichs moved it from another place down in the valley. Before that John Ogriz moved it in from Slate Creek. Building R [IDT-213] dates from the 1940s, after World War II....
- 319 John built Building P, the big lean-to.... Building R came from Slate Creek and was a big old bunkhouse building. Building R was already built, and John built additions P and Q....
- 343 There is a little shed [Building F, IDT-204] in back of the guest house [Building E, IDT-203]. The cat garage is Building O [IDT-212]. The other generator shed [Building R-1] is attached to [the west side of] Building R. John built Building S [IDT-212], the gasoline storage shed.... Building R-1, the generator shed, was built by John after the 1964 fire....
- 363 John also built Building S [IDT-214]. When John acquired [Building S] all it had was a roof and framing. He moved it there and put siding on it. The frame and sheet metal roof was located down in the valley before he moved it to its present location. John made an oil storage shed out of it. John used it at one time to store a 4600 generator plant. But it is just a storage shed now.
- 376 Buildings T and U [IDT-215] are the old Riley [Investment] Company office. John moved it from a little ways down the [Otter] creek to where it is now. He moved both parts together just as they sit today. The shed on the side [Building U] is a storage room. It has a lot of stuff in it now.... It is on the west side of Building T....

- 388 Building V [IDT-216] is an electrical warehouse. "I've got that plum full of wire and switch boxes." It has a little lean-to on the south side.... "I don't know where I scraped that thing up [from] but I moved it in there." He keeps motors and stuff under it. The other part, the electrical warehouse, ... was down at Flat over there across from the Kepler's place [Building LL, IDT-123]. When John bid on the Harry Brink/Ernie Norman estate, the structure was an addition to one of those buildings, the pig pen. John moved it to the Riley/Otter/Miscovich camp. It was behind the Post Office [Building CCC, IDT-124].... It was moved in the 1960s.
- 427 Building W [IDT-217] is a powerhouse with a generator in it. Behind it is a power house with a generator in it. The main building [of Building W] runs north-south and has a gable roof. Behind it [to the south] is the powerhouse and the little shed for the welder. To the north is [a shed with] a big Wilfley table. To the south is a generator shed. The shed on the east side is a welding shed.... There are four elements to the building. The main part of Building W came from the Golden Horn Mine. It was the powerhouse at the Golden Horn. John built the other three shed additions to the building.... John moved Building W from the Golden Horn Mine to his present camp in the ... mid 1970s....
- 449 Building X [also a part of IDT-217 complex] is to the east of Building W, and it is the welding shed. John built that and uses it as a welding shed. It has a roof and no walls....
- 459 Building Y [IDT-218] is a little building that came from Discovery [Camp, IDT-221]. It was used as a drilling shack. John does not know where it was originally built, but he brought it from Discovery [Camp], up at the [Miscovich's] upper camp.
- 467 Building Z [no AHRS number assigned to it] is a shed that has another Wilfley table in it. John just moved the shed a couple of days ago, and is going to move it along side of Building W. Building Z just has a roof and framing for walls on all sides [no exterior siding on the walls].
- 475 The backhoe [IDT-219] is the first backhoe that was shipped to Alaska in 1935 by John's dad. "It's a 'P & H' yard and a half backhoe made by Harnish Figure Corporation, and call P & H, Pauling and Harnish Figure, back in Milwaukee." It was for many, many years in the Miscovich's mining operations. It is an antique.... They bought it in 1935 and stopped using it in 1974 or 1975.... They used it after 1973 on Flat Creek.... John's dad had the first backhoe in Alaska and he bought the first diesel tractor in Alaska. He had the first water turbine hydroelectric plant in Alaska. They were all brought up the Iditarod River, off loaded at the landing in Iditarod, and walked overland to Flat. John ran the P & H for 25 years. He put it together in Iditarod, and walked it out [to Flat]. He ran it until World War II. When the war was over, John came back

- from the Army and they started in again digging with it. It is still a good machine. It needs some repairs.... It is a mechanically operated machine. There are no hydraulically operated controls.... "You couldn't hire anyone to run it today, and I doubt if I could last an hour if I was to sit up there and run it today. Maybe an hour, that would be about it.... Its a big machine. It weighs 65 tons." ... John repainted it. All the working mechanisms are still good. They took good care of it, except the tracks. He changed the stick on it, as the boom broke a couple of times. It was a yard and a half machine, but John made a two and a half yard machine out of it by extending the bucket sides and putting longer shanks on the lip of the buckets....
- 535 Rolfe inquired whether there are any buildings that he has forgotten or missed. John pointed to the little outhouse [Building T-1] over behind Arnold Kobler's House [Building T, IDT-215].... It is just to the north of Building T....
- 549 John's camp [IDT-201], where the interview is taking place, is called the Otter Dredging Company Camp or the J.E. Riley Camp. The J.E. Riley Investment Company operated as a name for years and years until the estate was settled and sold. When Ogriz and Steen bought the operation, it was then called Otter Dredging Company. Before that, Sam Applebaum operated it as J. E. Riley Investment Company for a while before Arnold Kobler and John Ogriz took it over. They wanted to change the name, so they called it Otter Dredging Company....
- 563 The Upper [Peter Miscovich] Camp and the Discovery Camp [IDT-221] are the same thing. It was always called the Discovery Camp because it was just opposite the town of Discovery and it was located right on the Discovery claim. That claim had a lot of significance. All of the claims in the valley are located and named in relation to the Discovery Claim.... The Discovery Claim was right on the river, on Otter Creek....
- 576 Otter Dredging Camp [IDT-201] had a fire in 1964.... John's dad had a major fire at the Discovery Camp [IDT-221] in the late 1940s, when John was in Poorman.... Peter Miscovich died in 1950.
- 589 Rolfe asked what prompted John and Mary Miscovich to move to the Otter Dredging Camp. John replied that the [Riley] dredge was located just below the Otter Dredging Camp, and they were going to start dredging in a down stream direction. They owned the ground down below and communications between the shop, dredge, and airfield were better there than with the Discovery Camp. Living up there [at the Discovery Camp] and dredging down below meant a two mile trip each way....
- 604 In 1958, John's dad's two story office building and living quarters burned at the Discovery Camp. Mary Miscovich recalled that a lightning strike on Boulder Mountain caused a fire in 1958. Peter Miscovich's office [at Discovery Camp] burned in the 1940s

and John Miscovich's shop [at the Riley/Otter Creek Dredging Camp] burned in 1964. Discovery Camp was a pretty good size camp when they started moving buildings in 1958 downstream to the Riley/Otter Creek Dredging Camp. But they did not move all the buildings from the Discovery Camp. Mary Miscovich added that the Workshop [IDT-223], Mess Hall [IDT-222], Office [IDT-224], and several other buildings were left at the Discovery Camp....

647 Darrell Lewis asked if the Discovery Camp and the old Miscovich camp are the same. John replies yes, they are the same. Mary said that it is called Discovery Camp because that is where gold was discovered in the Flat area....

660 Rolfe thanked John and Mary at the end of the interview....

662 [End of taped interview].

JOHN FULLERTON INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED ON JULY 27, 1993

This interview was conducted with John Fullerton on July 27, 1993, at his mining camp on Willow Creek, eight miles southwest of Flat, Alaska. The interview was conducted by historians Rolfe Buzzell and Steve Posgate, both of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and Julia Steele, archaeologist for the Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage District Office. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. The following is a summary of Mr. Fullerton's comments, unless quotation marks are used.

Tape 1, Side A:

- 000 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....
- 014 John Fullerton was born August 17, 1919 at Flat in the hospital. Dr. Behla was the physician in Flat at the time. John has been living in Flat or the area around Flat pretty much ever since. The remnants of the hospital later became the school house in Flat [Building X, IDT-093].... It was the hospital prior to the building being converted to a school house. John does not remember what year the building was converted to a school house, but probably around 1921 or 1922. John went to school in the building.
- 029 John Fullerton's father, Jim Fullerton, came to the Iditarod district in 1908 during the Innoko district stampede, shortly after the camp was struck. He was interested in the grocery business and he started a store in the Dikeman area. Dikeman was a booming area at that time. He moved to Flat after Dikeman started to slow down and he started a store in Flat. He was not married at the time he came to Alaska. He went outside later, met John's mother in Seattle, knew her a couple of weeks and they decided to get married. She lived with him in Dikeman for two to three years, then they moved to Flat. John is the oldest of the two boys in the family. His younger brother was Richard. Both brothers were born in Flat.
- 045 Jim Fullerton's store in Flat was called "Fullerton's General Merchandise Store." Generally at that time, the name of the store bore the owner's name.... The store was located in the general area of the present Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077]. Jim Fullerton passed away in 1925. John Fullerton's mother sold the store to Donnelley and Sheppard. In the spring of 1925, Durand's Cafe caught on fire ... and burned a number of buildings in Flat, including the Moose Hall, Gularte's Store, and Donnelley and Sheppard's Store. Both general stores in Flat were destroyed in that fire.

- Donnelley and Sheppard rebuilt. They had a temporary store for a while, but shortly after that they rebuilt, building the present store [Building H, IDT-077].
- 074 John Fullerton's mother became the post mistress of Flat after she sold the family store to Donnelley and Sheppard. She was post mistress until 1933. Her name was Anna Fullerton. Her maiden name was Johnson. She was post mistress of Flat for five or six years, starting in 1926 or 1927. In the summer of 1933, the family left Flat and moved to Seattle. Mrs. Fullerton decided to move because John had just graduated from grade school and needed to go to high school. She decided it was time to make the move to a different environment.
- 093 John was in the states for about a year or two. He went to high school there, then returned to Flat in the summers to work. He did that throughout high school.... Then he spent four years in the military service, during which time he was totally away from Flat. He was in the military from late 1942 through 1945. He got out of the military and went back to college for a year. He returned to Flat to salvage a mining operation in the Flat area. Richard Fullerton, John's brother, was gone from Flat all during high school, and he didn't come back until he got into college. Richard worked summers in Flat while in college. That was after 1937 or 1938. John was in Flat in 1936 and 1937 working.
- 118 John graduated from high school in 1937. That is when his step father, Henry Durand, got into mining with the Awe brothers. Durand started mining with Fritz Awe. A couple of years later, Fritz' brother, Charlie Awe, joined them as a partner. Henry Durand was in the restaurant business. John's mother and Henry Durand married in 1934. Durand continued in the restaurant business after the 1924 fire that destroyed his restaurant and a portion of the business district in Flat. He re-established his business a little further east of the earlier location. Then he moved to another location. In 1937 or 1938, Durand sold his last restaurant and went into the mining business full time. Durand's last restaurant was down near where the foot bridge is now that crosses Otter Creek [near Building AA, IDT-096]. That restaurant was sold to Joe Parker, who moved it over by the Moose Hall. The building [Joe Parker's Saloon, Building R, IDT-072] is all caved in now. The building used to be Henry Durand's Restaurant...
- 155 Fritz Awe built a two story house [Site Z, just northwest of IDT-096] near where Henry Durand's last restaurant was before the restaurant was moved up the hill. Fritz Awe lived there [Site Z] for several years. Fritz got out of the mining business, and his house deteriorated. The house was later torn down and the lumber salvaged... Awe's house [Building Z] was a pretty good-sized two-story building. There is a cement footing there now... There was an ice shed next to Awe's house near the river [Site Z-1, just north of Building AA, IDT-096]. When Durand's restaurant was there, Durand had a tin shed full of sawdust [Site Z-1]. In wintertime they cut blocks of ice from the river and put

- them in the shed and covered them with saw dust. Then they would have ice all summer long, for ice tea in the summer time... The building [Z-1] was a support facility for the restaurant....
- 173 Fritz Awe moved the restaurant building [from down by Otter Creek to Site R, IDT-072] for Joe Parker. The Fullertons had the tractors, sled and skids, and the Fullertons moved it for Joe Parker in about 1938 or 1939. John Fullerton was not in Flat at the time the building [Building R, IDT-072] was moved. The Awe's built their house [Site Z] in 1938, at about the same time. The Awe house belonged to the Awe Mining Company, of which the Fullertons were partners. Since Henry Durand was a one-third owner, John and his brother Richard each owned a third of the company. When Henry Durand passed away, then John and his brother became the only partners in the operation. The Fritz Awe House [Site Z] was not Fritz Awe's residence. It was actually built by Awe Mining Company funds. It was supposedly a company house. When they came into Flat in the spring time, they had a place in the basement to stay and to store their stuff before they moved out to the creeks [to mine for the summer]. It [Building Z] was a company house.
- 194 Fritz Awe was working for the McCaffrey Company down in Los Angeles, a welding-fabricating company, and kind of a surplus equipment yard. Awe was a welder and all around mechanic for McCaffrey Company. The Olson family was mining on Happy Creek and were one of the first mechanized miners in the Flat area. The Olsons were shopping for some equipment in Los Angeles at the McCaffrey Company. They got to talking to Fritz Awe, who found out the Olsons were miners from Alaska. That summer, Fritz Awe showed up in Flat and went to work for the Olsons. That is how the Fullertons met Fritz Awe. He was in Flat. He was a gregarious guy, and wanted to get into mining. John's step dad [Henry Durand] was intrigued with mining, but knew nothing about it. So Henry decided that Fritz would be a good person to get hooked up with because he understood equipment. So they got together. First, they formed Awe and Company, a service company. They bought several trucks and an old tractor and some sleds. There were a number of mining outfits in the area in the early 1930s. Fuel and oil was brought up the Iditarod River by barge and landed at Iditarod in barrels. Gasoline, freight, groceries... Durand and Awe contract hauled all of the supplies for Donnelley and Sheppard and all of the fuel and oil for all the different mines that were operating in the area. In the winter time they picked up wood from local wood cutters. They bought the wood, brought it into town on sleds and sold it. They also had a wood saw, and they cut the wood up into whatever stove length people wanted. So initially, they were pretty heavy into the service business.
- 230 Fritz Awe and Henry Durand wanted to get into the mining business to make more money. So they got together. Durand provided the funds. They got hold of the Northern Commercial Company, which was financing equipment at that time to people

- who had mining ground and needed money. So Durand and Awe bought a dragline, a tractor, a washing plant, a pipeline, pump, and all that stuff. They moved it into Flat in the spring of 1937 and put it together. They picked up some ground on Flat Creek, side pay on Flat Creek, up where the Fullertons are going to mine in the coming week. On one of the Durand-Awe tailing piles. They mined along the virgin limit of Flat Creek back in 1937-1938. Then they acquired ground on Chicken Creek and moved over there. Lower Chicken Creek had never been mined, so they built a camp there and mined big time on Chicken Creek...
- 255 When Durand and Awe went into the trucking [freighting] and wood supply business, they had to have a shop to work on their equipment. They needed a warm building to work in. The shop that [Mark] Kepler has now [Building AA, IDT-096] was a winter shop for Awe and Company. They built that structure in about 1935 or 1936.... Awe and Company did not construct any more buildings but there were several cabins that the miners stayed in when they were working for the company. The workers ate in local restaurants. There was another big building that they picked up from Gus Uotila. It was used to store supplies. The Horse Barn [Building JJ, IDT-097] survived the 1924 fire. It had horses in it back in 1930 or 1932 but it was moved [from the area of Building W, IDT-092 and Building V, IDT-090] because of dredging activity in that area.
- 295 The large metal pieces coming out of the sides of the Horse Barn Building [IDT-097] are tie rods with large nuts on them. The building was getting old and falling apart. The Fullertons put the tie rods in to hold the building together. The walls were pushing out, and the tie rods held the walls in place. The Fullertons use the horse barn building to store surplus auto parts.... It survived the 1924 fire, which is why the walls are scorched. During the fire, they put wet blankets on the walls to keep the building from catching fire. The building was originally located near Site AAAAA [referring to the site map]. It was originally sitting on virgin ground and that is why it was moved to its present location. Alex Matheson was going to dig [dredge] through there. The building survived the fire, then they moved it and put it down by the river [at its present location] at a site that had already been dredged once. After the horses were gone, the building was still used to store auto parts. The Blacksmith Shop [Building KK, IDT-098] was acquired from somebody else.
- 334 The last horses in Flat were taken to Iditarod in about 1930. They were very large, like clydesdale horses. They were taken to Iditarod, put on a boat and sent to the mission in Holy Cross. John Fullerton and others rode the horses to Iditarod and put them on the boat. The mission was raising food and needed the horses. Before 1930, there were lots of horses in Flat and Iditarod.... Teamsters dressed up for Christmas parties....
- 376 John and Richard Fullerton bought the Fullerton Town House [Building FF, IDT-075] and garage [Building EE, IDT-074] from Patty Savage in 1957. It is in its original

- location. That building was built in about 1938 or 1939 by Gunner Gustafson. Gustafson bought the restaurant from John's step father [Henry Durand]. Gustafson built the house near the restaurant. But he did not make it in the restaurant business and had to sell out. The house was sold to Patty Savage just before World War II. The Fullertons acquired it in 1957 from Patty Savage when they leased Patty's mining claims. There was a little portable light plant in the shed between the house and the garage. John thinks that the garage was moved there by Patty Savage. Patty used the building as a garage. It probably came from up Flat Creek because that is where Patty Savage's claims and camp were located.
- 447 The antique carriage in the garage [Building EE, IDT-074] originally belonged to [Frank] Manley, who mined on Willow Creek, on Willow Bench.... Manley had a horse. He hooked it up to the carriage and drove into Flat to buy groceries or drove to Iditarod on other business. The Fullertons found the carriage in a collapsed horse barn on Flat Creek, and brought the carriage into Flat where they keep it in the garage building.....
- 468 Manley owned a half interest in the "Marietta" mining claim on Flat Creek. When the Guggenheims mined Flat Creek, they signed a lease to pay a 50 percent royalty on that claim, which was unbelievably high for a royalty. The Guggenheims... were tough businessmen. They signed a 50 percent royalty in 1912, giving up half of the gross production. Ten percent of gross is considered high for a royalty in the placer mining business.... Manley did well on that claim. He pumped a lot of the royalties into his mining claims on Willow Creek. He later moved to Long Beach, California and invested in oil wells. He was there at the right time and right place, and made out very well there too.... Manley did not own a house in Flat, that John Fullerton could recall. Manley had a camp out on Willow Creek, but it has been displaced and isn't there any more. The camp was just old tent frame buildings.... The buildings have been moved around. A lot of that stuff [buildings] from Iditarod was moved over to Flat, then moved again or torn down for lumber. There was quite a bee hive of activity in the Flat area in the early days. At one time, people stayed in Flat year round. A few of them went out by dog team trail, but most of them spent the winter in Flat. The old timers mined in the summer and cut wood on different creeks in the winter or trapped. Mostly they did wood cutting. There was a big demand for wood in those days, especially for all of the steam plants. Wood cutters got \$5 per cord for cutting wood.
- 536 John Fullerton does not know when their original family home [Building L, IDT-133] was built. It was originally located between the present location of the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077] and the Matheson Dredge [Building A, IDT-118], and just north of [Building F, IDT-087], not too far from the river [Otter Creek]. The house had to be moved when the [Matheson] dredge came through. John's mother contracted with Gus Uotila in 1929 to have the house moved to the present location of the shop building [Building AA, IDT-096]. When the Fullertons left in 1933, they sold

the house to Henry Durand. Durand sold it to [Milton] Roper. The Ropers moved the house from the area near the river to its current location and the [Harold and Bessie] Byrds bought it from them.... The Keplers are very knowledgeable about Flat, and are the historians of Flat....

- 613 When John's mother visited Flat she stayed in a house owned by Henry Durand. That house [Building AAAA, IDT-156] is located across Otter Creek from the Kepler shop [Building AA, IDT-096]. It used to be located just northeast of the foot bridge. John does not know who moved it to its current location.

Tape 1, Side B:

- 003 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, continuing from Side A....
- 006 The front door of the house [Building AAAA, IDT-156] faced [west] towards the road. Before the foot bridge there was a car and truck bridge [that crossed Otter Creek] there. The last people that John knows of that owned the building were a couple by the name of the McVey's. McVey worked as an engineer on the North American Dredging Company [Matheson] Dredge. John does not recall who lived in the building before that. It was moved to its present location in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Harry Brink was living there when John Fullerton came back to Flat in the summer of 1947. By that time it had been moved. Stella Parker's place [BBBB, IDT-154] was kind of right next to it.
- 031 There is a little log cabin [Building AAAA-1, IDT-155] that has been north of Otter Creek since 1925 or 1926. It is one of the monuments of Flat, one of the original buildings of Flat. It was there since John was a kid and has never been moved. It was owned by some old timers, called the Russians. It was there in 1925 or 1926. There were a lot of Russians in Flat in those days. They were not the Russians who shot at each other, [Walter] Sakow and Tomahawk, who mined a couple of years in Willow Creek. Those two mined on Willow Creek in 1939 and 1940....
- 053 Ray Stock's cabin [Building EEEE, IDT-159] is owned by John Miscovich. Ray Stock does not own the cabin but has some kind of an arrangement with John Miscovich. John Miscovich got it from an old timer, Joe Loranger who lived in Flat, after Loranger moved to the Pioneer Home in Anchorage. Joe Cummings, another old timer had the cabin prior to that. When Joe Cummings left, Joe Loranger acquired the building from him. Finally Joe got so old, he had to move to the Pioneer Home in Anchorage. Johnny Miscovich "is a cabin collector", and acquired it from Joe Loranger. John made some kind of arrangement with Ray Stock where Ray can take care of it. Ray lives in Bethel and is about ready to retire. But Ray is not in very good health, has hepatitis....

- 088 Rolfe asked about buildings along Flat Creek Road... John replied that John Ogriz was an operator on the Riley Dredge when they were working in Discovery [Claim]. He and his wife lived in a house [Building FFF, IDT-132] on Flat Creek Road. John Fullerton does not know who owned the house before Ogriz. When Ogriz left Flat he gave the house to Alvin Agoff. Then there was a minister from Aniak that is retired and lives in Soldotna [Glen Johnson] that liked to hunt. He bought a house [Building AAAA, IDT-156] on the north side of Otter Creek from Minnie Brink, Harry Brink's wife. At the same time he got this house [Building FFF, IDT-132] from Alvin Agoff.
- 104 One of Glen Johnson's buddies [Darrell Snodgrass] from Soldotna bought a cabin [Building HHHH, IDT-170]. It was owned by Ernie Norman before he passed on. Fred Pierson owned the cabin and when he passed on Ernie Norman bought it. Fred Pierson passed away in the 1960s. He owned it prior to World War II... Then the guy from Soldotna, a friend of the preacher, bought it. His name is Snodgrass.
- 132 Jule Stuver lived in a cabin [Building EEE, IDT-132] just northeast of the minister's cabin [Building FFF, IDT-132]. It was an old cabin and several different people lived there. It just disintegrated, came apart. Stuver was the last person to live there.
- 156 Correction! Building EEE [IDT-132] was a garage or something in conjunction with the green house [Building FFF, IDT-132]. This house [Building DDD, IDT-131] is where Jule Stuver lived. He was the last person to live there. There were a number of people that lived there before him.... EEE was an outbuilding or garage. DDD was occupied by a number of different people....
- 171 The string of houses going up Flat Creek Road was nicknamed "Brainy Gulch," after all the businessmen that lived up there.... Tommy Balange was a Frenchman that worked for Donnelley. He lived in a house [Building JJJ, IDT-137] on the west side of Flat Creek Road, just on the south side of the creek. The house had a hipped roof. Balange lived there a long time. "He was a very good friend of Acheson's.... On the south side of the building there were several dog houses. There was a place right next to it that burned down." That was called Teddy Cassidy's cabin.... Tommy Balange was a dog musher and he had a lot of dogs. He had a winter cabin on Donlin Creek. He was a Frenchman. There were several Frenchmen in Flat and they were all buddies. They worked in Flat during the summer and then they would drive their dogs over to Donlin Creek in the winter. They had shops and were good with tools. They made dog sleds and all of that. Mostly they made sleds for themselves, but they sold some to other mushers. Tom Balange left Flat in the early 1960s and went to Kodiak when Acheson and Donnelley moved to Kodiak. He lived in Flat for a long time, was one of the real old timers...

- 225 The last person to live in the cabin marked on the site map as Building MMM [IDT-140] was Milo Caughrean. He and his wife had a couple of kids and lived in Flat for quite a while. He was an engineer on the Matheson Dredge. He lived there with his wife and kids. He did other things like prospecting. Prior to him living there, a man by the name of Henry Crook lived there. Henry Crook was a manager for Manley out on Willow Creek. Crook left Flat in the early or mid-1920s... Milo Caughrean lived there before World War II. He left after the World War. This building [Building MMM, IDT-140] was never moved. They never dredged up that high [on the hill side]. Building JJJ was just off the pay streak, so the buildings up there were left intact. After people left, water runoff, permafrost and other things destroyed the buildings.... Julia Steele asked about the hump behind one of the buildings [JJJ]. John Fullerton believed it was a root cellar. People kept the food from freezing in their root cellars by keeping a kerosene lantern lite in the root cellars. Lots of people had root cellars.
- 277 Louis Miller lived in the house [Building NNN, IDT-141] across from Milo Caughrean [Building MMM, IDT-140]. He and his family lived there for quite a long while. He had a heart attack and died in about 1948 and his family moved to Anchorage. The place was just abandoned after that....
- 297 Harry Donnelley used to live at that house [Site DDDDD] before he built his house [Building O, IDT-085] at the intersection. After Donnelley moved, it [Building DDDDD] became the Wireless Station for the Signal Corps. About the time of World War II, the Signal Corp built a big new building [Building AAA, IDT-130] and operated it for several years after the war before shutting it down.... Sgt. John Felix was the Signal Corps operator there [at Site DDDDD]. John Fullerton did not recall if anyone lived in DDDDD after the Signal Corps moved to its new building. The Fullertons were not living in Flat between 1949 and 1956, when they were mining on Colorado Creek near McGrath. They would get back to Flat on rare occasions, so John did not recall what went on in Flat while he was mining in the McGrath area. [Break]
- 339 John Fullerton recalled that mail sleds had 25 dogs to a team. They would load up with first class mail. If there was room they would put on second class mail.... The mail carriers came into Flat every Saturday around 2:00 PM and left Sunday at about 2:00 PM to go back to McGrath loaded up with mail. Of course they had roadhouses along the trail. The trail was flagged and had mile post markers. John followed the dog team trail by tractor train to Ophir. There were wooden mile post markers with black letters... The Alaska Road Commission built and maintained the trails. They had tripods for markers in the winter.... The Road Commission cut brush and maintained the mile post markers. After lots of mail teams went over the trail, it got good and packed.

- 389 The Post Office had contracts with different people to run the mail in the winter. Flat was serviced from McGrath. The last two mail carriers were Charlie Konig and Charlie O'Halleron.... The last two carriers lived in McGrath and Takotna and had the segment between McGrath and Flat. Then someone else had the next leg. A man by the name of [Ernie] Beatty got the mail contract and he subcontracted it out to different dog mushers. The last time John Fullerton talked to Beatty, he was in Seattle at the Stewart Hotel. They were having a couple of beers, talking about the dog mushing days in Alaska.... He had a dredge on Candle Creek just out of McGrath that Aiken had. Aiken broke the tumbler shaft on his dredge one time and contracted to have a new shaft, which weighed 800 or 900 pounds, brought from Seward to Candle Creek by dog sled. The trail was soft along the edges and the sled would slide off the trail, but Beatty got it delivered.
- 434 Beatty was involved in the famous dog sled robbery. Beatty was the mail contractor, and Bill Duffy was one of the subcontractors delivering mail. Duffy's girl friend was the prostitute known as the "Black Bear," who was the instigator in the mail robbery. Duffy was one of the mail subcontractors at that time and he knew that there was a cash payroll coming through the mail to Aiken at Candle Creek. The Black Bear found out and figured a way to get it. John Fullerton believes there was no question that she was guilty of participating in the robbery but it was never proven. John Fullerton was around when the Black Bear lived in Flat. She could be a nasty one. After Bill Duffy died she told John off for not signing a petition.... She and Duffy were an interesting couple. "She was an old hooker from down here for years you know and she married Duffy..." Duffy was mining on Chicken Creek and they did fairly well. They made a tour on the Graff Zeppelin, all the way to London, and to Egypt, all over the world. He couldn't get along without his Bull Durham tobacco, and she couldn't get along without her Hills Brothers Coffee. On this tour they each had a whole suitcase, one full of Bull Durham tobacco and the other full of coffee.... They were adventurous people, and they weren't young either. They traveled out of Flat and all over Europe.... John told a story about Duffy, wearing a ruffled suit, going into a Lincoln car dealership and buying the biggest car in the Seattle dealership, peeling out cash from his pocket to pay for it.
- 520 John Fullerton said she was called the "Black Bear" supposedly because she had black hair all over, on her chest and on her back, and that is how she got her name.... Rolfe asked about some of the women who lived on the "line" in Flat.... John Fullerton was a kid at the time and he had a job as a messenger with the Signal Corps. All radio communications to Flat came in through the Signal Corps station. John made a dollar a day delivering messages to the "line" or wherever else they needed to go. His mother did not go for that too hot, but he delivered to houses on the "line." He never gave the "line" too much thought, but there was certainly a distinct culture gap in this place. The prostitutes were on one side of the river, and the elite of Flat were on the other side of the river. The north side [of Otter Creek] was called "the line...."

- 558 Prostitutes and single old timers lived on the line [on north side of Otter Creek]. It didn't make any difference to the old timers where the prostitutes lived.... The line used to be located downstream, west of the town; and then it moved upstream to the north side of the creek. The prostitutes had to move because they were living on virgin ground. They had to move, like all the rest of the buildings, when someone wanted to dredge the ground. There was no city council or mayor in Flat. People just moved to ground that was already dredged.... The town of Iditarod existed prior to John Fullerton's time, and anything he knows about Iditarod is hearsay.... There probably was not another town that he knew of that did not have a church.
- 594 Flat and Iditarod never had a church.... Why, John does not know. Missionaries traveled all over the area but they concentrated along the river more and on natives. McGrath and Takotna had churches. Ophir never had a church either.... Rolfe asked John where the prostitutes houses were located.
- 625 All the prostitutes' houses have disintegrated. Violet Wadsworth was one of the prostitutes. She lived here [Building YYY, IDT-150]. She left Flat around World War II and married the "...garbage king of Anchorage..." a garbage collector for Anchorage. He was an Italian and she was Jewish. She was gone when John returned to Flat about 1947. In fact, all of the prostitutes were gone by then.
- 654 [Interview stopped to change the tape].

Tape 2, Side A:

- 000 Introductory remarks and continuation from Tape 1, Side B...
- 001 The prostitutes had their own houses. Billie Harding, was another prostitute, who had a house in the area of [Building YYYY, IDT-161] and [Building QQQQ, IDT-163]. Flossie was another prostitute who left quite a long while ago. She lived over there too [Building YYY-1, IDT-151] on the north side of Otter Creek. "She had several places".... Tootsie had Flossie's house later, before it burned down.... Tootsie was a real character. She was one of the few black people who ever resided in Flat. There were one or two [blacks] who resided in Flat during the time John lived in the community. All very nice people. Tootsie hung on right to the end. She was one of the last residents, one of the real old timers. "You had to drive her out of Flat, basically she wouldn't go to the [Pioneer] Home. She wouldn't do it. Those old timers were really determined to hang in here...." Many old timers were reluctant to leave Flat when they got old.... With a little encouragement, the locals finally got the old timers to go to the Pioneer Home. Some of the last ones went to [the Pioneer Home in] Sitka. When

- the State opened Pioneer Homes in Anchorage and Fairbanks, some of them went there....
- 39 Finn Annie was another prostitute in Flat who had a house [Site DDDD, IDT-160] near Otter Creek. She ended up marrying the Signal Corp operator, Lon French, in the late 1920s. When John was in grade school, he delivered messages for French, who preceded Felix as the Signal Corps operator in Flat.
- 45 There were eight or ten prostitutes in Flat, and they would come and go. Georgie Hagen was another prostitute in Flat. She married Axel Pomgran, one of owners of claims on Willow Creek, the Happy Creek Mining Company.... The prostitutes never crossed the river [Otter Creek] and came south. They had an enclave of their own over there. It was an understanding that the prostitutes stayed on the north side of Otter Creek. There was no mayor or city council in Flat. There was a marshall in Flat for a while. But the marshall did not enforce keeping the prostitutes on the north side of Otter Creek. It was a basic understanding, an unwritten law, that they stayed on the north side of the river. The prostitutes never, never took part in any social functions. John had very old photographs of a ball at Discovery with the girls on the line at it. No other women took part in it. They had their own functions, totally separate from other functions that took place in the community.... John's photographs burned up in a fire at his camp earlier this year. Tony Gularte in Anchorage has a lot of old pictures. Tony collected a lot of pictures from early Flat....
- 87 Usually when prostitutes got married they left Flat and went to a place where nobody knew their past. When one of the last prostitutes in Flat, Gerdie Stenberg, got married to a guy named Stenberg, she stayed in Flat and her background was more or less forgotten. She would attend Flat social functions, and she was accepted. But prior to that, no other prostitutes were accepted [in Flat's mainstream society].
- 101 Rolfe asked about other women in Flat, and their activities. John said that the other women of Flat were married.... [Harold] Byrd, the accountant at the store, and his wife [Bessie] lived in Flat. Bob Acheson and his wife and family lived in Flat. Local wives had a garden club and a Women's Club. They got together and talked and had tea and cookies... These meetings would take place every couple of weeks or once a month. It didn't last long because the mining companies started closing down.
- 126 Flat disintegrated or fell apart rather rapidly. They shut the dredge down and people had to move out.... Things folded up in a hurry. Awe Mining Company, which employed 25 men on Chicken Creek, had to shut down. The other creeks all shut down. Patty Savage shut down. Upper Chicken Creek, Slate Creek, and Riley Investment Company all shut down. They got the dredge going again for a short period after that. Mining was shut down during World War II because it was considered non-contributing [non-

- essential] to the war effort. The fixed price of gold also effected mining. "After the war there was a feeling that things would continue on just the way they were before that [the war]." Mining revived for a brief time, but then the realities [increased costs and the fixed price of gold] of the whole thing hit and it [mining and the fortunes of the town] just started disintegrating.
- 147 Flat experienced boom and bust cycles. The real boom period for Flat was in the early 1910s--1910 and 1912--when the camp was struck....
- 158 Iditarod had many stores. It was a supply camp, not a mining camp. The town had a registered surveyor....There were jewelry stores, three newspapers, clothing stores, hotels, restaurants... This was the river boat landing area. Flat was the major mining camp, the producing area. Flat had many of the same stores. Businessmen overdid it [over built] in Iditarod. "They built all this logistic support for the mining area that never materialized." There were 5,000 people in the district. It didn't take long to find out that this was a limited mineralized area. "The whole thing went down just as fast as it went up. There were tremendous losses." John Fullerton gave Mark Kepler some survey plats of Iditarod and Dikeman. Dikeman was also over built. Dikeman was surveyed to be a big city, even though it was only a supply point. Flat was one of the larger gold bearing areas of Alaska....., but could not support that level of development. Flat back in the 1920s.... underwent lots of layoffs. Times were tough in Flat and Iditarod in the 1920s. The initial enthusiasm broke down in the 1920s....
- 208 The social hall in Flat, the Loyal Order of Moose, was a big two story building. It burned down. It had a dance floor downstairs and there were kitchens upstairs. Locals had dinners in the evenings, Christmas parties, masquerade balls, and all kinds of social events.... The building of the Moose Hall [Building S, IDT-070] was a community effort. Everybody contributed money. Alex Matheson supervised the building of the Hall. He was a master carpenter/cabinet maker from Scotland. Alex "put the dance floor in so the grain was going in all directions, so that you were never dancing against the grain of the wood" They had wax on the floor, and used large bails of hay to polish the floor. The Pioneers, Igloo #10, were the primary organizers of monthly parties in the winter time. They had "bean feeds." And dancing at bean feeds and card parties. There was absolutely no drinking there at the Moose Hall. Some of the guys would go over next door [to Andy Miscovich's Bar, Building Q, IDT-071] and have a drink, but they would chew gum so no one knew they had been drinking.... Kids and women participated in the activities at the Moose Hall, all together.... This was a part of rural America's heritage, and it was a lot of fun.... It was not the same in Seattle when John Fullerton later raised his kids....
- 270 Rolfe's concluding remarks....
- 277 [End of interview]

MARK AND SHERRY KEPLER INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED ON AUGUST 6, 1993

This interview was conducted with Mark and Sherry Kepler on August 6, 1993, at their home in Flat, Alaska. Mark and Sherry's son, Colin Kepler, was also present, as well as their dog "Winston." The interview session on August 6, was conducted by historians Rolfe Buzzell and Steve Posgate, and by interns Darrell Lewis and Ursula Schwaiger, all of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. The following is a summary of their comments, unless quotation marks are used.

Tape 1, Side A:

001 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....

013 Mark Kepler has always liked old towns and just fell in love with McCarthy when he lived in the Palmer area. Mark first came to Flat in 1983 or 1984 to help a friend repair an airplane. At that time Mark was living in Aniak. While helping his friend repair the airplane, he discussed buying a place in Flat. His friend knew of a place that was for sale. His friend took him over the Brink place. He did not know who owned the house but thought it might be for sale. After trying to track down the owner, who lived in McGrath, and not having any luck, Mark and Sherry just about gave up on the idea of buying a place in Flat. Sherry recalls that this was in March of 1984. Mark just happened to sit down next to the owner of the house at the Ryan Terminal in McGrath in July of 1984.... They bought the house and spent weekends and vacations at the place for three summers.

031 Josephine [Demientieff] decided to retire as post mistress in Flat and the post master's position came open. Mark had already bid on the contract to maintain the airport at Flat, and applied for the post master's position. He took the post masters job and moved to Flat in September of 1986. Sherry and the kids [Justin, Colin, and Cami] moved to Flat in late May of 1987. They have all been living in Flat since that time....

038 Mark and Sherry bought the Brink House from Tom Coil. Coil does odd jobs over in McGrath, and has a logging company there. He did not own the house for very long. Coil bought the house from Dick Wilmarth as payment for work he had done for Wilmarth down on Julian Creek. Wilmarth acquired the house from the estate auction after "Bigfoot" [Ernie Norman] died. Wilmarth did not own the house for very long either.... The Brink House burned on June 7, 1987.... Mark points to the building

- [Building LL, IDT-123] on the 1976 aerial photo and the survey crew's site map.... Bigfoot's name was Ernest "Ernie" Norman. Ernie did not own the house very long. Norman got it from a woman named Minnie Brink. She had moved to Wasilla to live with her daughter. Sherry added that Minnie lived here [in Building LL, IDT-123] for a while. Ernie stayed for a while, several years, after Minnie left. He stayed in Building LL. When Minnie moved, Ernie moved into Building LL. Building LL-2 [IDT-123] was just a wood shed and storage shed....
- 058 Harry and Minnie Brink had the house [Building LL, IDT-123] the longest, as far as Mark and Sherry know. A man by the name of Reynolds originally built the house. It was a combination of a log house and another house stuck together. A guy by the name of Randall is the one that put it together. Randall may have been a brother-in-law of Alex Matheson. Sherry recalls that Randall worked for Alex.... Mark and Sherry do not know when Randall lived there, but it was in the 1930s.... The house burned down in 1987....
- 071 The Kepler's current house is built on the location of the old Brink house. "We just enlarged the hole and put a bigger house in," Mark stated. This house [the current Building LL, IDT-123] is made from Building UU-1 and Building PP [as shown on the 1976 aerial map]. They were put together to make the house that the Keplers are in now. Building PP-1 was the Matheson Steam Bath, and Building PP was the Matheson's Bunkhouse. Mark does not know who owned Building UU-1.... The Matheson Bunkhouse [Building PP] was a one story building.... The east end side of the Kepler's present house, the bedrooms and bathroom, is made up of the Matheson Bunkhouse.... Mark moved the bunkhouse building pretty much intact. The building originally had Celotex on the outside. The building was empty inside, but it was in pretty good shape structurally. Mark and Sherry took all the Celotex off and put plywood on the outside because plywood is more rigid and weather tight. The other house [Building UU-1] had some rotten wood in it that had to be replaced.... Mark took the walls off and got down to the floor. He brought the floor over and put it on the foundation, then put walls back up. Then he did the modifications, like the bay window in the kitchen.... The kitchen and living room area on the west end of the building is the floor from Building UU-1. The roof is off of Building UU-1, also. Mark used most of the old rafters and most of the lumber from the roof. But most of the walls are all new.... The fabric of the original building [UU-1] is pretty much gone, except for the floor. Building UU-1 was not built too well. It was like most of the houses in Flat where the studs were spliced in the middle. There was not a full length stud in any of the walls....
- 108 The Kepler house has a full basement.... The foundation is treated timbers sitting on grade....

- 112 Mark built the Generator Shed [Building LL-1, IDT-123] from scratch. Mark also built the Chicken Coop [Building LL-3, IDT-123] from scratch. The Library [Building CCC-1, IDT-125] used to be Building LL-1 [IDT-123]. It was sitting out near its present location and falling apart. So Mark tore it down to the bare floor, moved it to a solid foundation in its current location and built it back up. The walls were removed but not dismantled when the building was moved. After the floor was moved, the walls were put back up. He also turned the building around. He put a completely different roof on it, because the roof was in very bad shape....
- 125 Building CCC-1 [IDT-125] was originally a house, but Mark does not know whose house it was. It was located on the other side of town. It was moved to another location and used as a wood shed. Minnie Brink bought it and had it moved to the area where the Generator Shed [Building LL-1, IDT-123] is now, where she used it as a house. She thought her other house was too big and too inefficient to heat. So she used Building CCC-1 as a winter time house. But it was so cold and drafty that Minnie about froze to death in it.... Mark does not know when it was moved, but John Fullerton was the one that moved it to the area of its present location. It had to be in the 1960s....
- 139 The Shower Building [Building LL-4, IDT-123] was a tool shed from Fullerton's old camp [IDT-234] that is located about 1-1.5 miles on Flat Creek. The Fullertons used it as a storage shed.... It was part of John Fullerton's camp in the 1950s. The Fullertons lived there after they moved back to Flat from Colorado Creek. The Fullertons lived there for three or four years. Mark does not know where Building LL-4 was before the Fullertons used it at their camp. Mark assumes it was built at their camp, but he does not know for sure....
- 155 Mark pointed out that the buildings designated as Building CCC, CCC-1, CCC-2 and CCC-3 on the 1976 aerial map and the Flat site map no longer exist. Originally Building CCC was a house, but Mark did not know anything about it. The Keplers just tore down the last remains of that building last spring.... There were only two walls of the kitchen standing on the building when the Keplers moved to Flat. Mark believes that Big Foot [Ernie Norman] or someone cut it up and used it for fire wood.... Building CCC-1 was just a shed. It was a pretty good sized shed, but the roof was collapsing on it. So the Keplers tore it apart. It was where Justin's Shop [Building CCC-2, IDT-126] is now. One of the walls from that building was used for the floor of the front porch on the Kepler Guest House [Building FFFFF, IDT-127].... Mark did not know what the building marked CCC-3 [from the 1976 aerial photo] was. It was not at that location when the Keplers moved to Flat. Steve Posgate asked when the porch was added to the Kepler Guest Cabin [Building FFFFF, IDT-127], and Mark replied that it was two summers ago, in 1991....

- 186 Rolfe explained that he has assigned the same letters [temporary site names] to the buildings that are there now as to the buildings that have been torn down. Rolfe asked about the buildings that are there now.
- 188 The Post Office [Building CCC, IDT-124] is Site HH-1 [just east of Building HH, IDT-122] on the site map and 1976 aerial photograph. When Mark took over the post office, the building was sitting next to the School [Building X, IDT-093]. Josephine Demientieff was the post master and she had the post office building sitting next to the school [near her house, Building W-1, IDT-092]. Mark towed the building to its current location. Sherry referred to it as "the portable post office." When John Stevens was post master, the building [Building CCC, IDT-124] was sitting by the Matheson House [Building II, IDT-102]. It was by the Agoff House [Building HH, IDT-122] when Kathy Agoff was post master.
- 199 Steve asked who the post masters in Flat were....
- 201 Josephine Demientieff preceded Mark. She was post master from 1980 until 1986. Mark took over as post master in September of 1986. He does not know who had it before that. Kathy Agoff had it for a little while between the time [John] Stevens died and Josephine took over. Mark does not know how long Stevens was post master or when Kathy Agoff had it. Mrs. [Lena] Alderson had it before her and Mrs. [Anna] Fullerton had it before her. Josephine Wood, Ira Wood's wife, was post master in 1912....
- 215 Mark moved the Post Office Building [Building CCC, IDT-124] from its location near the school to its present location in September of 1986, the day he took over being post master. He hooked it onto a cat and dragged it away.... Rolfe asked if Mark has made any changes to the building since he became post master. Mark replied yes. The U. S. Postal Service sent a maintenance man out and he measured for the door and windows and made the Keplers put in a solid core door with a dead bolt lock. The Postal Service sent out the bars for the windows and bolted the safe to floor. John Miscovich told Mark that he thought that was pretty stupid because anyone with the equipment could just pick up the whole building and take it away.... But at least the safe was bolted to the floor so it would not roll around [laughter]. Rolfe asked if they keep the building locked, and Mark replied that they do when they are not around.... The boxed soffit on the eaves of the building was part of the original building. The building was originally the accountant's office for one of the mining companies. It was on skids and the mining company dragged it around behind the [Matheson] dredge. It was the office for the guy that did the payroll. The safe next to the building was originally inside the building. It belonged to the mining company. But it was sinking through the floor and Mark felt it had to be moved. Steve Posgate noted that it is one of the few clapboard sided buildings in Flat. Rolfe added that it might have belonged to Matheson's accountant....

- 252 The library [Building CCC-1, IDT-125] used to be in the location of [Building LL-1, IDT-123]. They moved the building and remodeled it. The false front was built on by Mark. The other walls are unchanged. It was just a wanigan skid shack to begin with. Mark made the front window, and put the false front on it. The front door came from Building HHH [IDT-135]. That was Agoff's old house.... The front facade has been changed totally on the library building. "It was a real grungy looking tar paper shack when it was sitting out there; and that was one of the reasons we moved it..." Sherry said that when their first house [the Harry Brink House at the site of building LL, IDT-123] burned down, the fire turned all the tar paper black. Mark noted that the building was originally covered with green mineral paper, like a lot of the houses around Flat.... Rolfe asked about [Building CCC-2, IDT-126]....
- 271 Building CCC-2 [IDT-126] is Justin's shop. It was part of Bill Burns' complex [Building BBB, IDT-128] in 1976. Bill Burn's place consisted of a house and a shop, and there was a "companion way" between the house and shop that was used as a wood shed. They were all connected. The kitchen part of the house and the "companion way" collapsed and so the Keplers just took it out and moved the shop part over [Building CCC-2, IDT-126] to its current location.... The shop was the east end of the Bill Burns complex, closest to the outhouse associated with Building FFFFF [IDT-127]....
- 290 The Keplers found the ACS [Army Signal Corp] signs down at the dump and put them on the building [Justin's shop].... One of the signs they found in the dump and the other in the Miller's stuff at the Miller House.
- 298 The Millers lived in Building BBB [IDT-128], but it was originally Bill Burns' place. The Keplers called it Miller's place for a long time until they learned that Bill Burns had lived there. They try to call buildings by the original owners name if they can. A lot of people call the big grey house [Building II, IDT-102] the Dahl House, but it is actually the Matheson House. The same goes for the Donnelley [Building O, IDT-085], which is now referred to as Kenny [Dahl]'s house....
- 309 Alfred Miller was a friend of Alvin Agoff.... Miller lived there in 1979 and 1980. Nobody lived there between Bill Burns and Alfred Miller. Mark does not know when Burns left. "Bill Burns was one of the old timers around Flat." Steve noted that Bill Burns hung out with Tootsie and was responsible for the fire that burned down the Flossie [Winter] House [Site YYY-1, IDT-151]....
- 328 Mark was told by John Fullerton that Bill Burns moved the house [Building BBB, IDT-128] to its present location, but did not build it. He moved into the house and added the rest onto it. It was constructed when John Fullerton was a little boy, and it has been in that location as long as John Fullerton could remember.... When the [Matheson] dredge came through, Burns refused to move and they dredged right passed him. That is why

- there are fairly fresh tailing piles on the south side of the site. The dredge bucket line [Site BBB-1, IDT-236] just to the southwest of the house is from the Guggenheim Dredge. When the dredge was dismantled, that is where the buckets were dumped. There are parts and pieces of the dredge all over Flat. The dredge was dismantled for scrap iron.... Dredge buckets make great flower pots, Mark added. Nobody can tip them over....
- 360 Mark does not know what Building EEEEE [IDT-129] was, or whether it belonged to Bill Burns. It is a collapsed shed. Mark has no idea what that was. It may have been associated with another house. Jane Fullerton once told Sherry that when she was in Flat there were a lot of houses in the area of Building EEEEE.... Mark notes that some of the areas that appear to be alleys or roads are just places where the tailing piles were leveled off with a cat. They were not really streets.... Sherry said that Jane, who was in Flat in the late 1940s, told her that there were two or three houses southwest of Building LL. Sherry speculated that Building EEEEE might have been attached to one of those houses that no longer exists....
- 385 Building FFFFF on the site map is not the same building that is there now. The Kepler Guest House [Building FFFFF, IDT-127] was originally Stella Parker's building. Building FFFFF on the 1976 aerial photograph may have been the sheet metal shed [Building FFFFF-3, IDT-127] that is located just northwest of the guest house. It used to be located in the area behind the Kepler Guest House. It is currently being used as storage shed. Mark moved the shed last spring. The people that were living in the guest house were also using it as a storage shed. The Millers had also used the building for a shed. It was sitting on skids, and Mark moved it in there.
- 413 Alvin Agoff and Alfred Miller moved the Kepler Guest House [Building FFFFF, IDT-127] to that location in 1979 or 1980. The Millers never did anything with the building. The Millers were going to use it as a guest house. Mark does not know where it came from. Alvin Agoff would know where that building was before it was moved to its present location. The building belonged to Stella Parker but Mark does not know what she used it for.... Stella Parker had a lot of buildings. Joe Parker would buy people out when they left Flat, and Stella inherited all of Joe's stuff when he died....
- 428 Mark was sure that Miller built the outhouse [that is associated with Building FFFFF, IDT-127].... It was put together with odds and ends of materials. Rolfe asked why so many outhouses in Flat have windows...? Mark replied that "People here had class!" Most of the outhouses in Flat are old, but Mark does not know about the windows....
- 451 Frank Hatten was the last guy that lived in Building DDD and DDD-1 [IDT-131].... Rolfe asked about correspondence between Frank Hatten and Ira Wood that was found in the house... Mark replied that Ira Wood was bank rolling Frank Hatten's mining

- operation. Hatten worked for the miners around Flat and started buying claims when he got some money ahead. Hatten mined out at Willow Creek, where the Fullertons are now, for a while.... Hatten owned the Cat Shed [Building E, IDT-120] that Alvin Agoff owns now. There is a lot of junk and scrap iron around the cat shed. "Frankie Hatten was a pack rat...." Mark noted those dead typewriters and stuff around the [north side of the] Hatten House [Building DDD, IDT-131]. Hatten collected anything people threw away.... Frankie Hatten left in the 1940s. Mark received a letter from one of the Hatten sons who said he left Flat in the 1940s when he was five or six years old. Darrell Lewis and Ursula Schwaiger added that they found correspondence [under the floor of the Hatten House] dating between 1947 and 1954. Mark speculated that maybe Hatten's son was born in the 1940s and left Flat in the 1950s....
- 510 The Shed [Building DDD-1, IDT-131] next to the Hatten House was a work shop or something.
- 513 Steve Posgate asked if Site E-2 [IDT-120] has been moved recently because there are fresh cat tracks in the area.... After looking at the site map, Mark pointed out that that particular building is not there. The cat tracks are there because Mark recently went down with his cat and picked up a pickup that used to sit there. He did that last fall. Site E-2 [IDT-120] is a freight sled. On the opposite side of the road from Building E is a Morrison-Knutson pickup, that is sitting up on barrels. Mark and Alvin Agoff have been salvaging parts off the pickup.... The Freight Sled [Site E-2] has been moved to an area south of the location on the 1976 aerial map or it may be one that is in the brush near the Moose Hall [Building S, IDT-070]. Alvin Agoff was in the freight business, hauling freight on sleds.
- 555 Building FFF [IDT-132] belongs to a man named Jim Cruise right now. Mark does not know who Cruise got the house from. It was John Ogriz house originally. It is known in the community as the Ogriz house.... John Ogriz was a miner. Mark believed that he also worked for the Alaska Road Commission in Flat for a while.... Mark has no idea what Building EEE [IDT-132] was or where it went.... Mark said that Jim Cruise remodeled the house [Building FFF] and Cruise may have torn down the shed [Building EEE] for building material. Cruise built an addition on the northeast corner of Building FFF. It was a pretty good sized addition. He put in a sauna and a storage room. The addition was put on in 1987 or 1988. Cruise was just finishing it when Mark was moving the old bunkhouse onto the foundation of their present house.... Cruise worked on it over a period of time.... Jim Cruise lives in Nikiski [also spelled Nikishka] or Soldotna, somewhere on the Kenai Peninsula.... Glen Johnson bought a lot of buildings from Stella Parker. He lives in Soldotna. It was in the 1970s that Johnson was buying buildings in Flat from Stella. He bought buildings W and W-1 [IDT-092], BB [IDT-095], and a lot of others....

661 Building L and L-1 [IDT-133] is the old Fullerton house.... It used to be down in the area of Mark's Shop [Building AA, IDT-096]. That is where it was built. John and Rich Fullerton remember growing up there.... John Fullerton was born in that house and at the time it was down near Otter Creek...[End of Side A].

Tape 1, Side B:

002 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Side A....

008 The only thing that Mark knew about Building GGG [IDT-134] was that Mike and Josephine Demientieff cut it up for kindling. It had belonged to Mike's sister-in-law or some other relative.... It was cut up between 1980 and 1986. The Demientieffs were still tearing the building down when Mark moved to Flat in 1986....

015 Mark stated that building HHH [IDT-135] is the old Agoff house. Sherry suggests that the interviewers get a hold of Alvin Agoff sometime this winter. He lives in Palmer. He does not have much time in the summer but he has a lot of time in the winter....

042 Mark did not know what Building III [IDT-136, the Nick Sopoff House] was. Only a foundation remained in 1993. The building was gone when the Keplers moved to Flat....

045 Mark does not know who owned Building JJJ [IDT-137, the Silas McConeghy House, which had a hipped roof]. It was falling apart when the Keplers moved to Flat. The hutch that is in the Kepler Guest House [Building FFFFF, IDT-127] was the only thing holding the roof up in Building JJJ [IDT-137] when the Keplers got there. The hutch was in pretty good shape, so Mark pulled it out and the roof caved in. Sherry said that Alvin would be knowledgeable about these buildings.... Somewhere up the Flat Creek Road was Hardcrap's place.... Mark and Sherry did not know who owned the houses up the road from Building JJJ.... Sherry stated that Walter Sakow's House was still standing, and it had papers inside it. That was Building KKK [IDT-138]. Alvin Agoff would know whose house that was.

066 Mark states that the area going up Flat Creek Road used to be the main residential part of Flat, but it burned down. Bob Browne told him about growing up in that area when Browne was a boy. Browne told Mark that the early buildings there all burned down.... Browne lives in Las Vegas, Portland, Everett [Washington], and Los Angeles....

078 Steve Posgate asked about who owns the buildings on the north side of Otter Creek....

079 Mark stated that Building KKKK [IDT-169] is "Freight Train's" steam bath. Olsen remodeled the building. Mark does not know what it was before that. Darrell Olsen is

- "Freight Train's" real name.... He lives in Wasilla. Sherry says he has hung out in Wasilla, Nome, and McGrath for the last few years. Mark added that if Olsen was not working in Nome or McGrath, he was in Wasilla....
- 088 Building MMMM [IDT-168] is Olsen's house. Olsen bought it from Bertha Stevens sometime in the 1970s. That is where she was living when she met John Stevens and she was Bertha Dahl. John Stevens made her move out of the place because he did not like it. The east end of the building was added on by Darrell Olsen. It was not part of the original house, and was added in the 1970s. Just the hipped roof part of the house was original. Olsen moved to Flat when he was 18 but Mark does not know exactly when that was. Olsen was in Flat when John Stevens and Big Foot [Ernie Norman] were in Flat, and they both died in 1979.... The addition was added in about the late 1970s....
- 114 Building NNNN [IDT-167] is Darrell Olsen's Shop...
- 117 Building OOOO [IDT-166] is Dan Crammer's Cabin. He lives in Wasilla too.... Mark does not know who Crammer got the cabin from....
- 121 Building PPPP [IDT-164] is Jimmy Flemings' place. He built an addition to the east side in the spring of 1987 and Flemings never finished it before he moved away from Flat.... Flemings worked for John Miscovich in the summer of 1987 and moved to Bethel that fall. Flemings still lives in Bethel....
- 135 Building QQQQ [IDT-163] is Shawn Flemings' Shop. Mark does not know who Shawn got it from.... Mark believes the north addition was like that when Shawn got the building.
- 138 Jimmy Flemings bought Building PPPP [IDT-164] from Glen Johnson. Shawn and Jimmy used to live in Building AAAA-1 [IDT-155] and Glen Johnson owned Building AAAA [IDT-156]. They traded buildings. Shawn and Jimmy did not want to live together anymore, so they got houses on the other side of the road. Jim Flemings, Sr. used to own Building AAAA. That is where the Flemings lived when they lived in Flat. They sold the house to Glen Johnson when they moved over to Iditarod. Glen Johnson bought most of what Stella Parker owned. When Shawn and Jimmy moved back, they lived in the little log cabin [Building AAAA-1, IDT-155]. Glen Johnson did not like them living out his back door and the Flemings brothers decided that they did not want to live with each other any more. Johnson traded Building PPPP and Building SSSS [IDT-162] for Building AAAA-1. Rolfe asked how old Shawn and Jimmy are.... Mark replied that Shawn is 25 or 26 and Jimmy is 27 or 28. They are not old timers, but they have lived in Flat or Iditarod from the time they were five or six until they were over twenty. They lived in Iditarod or Flat most of their lives while they were growing up. Shawn Flemings owns Building SSSS, which was someone's workshop or shed. It

- originally had double doors on the front. Shawn modified the entry and added an arctic entry. It now has a different front on it....
- 182 The former building at Site RRRR, which has been removed, is on the back (north) end of Building SSSS [IDT-162].... It was like that when the Keplers moved to Flat. It was moved and added to Building SSSS in the 1970s. Shawn and Jimmy moved over to Flat from Iditarod at about the same time Darrell Olsen moved into Flat. Shawn and Jimmy and Dan [Crammer] and Darrell had their own little community over there.... The Flemings had the little cabin [Building WW, IDT-196] across the slough in Iditarod.... Five people lived in that itty-bitty place.
- 196 Building BBBB [IDT-154] is Stella Parker's place. Building CCCC [IDT-153] is just a foundation. Site XXXX is a truck. It is a 1941 one and a half ton Chevrolet pickup.... Trucks are easier to fix than buildings....
- 210 Sherry said "You didn't ask me about my other house!" Building DD [IDT-076] was the old post office in the 1940s and 1950s. There is post office paperwork over there in the upstairs of the building from when the post office was moved over from Iditarod, but Sherry cannot remember the date when the post office was moved. Steve Posgate asked if they moved the building when they moved the post office to Flat, but Sherry did not think so. Rolfe interjected that Mark and Sherry purchased the old post office this summer [1993] while the cultural resources crew was there surveying Flat. Sherry bought the building from Anne Williams. Anne Williams got it from Alvin Agoff in the early 1980s after Ann's house burned down....
- 250 Rolfe asked what other buildings the Keplers own.... They replied that they own just their house [Building LL, IDT-123] and outbuildings and the old post office [Building DD, IDT-076]. John Fullerton owns the shop [Building AA, IDT-096] that he works in....
- 260 Darrell Lewis asked if they knew anything about Building WW [IDT-114].... [The building appears to be the second story of a two story building and is currently being used to house a bulldozer].... Mark did not know anything about that building....
- 275 Mark showed the interviewers some photographs that he has developed from negatives that he has found laying around [in buildings] in Flat....
- 286 "This photo shows the bottom half of the Grand Hotel, which was turned into a dog kennel [Building V, IDT-90]." The top half was turned into the U. S. Commissioner's office.... The Grand Hotel was sawed in half.... The hotel was not located where the Dog Barn [Building V] is now.... Mark did not know where it was originally, but it was moved when the [Matheson] dredge came through. The building in the background of

- the photograph was the Turner and Wood Store but it was facing the opposite direction of the way it sits today.... The photos were taken in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Marie Matheson took most of the pictures and she came to Flat in 1923 or 1924. She started taking pictures when she first came here.
- 313 "This [photograph] is the old main street," Mark said, going to the next photograph. That section of town burned in the 1924 fire.... "This [next] picture is Flat after that section of the town burned down, so it was taken about 1925." "[In the next photograph], that is Marie [Matheson] behind the counter in Henry Durand's Cafe. She was a cook there....
- 335 Some of the negatives are from one of the buildings that the Dahls own. Some of the negatives were from Tom Balange, some were from Alice Parent, and some were from Marie Matheson.... All three had negatives stashed away in their stuff that was left in buildings. Sherry added that two of the oldest photographs were found in Building MM [IDT-105], which is partially collapsed. Some of those negatives were water soaked.... Some of the negatives are 5 inches x 7 inches, as in the case of one of the inside of the bank building in Iditarod.
- 371 Rolfe asked if the Keplers have a photograph of Alex Matheson or Harry Donnelley.... Mark has a good picture of Alex Matheson but has never seen one of Harry Donnelley.... Mark does not have any pictures of Turner or Wood, but he has one of Harry Sheppard and one of Henry Durand. Sherry notes that they have a photograph of the second hand dealer, [Felix] Bismarck, the guy with his pants unbuttoned....
- 387 [The tape recorder is shut off while they look at photographs].
- 388 Rolfe asked the Keplers about their vision of the future of Flat.... What kind of future do they see for the town of Flat and the historic buildings....
- 407 Mark replied that he and Sherry have some ideas about what they would like to do in Flat. They would like to acquire the [Donnelley and Sheppard] store [Building H, IDT-077] from the Dahls, fix it up, and make a museum out of it, but it does not seem feasible right now.... The Keplers main goal for right now is to just survive and keep going, remain in Flat, and preserve what they can in the community.... It is looking pretty grim at the moment ... because mining is a dying thing in Flat. Mark and Sherry had a discussion last night with Tad Fullerton, talking about mining, and what to do when mining dies. "What to do as mining limps along in these last few years.... Actually," Mark stated, "if you want to talk about dollars and cents, and investment and stuff, we are totally crazy for being here. Because there is no future here, as far as an economy goes, it's dead.... Its real hard to explain why we're here."

- 456 Sherry added: "We have invested every penny that we've ever gotten [in Flat].... I don't like to think about it, because it's not real smart!"
- 468 If money was no object, Mark would like to rebuild most of the buildings that are still standing and fix them up as displays or functional housing for tourists that come into Flat. He would like to see them live in some of the houses and tour the other buildings and mining operations. He would fix up the [Donnelley and Sheppard] store and make a museum out of it. He would restore both of the stores [Donnelley and Sheppard and the Turner and Wood stores]. He would also fix up the Matheson and Donnelley houses and put them on display. These were the best houses in the town.... He would fix the smaller houses up for tourists who would spend a week or weekend in them. "But that is not economically feasible because it takes so much money to rebuild these places." Mark said they have thought about the idea of catering to tourists for a long time.
- 497 He added that it would be very difficult to make it work. The main reason is the weather. If anyone has a schedule, forget it, especially this time of year. As far as tourism goes you would have to write the end of July and August off for most years.... One can get stuck in Flat for a week waiting for an airplane when the clouds set low over Flat. A tourist would have to be on a real flexible schedule.
- 514 Mark noted that another factor is that the buildings sit on mining land. "We don't exist," he said. "We're not here." Running a business other than mining on a mining claim is what would hurt the Keplers.... "Technically we don't exist here," Mark stated.... Technically, they are caretaking for the mining claim owners.... "It [Flat] is a town," Mark said, "and it's been a town since 1910. Nobody bothered to fill out the paperwork...."
- 531 Rolfe asked if there were any other year round residents of Flat when the Keplers first moved to Flat.... They replied that they have been the only year round residents since they moved there. Sherry says, "Everybody moved out when we came here!" Kenny Dahl had the airport contract the winter before Mark moved to Flat. Kenny and Connie Dahl were living in Flat all year round. Mike and Josephine Demientieff had the post office. Shawn and Jimmy Flemings were in Flat. Hal [?], Dan Crammer, and Darrell Olsen were in and out of Flat, but they were not year-round residents. That was it. When Mark moved to Flat, Hal, Dan and Darrell were gone. During the first winter Mark was in Flat, Shawn and Jimmy Flemings and Mike and Josephine Demientieff were the only other people living in Flat. Bill and Anne Williams were there until late November of that year. There was nobody besides the Keplers living in Flat the next winter. Mike and Josephine Demientieff left that summer, the Flemings stayed for the summer and left for Bethel. Kenny and Connie Dahl never came back.... As soon as the Keplers started staying year round, everyone else went where the money [and jobs] were....

- 581 Rolfe interjected that Flat has been and continues to be occupied all year round but the Keplers are the only family living in Flat all year round. Mark noted that Tad Fullerton was up at Willow Creek last winter. There was a couple [Curt and Kim Spratt] living in the Kepler's Guest House [Building FFFFF, IDT-127] for two years. They left in March of 1993.... Mark and Sherry brought them out to Flat to help cut wood and take care of things around Flat, but it did not work out. It turned out to be more work for the Keplers than the couple were helping them.... Rolfe added that if the Keplers leave, Flat may become uninhabited year round for the first time. Mark agreed. Mark has a few projects to get done before he leaves Flat. It may take him twenty years to finish the projects, however.... Sherry said she did not want to leave Flat....
- 615 Rolfe asked if the Keplers have any other ideas for bringing people into Flat...? He added that if buildings were not used and there was no economic activity, the buildings would not survive....
- 633 Mark replied that the only viable economy that could be attempted in Flat would be tourism. Bring people out to do recreational gold mining, etc Mark envisions doing something like what has been done in Williamsburg, Virginia. Kind of a 1930s theme town. Fire up the [Matheson] dredge, and let the tourists take photographs of it. One of Mark's projects is to build a blacksmith shop and put all the old blacksmith tools that he has been collecting in it.... Mark has boxes and boxes of blacksmith tools, but no blacksmith shop to put them in.... There is a four foot long bellows in a blacksmith shop up Flat Creek, which he could move down the creek into Flat....
- 686 [Tape runs out. End of Tape 1, Side B]

Tape 2, Side A:

- 002 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Tape 1....
- 005 Rolfe asked what impediments or obstacles the Keplers see that would work against preservation of the buildings in Flat...? Mark noted that the legal issue of the town being there at all is the main obstacle. If that were cleared up then the Keplers would be willing and motivated to invest a lot more time and money into fixing up the old buildings. "If we don't have any immediate use for the old buildings right now," he stated, "we are not going to put any effort or money into fixing them up.... I mean we could be run off." If the town status and land issues were resolved, the Keplers on their own would take care of more of the buildings in Flat. There would be more promise for a financial future in Flat for the Keplers.

- 022 Rolfe asked if the Keplers have discussed this with BLM or if it is something that everybody wants to avoid.... Mark replied: "It's been a can of worms that we really haven't wanted to open...." He does not want the people who own the mining claims to loose their mining claims just so he could have a piece of property that his house is sitting on. "There are so many ... variables involved." A mining claim is a negotiable peace of property. They don't want BLM to take these mining claims so they can turn the land into a town; on the other hand, mining is [almost] dead in Flat.... Mark said he did not know who they should talk to at BLM about these issues.... Dave Kelly [of BLM] talked to the Fullerton family a little about what should be done with Flat, but Mark did not know what part Kelly played in these issues....
- 041 Rolfe explained that BLM has a mandate under the National Historic Preservation Act to preserve cultural resources that are significant. BLM asked Rolfe and his crew to evaluate the buildings and structures in Flat to begin the process of determining which sites and structures are significant.... BLM eventually will have to address all of these issues.... Rolfe noted that there is not much public money available for preservation on public lands, so the strategy of state and federal governments these days is to develop partnerships between the private and public sector, to encourage people to reuse buildings....
- 061 Mark asked what would happen if Flat was made a townsite by BLM? Would the miners be reimbursed for their claims...? Mark asked what kind of partnership Rolfe is talking about... Rolfe explained that after the buildings have been evaluated as historic sites, BLM may try to initiate a dialogue to address some of these issues. Rolfe speculated that there may be incentives that could be developed to encourage people to invest in Flat to help preserve the buildings. Government officials understand that people are not going to put money into buildings that could disappear or that people have no control over. There needs to be some kind of long term arrangements ... to encourage entrepreneurs to invest in historic preservation....
- 085 Mark noted that right now it is not legal for them to rent out cabins because that kind of business is not mining related Sherry added that "We really truly do not exist." A census worker came to Flat and counted the Keplers. The census worker was in Flat for three days. Mark worked as an enumerator for the [U. S.] Bureau of the Census. When the census came out for western Alaska, Flat had zero population. The census worker sat at the Kepler's kitchen table for three or four days.... As far as the census was concerned, Mark listed 52 habitable dwellings in Flat under census criteria, not counting the Miscovich Camp [IDT-201] and the Agoff Camp [IDT-032].... But none of that information was in the final 1990 census report.... A habitable dwelling according to the census, Mark added, was anything with a roof, a floor and a door....

- 111 Mark asked if a partnership with BLM would limit what the Keplers could do with the buildings, such as moving buildings to shore up foundations, or to restore buildings? Would they have to consult BLM before they did anything with the buildings....? Rolfe explained that he did not have the answers to those questions. Rolfe added that these may be "gray areas where one can either be scared off or be very creative...." One of the questions that Rolfe ran into as soon as he started this project was who owns the land and one BLM official told Rolfe: "That's the question no one wants to talk about." Rolfe concluded that the questions underlying land ownership were major obstacles to economic development in Flat. Sherry acknowledged that right now, they are at a stand still until this issue is addressed.... They have to start making decisions for the next couple of years now.... Mark sees all sorts of potential for developing tourism in Flat, but they cannot do anything about it until these questions are sorted out....
- 140 Rolfe noted that there does not seem to be a unified sense of vision among the people who own buildings in Flat as to what should or could be done with the buildings.... Mark commented that the only other person besides he and Sherry that is interested in preserving anything in Flat is John Miscovich. As far as Alvin Agoff is concerned, it is all past, it's all history. Mark said that Agoff does not care [about preserving] these buildings.... The Fullertons are not interested in saving anything in Flat. They have a utilitarian view about re-using buildings for their mining operations.... Sherry explained that "We have a different attitude than most. This is our home. This isn't just our place of work.... My children will probably always want to come back here. This will be home to them." Mark said that no family has really been committed to living in Flat the way the Keplers have since the 1940s in terms of staying in Flat and raising a family.... The Keplers were in Aniak last June and they were offered pretty good jobs to go back to Aniak. But they had no desire to go back there. The Kepler kids were totally against going back to Aniak....
- 183 Mark concluded that right now they are just trying to hang on and take care of what they can in Flat. Sherry added that they are getting to the point where they will have to decide what to do for the future. Mark said that at first they were taking care of a lot of other people's buildings more than they are now. The Keplers were trying to fix up a few buildings, like some of the Dahl buildings, as best they could without putting any money into them. But they had a disagreement with the Dahls about what the purpose of all of their efforts were, so the Keplers have backed off of that. They are not touching any of the Dahl buildings anymore. "If it falls down, it falls down," Mark said, "and its not going be long before a lot of them [buildings] do." There is a lot that the Keplers would like to do [to preserve the historic buildings] in Flat, but they do not have the time, money or access. For Mark to do what he envisions doing in Flat, it would take him 20 years. With ten good carpenters, he could do it in three years. But there is not an economy in Flat to support ten more people. "There is barely any economy

- here [in Flat] to keep us going." If gold mining fizzles out and they cannot depend on the miners for fuel, the Keplers do not know what they are going to do....
- 210 Sherry said they are at a decision point. "We have to start making decisions now on where to go." They have been talking about it for years, but all of a sudden it has become timely. The way things are now, Mark said, "in five years Tad Fullerton will be the only miner operating in Flat.... In five years, the town has to have an alternate source of income.... They have to do something, and they have to start in on it now."
- 220 Rolfe asked if the Keplers see any potential for tying into the Iditarod Trail and dog sled race? Mark replied that he believes one would have to capitalize on the Iditarod name to draw tourism into Flat.... The Iditarod Dog Sled Race committee was too poorly organized to do anything about developing tourism.... Sherry added that the whole aura of the Iditarod Trail comes from the gold rush and the people that walked in on the trail.
- 241 Mark referred to a photograph of a shipment of gold at the Miners and Merchants Bank in Iditarod in about 1912. It is one of the negatives that was in a cardboard box in one of the sheds.... The people in the photograph are holding a sign that says "Three quarters of a million dollars worth of gold." ... There is another picture of the gold on the two dog sleds in Knik.... There was about 2500 pounds of gold....
- 272 Rolfe ended the interview and thanked the Keplers for the interview and for hosting the cultural resources crew during their stay in Flat....
- 281 [End of Interview].

NOTES OF INTERVIEW

WITH PETER BAGOY

Anchorage, August 28, 1993

On August 28, 1993, historian Rolfe Buzzell of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources/Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation/Office of History & Archaeology, interviewed Peter Bagoy at his home in Anchorage at 2522 McKenzie Drive, 99517. The interview was not tape recorded. Rolfe showed Mr. Bagoy a large 1976 aerial photo of Flat and a related site map from the 1993 field season. The following are notes taken by Rolfe Buzzell during the interview:

Peter stated that most of the buildings in Flat were not built there, but rather came from Iditarod. Many of the early buildings in Flat were destroyed in fires over the years. As Flat became the main population center in the Iditarod mining district, many of the Iditarod buildings were moved to Flat.

Peter was born in Nevada in 1908. He was six months old when his parents moved to Fairbanks in 1908. Peter's father was John Bagoy and his mother's name was Marie. The Bagoy family moved to Iditarod in 1910. John Bagoy was a prospector and miner, but he was not successful at either occupation. So John and Marie bought a roadhouse at Mile Two above Discovery (east of present day Flat). Marie ran the boarding house part of the roadhouse which was upstairs; John ran the restaurant and saloon downstairs. The Riley Investment Company Dredge mined the ground at Discovery and undercut the town. The Bagoy Restaurant and Saloon fell into the river [Otter Creek] about 1912 or 1913.

After the demise of the roadhouse, the Bagoy family moved to Flat. John Bagoy bought a saloon in Flat and operated it until prohibition began (about 1916). Prohibition put him out of business. John resumed mining, but went bust. After that, John started a farm on what is now tailing piles at the northwest edge of Flat. The Bagoy family supplied vegetables, eggs and milk to miners and the people in Flat and Discovery. They cleared six acres, and raised cabbage, turnips, and other vegetables. They had one cow and chickens. The farm was located one half mile up Otter Creek from the mouth of Cottonwood Creek, on the south side of Otter Creek. The area has since been mined and nothing remains of the farm. The location is west of the present Alaska Road Commission complex (IDT-171 and IDT-172) and south of Manuel Gularte's Warm Storage Building (IDT-173). The Iditarod-Flat tramway ran next to the Bagoy family farm. In recent years, Peter made a model of the farm, showing Otter Creek and a tramway bridge crossing Otter Creek next to the farm. The houses of prostitution in Flat during the 1910s were confined to an area just east of the Bagoy farm.

The Bagoy family continued to farm on the northwest edge of Flat until 1921. By that time, mining activity in the area was in decline and many people in the area had left. So John Bagoy scratched up enough money to move to Anchorage. The family abandoned the farm, as there was no one interested in buying it. Peter was about 14 years old when he and his family left Flat.

The school that Peter Bagoy attended in Flat was located on Flat Creek Road.

During the 1910s and early 1920s, Flat's prostitutes lived and operated in a confined area on the west side of Flat. However, they mixed socially with the people of Flat at dances, etc.

Peter remembered Emil Jensen, who was a boat captain on one of the Iditarod River boats. Peter did not know Emil's daughters, Johanna [Jensen Kerr] and Clair [Jensen Marks], who were born in the 1920s and were living in the Anchorage area in 1993.

Peter recalled that in the early years, Tootsie [Matty Crosby] operated a bathhouse (IDT-188) on the bank of the Iditarod River. Her establishment had bathrooms and a laundry service. The bathhouse and laundry was a legitimate business, but Peter recalls hearing rumors that the bathhouse was really a "hook shop"--a place of prostitution. Peter recalls that prostitution was not conducted openly in Iditarod. It was conducted similar to how prostitution has been run out of "massage parlors" in Spenard (Anchorage) in recent decades. The bathhouse was a front for prostitution. Later, Tootsie moved to Flat and ran a house of prostitution. She was still in Iditarod in 1921 when Peter's family moved from Flat to Anchorage.

While living in Flat, Peter delivered milk to miners, towns people, and the "girls on the line," as prostitutes in Flat were known. The latter were his best customers. He went around to the local saloons and collected beer bottles. His family cleaned and sanitized the bottles with fine sand, and then bottled milk in them. He delivered milk to people living as far away as the town of Discovery.

Peter recalled that Johnny Beaton and the J.E. Riley Investment Company were the two largest claim owners in the Flat area when he lived there. Johnny Beaton's wife [Mae] and two children died when the liner "Princess Sophia" went down in Lynn Canal near Juneau. Alex Matheson had his own mining operation on Willow Creek near the head of Flat Creek when Peter was a boy. Peter recalled the time when Matheson was injured in an accident and was brought in to Flat with a broken leg. Dr. [H.] Moore set the leg, but did not set it correctly, so Matheson always walked with a limp after that.

Dr. Moore was a "horse doctor," according to Peter Bagoy. Moore was actually a pharmacist, not a medical physician. He had a pharmacy in Flat, and there was no doctor in town. So Moore filled in, delivering kids, setting broken bones, pulling teeth, etc, all out of his pharmacy. Dr. Moore delivered six of the Miscovich kids and Peter Bagoy's four sisters.

Besides Tootsie, Peter recalled other prostitutes in Flat. As a boy, he met them delivering milk in the mornings. He recalled them by their nicknames. They included the "Irish Queen," the "Beef Trust," the "White Rat," "Three Dog Annie" (Finn Annie), "Kitty the Bitch," "Pie Face," the "Queen" (Flossie Winters), who had the largest house of prostitution, held dances, and had dance hall girls), the "Bull Dog" who was Chester Brink's girl friend (Chester Brink was a dog musher and mail carrier), and "Modie." Peter recalled that "Modie" and "Pie Face" got into a physical fight over one of the Mutchler brothers. "Modi" ended up marrying the brother. Most of the prostitutes ended up marrying miners and settling down. Some stayed in the Flat area, most moved on to other areas. "Talkeetna Red" was a red headed prostitute that moved from Flat to Talkeetna. A lot of the prostitutes came to Flat by way of Dawson, where they had been dance hall girls. The "Black Bear" (Nellie Bates) hailed from Fairbanks. The "Oregon Mare" died in Fairbanks. Peter said there were no "pimps" in those days. The prostitutes usually worked solo, although a few may have worked later for madams.

Peter said that after 1921, the people and town of Flat changed in character. Many of the old timers died off and a new generation of miners and entrepreneurs took over. Peter went to school with Tony Gularte, who was living in Anchorage in 1993. Peter and Tony have been friends, and over the years Tony talked about lots of people in Flat during the 1920s and 1930s that Peter never met.

Tony Gularte's father, Manuel Gularte had a saloon in Iditarod. The town of Iditarod declined before 1921, and by that year there were very few people left there: only two or three families. Manuel Gularte moved to Flat and bought Jim Finegan's business, which was a combination of pool hall, card room, bowling alley, and candy and ice cream shop. Gularte then got into the wholesale grocery business, selling groceries to the Bagoy and other families. Eventually Gularte got into the grocery business full time. Peter recalled the Subterranean Warm Storage Building (IDT-173) that Gularte had on the northwest edge of town at the edge of the slope, on the road to Iditarod. Peter believes that structure was there prior to the time that Manuel Gularte took it over. The structure was there as long as Peter could recall.

C.R. Peck had the first grocery store in Flat that Peter could recall. Tom McMann also had a grocery store. McMann sold out to Jim Fullerton. When Fullerton died, Fullerton's wife [Anna] sold the store. It was turned into a gymnasium, where kids and adults worked out. Mrs. Fullerton later married Henry Durand, who owned a restaurant. Miners ate at the restaurant, often using meal tickets (a form of tab) rather than paying cash. The miners would pay off the meal tickets at the end of the mining season. Durand obtained a number of mining claims from miners who went bust and could not pay their meal tickets at the restaurant. That is how Durand came to own mining claims. He later went into partnership with Fritz Awe to develop those claims. When Durand and Awe died, Durand's step children, the Fullerton brothers (John and Richard) inherited the mining claims and operation.

Harry Donnelley also had a grocery business in Flat. He initially worked for C. R. Peck, then bought C. R. Peck's grocery business. Donnelley took on a partner, named [Harry] Sheppard. Sheppard and Donnelley were partners in the grocery and mining businesses. Donnelley and Sheppard became partners before Peter left Flat in 1921. Peter's school teacher was named Marie. Peter could not remember her maiden name. She married Harry Donnelley. [George] Turner and [Ira] Wood, partners in another grocery business, came to Flat after 1921. Peter did not know either Turner or Wood.

Peter recalled the prominent stores along the main street in Flat during the early 1910s. They were all lined up in a row, starting with Manuel Gularte's business. Next door was Jim Finegan's grocery store. Next to that was the A.B. (Arctic Brotherhood) Hall. Chris Antonison had a jewelry store next to the A. B. Hall. Next along the street was Abe Wise's Haberdashery (clothing store). Next was Charlie Mitch's pool and cardroom. Next to Mitch's place was an alley, followed by "Budwiser Paul [Reimer]'s" Saloon, then Al Baine's Saloon, Al Currey's Saloon, and then John Bagoy's saloon with rooms upstairs. Across the street was Tom McMann's grocery store. At the end of the street was Doctor Behla, who worked as physician for the Guggenheims. The Guggenheims built a make-shift hospital building, which later became the Flat School House (IDT-093). Peter recalled that the main street of Flat ran north and south.

The Guggenheims also had a two-story log cabin on Gold Street. A doctor named Reed occupied that building. Reed brought an eskimo nurse with him to Flat. Peter delivered milk to the building. John Anderson later married the nurse. One of their children, Amanda, was later the belle of the town. Peter remembered two Finns who walked from Takotna to Flat. They got in a fight on the trail over the prostitute Finn Annie, and they nearly killed each other. Peter remembered when they were brought into town half dead, and Dr. Reed patched them up.

Judge [Charles E.] Bunnell from Fairbanks made a circuit ride to Flat to hold court each spring. A number of people accompanied Bunnell, including Ms. Fisher, his secretary, a lawyer named [Leroy] Tozier, and E. Coke Hill, another lawyer and musher. The "court crowd" came to Flat every summer on the first boat from Fairbanks to hear civil and criminal cases. Flat had a small jail, and had both criminal cases and civil disputes.

Peter recalled one crime in which he was involved indirectly--the killing of Mr. George Riley, the head of Riley Investment Company. Riley was overbearing and was the most hated man in the Iditarod-Flat area in the 1910s. At one point, Riley ran into financial troubles and could not pay some of his employees. This included a Montenegrin wood cutter named Mailo [Saguro], who confronted Riley in the latter's office. Riley refused to pay the wood cutter and kicked him out of his office. Mailo hired Peter to go to his cabin to get his belongings. Unknown to Peter, Mailo also purchased a gun at the Northern Commercial Company Store. He then followed Riley and shot him in the back [on May 5, 1918]. Mailo was caught and incarcerated in the little log cabin jail in Flat. A trial was started in Flat, but was moved to Fairbanks because Mailo could not receive a fair trial in Flat. In the Fairbanks trial, Mailo was convicted. He was the first man hanged in Fairbanks. All of this occurred about 1918, Peter recalled. If Mailo had confronted and fought Riley in a fair fight, there is no way he would have been convicted, according to Peter, as Riley was so hated in Flat. But Mailo shot Riley in the back, and leading to his conviction and execution.

Flat had a magistrate that handled minor cases during the rest of the year. A fella named [Felix] Bismark played attorney in some of these cases. Bismark had a second hand store in Flat. He had served in the German Army. Dave Browne was the magistrate or commissioner of Flat. [G. W.] Albright and [Charles] Taylor were two attorneys who came from Fairbanks to try cases during the summer season.

Peter recalled that there were about 700-800 people who lived year round in Flat during the years that he was in Flat. People came in the summer and left after the mining season, but there was still a sizeable population year round. By 1921, the population had declined to about 500 people. It took several weeks to get to Flat by river boat in the summer. Others came to Flat and Iditarod over the winter trail.

Mushers carried freight from Seward to Flat and Iditarod. Later, as the [Alaska] Railroad was being built towards Fairbanks, the trail head moved from Seward to Nancy (north of Knik), then farther up the line to Koby (now known as Anderson, where Clear Air Force Base is located). Prominent mushers that Peter remembers were Owen Grey, Bill Duffy, Ernie Beatty, Charlie Stanford, Gene Norton, Chester Brink, Sig Wig, and a French-Canadian named Clem LaBoard. The winter mail trail went right by Flossie [Winter]'s Place [IDT-151]. One mail carrier, Charlie Stanford who was an Irishman, frequently stopped at Flossie's Place and

got drunk. One time he was so drunk, he left his sled, dogs, and the mail on the trail outside her place. Locals had to take his sled, dogs, and the mail into town in order to distribute the mail.

The great mail robbery occurred after Peter left Flat. Nellie Bates, the prostitute known as the "Black Bear," was married to Bill Duffy, a mail carrier. The gold shipment that was robbed disappeared at Schermeier's Roadhouse. Nellie Bates was accused of stealing the money. She was tried, but she got off. Bill Schermeier was a friend of the Bagoy family. For a time after the robbery, Schermeier appeared to be very prosperous, bestowing lavish gifts and grants of money to various people. Later, he became seriously ill in San Francisco and thought he was going to die. He confessed to the robbery, but lived on after his confession. The "Black Bear" was suspected of participating in the robbery, but never went to jail. People said she bought her way out of it with expensive lawyers.

There was another robbery in the early days, which took place just outside Flat [1911?]. Louis Gorman, a Frenchman, and a partner robbed the Iditarod-Flat Tram as it was crossing Cottonwood Creek just outside of Flat. They reportedly cached part of the gold dust in Cottonwood Creek. Gorman and his partner were convicted and some of the gold recovered. The rest, supposedly buried in Cottonwood Creek, was not found. Lots of miners went looking for the gold, but no one knows if any of the rest of the gold was ever found.

The Guggenheim Dredge operation in Flat shut down before the Bagoy family departed Flat for Anchorage. The operation shut down during the war, sometime around 1917 or 1918. After that, the town started to die. The tramway carried the Guggenheim Dredge, piece by piece, when it was first constructed in Flat. The freight was carried on cars pulled over the wooden rails and ties by horses and mules.

Frank Manley shipped in a dragline by horses one summer. The parts were carried over the tundra by wagons that sunk into the muck up to the wagon axles.

Johnny Beaton, Alex Matheson, and [Odin] Strandberg were prosperous local miners. Strandberg made and lost a fortune on the Marietta Claim at the head of Flat Creek. He struck a very rich pot hole (\$50 pans) and went out and hired lots of additional laborers without doing adequate testing of the rest of the ground. The extra help and equipment were not warranted and he lost a lot of money through poor planning and management of his mining operation. Other prosperous people in Flat included Sam Applebaum, who was a Jew and an old sailor, Peck, Donnelly and Sheppard, and the Northern Commercial Company. These were all merchants that made good money from the gold mining activity in the area. The [Peter] Miscovich family also made lots of money in the Flat area from mining in the late 1930s, but the war pretty much shut down mining in the early-mid 1940s.

Peter later knew W.E. [Wesley Earl] Dunkle, who in the 1930s tried to develop the Golden Horn Mine east of Flat. Dunkle also developed the Golden Zone Mine [in southern part of Denali National Park] in the 1930s, and Peter Bagoy supervised the building of the road from the Alaska Railroad to the Golden Zone Mine. Peter recalled that Dunkle lived in a very primitive fashion while working in the back country.

Peter worked from 1927 to 1972 (47 years) for the Alaska Road Commission (ARC) and its successors, the Bureau of Public Roads and, after Statehood, the Alaska Department of

Highways. Peter knew Ralph Solberg, who wrote a book on building bridges for the Alaska Road Commission and who died last year. Over the years, Peter Bagoy worked on the Denali National Park Road to Kantishna, roads in Homer and Illiamna, the Palmer to Nelchina section of the Glenn Highway (1941-1946), the Seward Highway (in Anchorage) to the Potter Section House, and the Pioneer Roads Project in Anchorage, including Rabbit Creek Road, DeArmond Road, and other roads including Muldoon Road. Peter was in charge of construction on these projects.

The last time Peter was in Flat was in 1962, when he was working for the State of Alaska. He was there at that time to inventory the highway maintenance equipment at Flat at the old Alaska Road Commission station. He met John Stevens during that visit. Peter recalls that Tootsie lived on Flat Creek Road in 1962 during his visit. She was running a lunch room, and she wouldn't serve him unless he told her who he was and where he was from. After he told her who he was and that he was from Flat, she remembered him.

Rolfe copied a number of photographs of Iditarod and Flat from Peter Bagoy's personal photo album. The photographs are in Roll #62 (FLT-93-RGB-62), and Peter agreed to allow use of the photos in writing Bureau of Land Management-Department of Natural Resources reports on Flat and Iditarod. Peter said he was interviewed last year by an University of Alaska/Anchorage professor whose name Peter could not recall.

NOTES OF INTERVIEW

WITH CLAIR (JENSEN) MARKS, JOHANNA (JENSEN) KERR, DOLLY
(MILLER) TURNER, AND NINA (MILLER) MERCER

Anchorage, August 26, 1993

On August 26, 1993, historian Rolfe Buzzell (Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Office of History and Archaeology) interviewed Clair (Jensen) Marks at her home in Anchorage. Also present were her sister Johanna (Jensen) Kerr, Dolly (Miller) Turner, and Nina (Miller) Mercer. Clair and her sister Johanna, who is older, were born in Iditarod and raised in Flat. Sisters Dolly and Nina Miller, who lived in Flat during much of the same time period, also participated in the interview. Rolfe did not tape the interview as there were seven adults present and a TV set going in the background. Rolfe showed the four interviewees a large 1976 aerial photo of Flat and a related site map with temporary site location letters. He also showed them photographs of specific buildings taken during the summer of 1993.

The following are Rolfe's notes taken from the interview with the four women.

Clair (Jensen) Marks was born in Iditarod in 1925. Her address is 3723 East 66th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99507. Her father, Amal "Paprika" Jensen, was a miner. He also ran mail by dog sled in the Bethel area, ran a barge on the Iditarod River for Day Navigation, and freighted fuel overland by sled in the winter. Clair's mother was an Athabaskan Indian. The Jensen family moved from Iditarod to Flat in about 1929 or 1930. Clair's older sister, Johanna, is about ten years older and was also born in Iditarod. The two sisters lived in Flat at Site CCCC [IDT-153] until 1942, when the war prompted a shut down of most gold mining in the area. At that point in time, the Jensen family moved to Anchorage. Clair has some photos of Iditarod and Flat, mostly of people, not buildings. Rolfe borrowed six photographs, and Clair said she would try to locate more photographs through her daughter and a cousin. Of the four people participating in the interview, Clair appeared to have the clearest memories of experiences in Flat and she was the most willing to volunteer information about Flat.

Johanna (Jensen) Kerr lives in Eagle River. Her address is P.O. Box 770297, Eagle River, AK 99577. She was married to a man named [Bob] Rudd, then later to a man named Kerr. Johanna had a number of photographs of Flat, but most were destroyed in a house fire some years ago. She may still have some photos, but was not able to locate them in time for the interview.

Dolly (Miller) Turner lives in Peters Creek. Her address is P. O. Box 357, Chugiak, Alaska, 99567. Dolly was born in 1930. Her sister Nina (Miller) Mercer was born in Flat in 1932. Her address is P. O. Box 670563, Chugiak, Alaska, 99567. Both Dolly and Nina grew up in Flat, and left there in 1948.

Nina and Dolly said that Building NNN [IDT-141] was their family home in Flat from about 1937 to 1950 or 1951. Site WWW [not found during the 1993 field survey] was the Bob and Betty Acheson House, they said. Nina had a photo showing the house [Building NNN] still standing in 1958. Their mother, Lucy, lived in the house until about 1950 or 1951. Their father, Loui Miller, bought the house about 1937; it was already in that location at the time.

Their father built an addition on the north side of the house. [Evidence of that addition was not found during 1993 fieldwork]. After Lucy Miller left Flat about 1950 or 1951, the house was abandoned.

The house just north of Building NNN [Site DDDDD] had a hipped roof, Nina and Dolly said. This building [DDDDD] appears in Nina's 1958 photograph. [During the 1993 fieldwork, DDDDD was not located, although it shows up on the 1976 aerial photograph]. Nina and Dolly recalled that the Teddy Charles family lived in Building DDDDD. Another family, the name of which they could not recall, lived in building DDDDD before the Charles family.

Nina and Dolly recalled that Milo Caughrean lived across the road from them in Building MMM [IDT-140]. They said Maxine Caughrean lives in Grants Pass, Oregon.

Clair (Jensen) Marks recalled that Alex Matheson's wife (Marie) was called "Mazie" in the local community. Clair cleaned her house at various times for compensation. Clair recalled that "Mazie" gave her a bible. Marie Matheson taught bible school for the kids and held bible meetings for adults in the community. Clair recalled that Marie had previously been involved with the Jesse Lee Home for children in Seward before coming to Flat.

Clair, Johanna, Dolly and Nina recalled that there were four families in Flat in which the wives were Native women. All four women were married to white men. They were John Anderson, Amal Jensen, Loui Miller, and George Turner [a partner in the Turner and Wood Store]. George Turner's wife was Ester. Amal Jensen and Loui Miller were both married to Athabaskan Indians. There were no married or unmarried Native men in Flat, and no unmarried Native women. It was pretty much a white community, with the exception, they said, of Tootsie, who was black. Native men were more interested in fishing and trapping, and Flat was a mining community, they said.

Dolly and Nina said that their father, Loui Miller, worked in the mines around Flat. He drove thaw points. He worked for Matheson, and also worked for a time on Willow Creek for a miner named Pete Jensen (not related to Amal Jensen). Loui Miller first moved to Flat in 1935 or 1936, they said.

Prior to living in Building NNN [IDT-141], the Loui Miller family lived in Building TTTT [IDT-161], on the north side of Otter Creek, across the street from the Jensen family [who lived in Site CCCC, IDT-153]. Joel and Jule Stuver lived in Building TTTT before Loui Miller moved his family to Building NNN. The Stuver House was across the road from Building CCCC, where the Amal Jensen family lived. The Millers lived at Building TTTT in 1936-1937. The logs at Building TTTT came from a log house in Iditarod. Clair said her father took the log house in Iditarod apart and moved the logs to Flat where he used them to build Building TTTT. This was before the Stovers lived in the house.

Clair said that Site V [IDT-090] was a dog barn operated by Harry Lawrence, who had the Adams Hotel [Site P, IDT-089].

Bob Acheson, who lived in Site WWWW [no AHRS Number has been assigned], up the road and on the same side of the road from Building NNN, died in Kodiak last year. Acheson ran the store for Donnelley and Sheppard.

Tom Jensen had a garden in Flat, Clair Marks said.

Clair and Johanna's father, Amal Jensen, worked for Day Navigation and for Donnelley on the Riley Dredge.

Violet [Wadsworth], the prostitute, went with Harry Bodeen. Harry gave Clair lessons on a musical instrument when Clair was a child.

Teddy, another prostitute, lived in Flossie's Place [Site YYY-1, IDT-151] after Flossie [Winters] left Flat. Clair said she did not recall Flossie living in Flat in the 1930s. Flossie worked Flat in the years before the 1930s, and Teddy took over Flossie's large house.

Jean Clyde was another prostitute on the "Line" in Flat, Clair said.

Loui Hall worked for the Telegraph (Signal Corps office) in Flat.

Billie Harding lived in Finn Annie's house [Site DDDD, IDT-160] after Finn Annie left. Clair recalled that the house had 3 distinctive points (gables).

Joe Cummings lived in the old log house [Building EEEE, IDT-159] west of Finn Annie's Place. None of the four women recalled what Joe Cummings did for a living. He was an old man and retired during the 1930s when they lived in Flat.

Joe Baker lived in the house [Site ZZZ, IDT-152] to the west of the Jensen family home [Site CCCC, IDT-153]. Clair said her father was friends with Joe Baker. Amal Jensen spent a lot of time at Baker's place playing cards. Baker apparently ran card games and sold bootleg alcohol.

Clair said that Harry Brink lived in a log house [Building AAAA-1, IDT-155] by the foot bridge across Otter Creek. A Mrs. Carter lived in the house next door [Building AAAA, IDT-156] during the 1930s. Mrs. Carter owned mining claims in the area around Flat.

Nina said that Alvin Agoff has a very good memory, and might be a very good informant about the history of buildings in Flat. In the fall and winter he lives in Palmer.

The four women talked about going to school in the old School House at Flat [Building X, IDT-093]. Teachers that taught at the school while they lived there included Evelyn Agoff, [first name unknown] Porter, [first name unknown] Lyons, the Stiffers, Mrs. Savage, and Mr. and Mrs. Holmes. Harold and Lois Weingartner taught at Flat after 1942. During one period of time (years not specified), the teachers attempted to offer high school at Flat, but it was not continued for lack of enrollment. The kids had to go elsewhere if they wanted to go to high school (which most families apparently could not afford).

There was no church in Flat. Marie Matheson taught bible school to the kids and conducted bible sessions with adults. Henry Chapman, an Episcopal priest, came to Flat from Anvik to baptize new born babies.

According to the four women, the prostitutes in Flat were shunned (ostracized) by other women in Flat. The prostitutes had to stay on the north side of Otter Creek. Paul Reimer, who was known as "Budwiser", worked for the Donnelley and Sheppard Store. He would go over to the "line" and take the prostitute's grocery orders and then deliver them. In the 1930s, Tootsie was known as a "madame," who ran "laughing girls" (other prostitutes). Tootsie owned a number of mining claims in the area. Amal Jensen took her out by dog sled during the winter to do assessment work on the claims. During the 1930s, Tootsie ran a restaurant and sold

bootleg alcohol. She also made homemade bread, which locals could buy. Hair from her wig sometimes showed up in the loafs of bread, Clair said.

During the winters in Flat, the four girls (Clair, Johanna, Dolly and Nina) hauled water by dog sled, skied, and ice skated. During the winter, Otter Creek was frozen and they could just walk across it rather than use one of the bridges. During the summers, the girls rode their bikes. All of the kids had bikes. They also went berry picking. There were lots of bears around Flat in those days, they recalled. Also during the winter, they went to dances. The dances were sometimes called "Bean Dances" because the men made beans to eat during the dances. They were held at the Pioneer's Hall, also known as Moose Hall [Building S, IDT-070]. Clair's father, Amal Jensen, was a member of the Pioneers. Santa Claus came to the Moose Hall at Christmas, not to the family homes. The community held a community Christmas Party where all gifts were exchanged. The kids took their new presents and toys home on sleds. There was also an annual school play at Christmas time, but the kids were frequently not very enthusiastic about participating in that.

There was no doctor in Flat during the 1930s and 1940s. Mrs. Lawrence, whose husband ran the Adams Hotel and the Lawrence Bar [Building P, IDT-089] was a registered nurse. Andrew Miscovich's wife was also a nurse, as was Mrs. Roper. Babies were delivered by mid-wives.

The dredge shutdown in Flat during World War II, and many people left to find work, often moving to Anchorage. During the war, armed guards were stationed at the Wireless Station [Building AAA, IDT-130] to protect radio communication from sabotage. Loui Hall worked for the Signal Corps. Before the war he wore civilian clothing, but during the war he and others working at the Signal Corps station had to wear military uniforms.

Rolfe borrowed six photographs from Clair (Jensen) Marks to copy:

1. Dog race in Flat
2. Kids in front of the Flat School [Building X, IDT-093] in 1930s
3. Robert Gertler in front of an airplane. Wiley Post's aircraft is in background, flipped over (1933).
4. The Grand Hotel and other buildings in downtown Flat (winter time)
5. A temporary Alaska Road Commission camp on the Flat-Iditarod Road, showing vehicles and workers.
6. Johanna and Clair Jensen at Iditarod on the boardwalk in front of the Northern Commercial Company Store [Building A, IDT-174]. This photograph was taken in the late 1920s.

Rolfe asked Nina (Miller) Mercer to make copies of three slides of Flat during 1970 and a print of the Miller family home [Site NNN, IDT-141] in Flat taken in 1958. Nina Mercer had other photos and slides of life in Flat, but they did not include buildings documented during the 1993 field season.

CATHERINE WEIMER INTERVIEW
SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW
CONDUCTED ON JANUARY 18, 1994

This interview was conducted with Catherine Weimer on January 18, 1994, at her home at 1207 G Street, in Anchorage, Alaska. The interview was conducted by historian Rolfe Buzzell and student intern Ursula Schwaiger, both of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. The following is a summary of Mrs. Weimer's comments, unless quotation marks are used.

Tape 1, Side A:

- 002 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell.... Catherine's first name is spelled with a "C" and her last name is spelled W-E-I-M-E-R.
- 011 Catherine Weimer stated that she has lived in Anchorage since she was born there in 1916.... Catherine spent two summers in Flat.... She was married in 1934 and her husband went to Flat in March or April looking for work. He had a choice of looking for work in Dillingham fishing or in the interior, where the price of gold had recently gone up. Catherine and her husband opted to go to Flat that summer. They went there the following summer as well. They only stayed two summers because they were expecting their first child, there were no medical facilities in Flat, and she had family in Anchorage. So they came back to Anchorage.... Catherine's husband's name was Robert M. Weimer ... and he passed away in 1947....
- 030 Catherine's grandfather, Charles Ross, went to the Klondike around the time gold was discovered in the Cassiar area. He was in the Klondike at the time of the discovery at the Klondike about 1897. Catherine's father was a young bachelor. He was one of three young Irish Americans who were partners. They went to the Klondike together during the rush. Catherine did not know anything about her father's experiences in the Dawson area. When gold was discovered in Nome, her father went to Nome. Catherine's grandfather went to Nome in 1899. She thinks her father went to Nome in 1900. Catherine's grandmother, her mother's mother who was married to Charles Ross, packed up her six children.... and took them to the Klondike....
- 053 [The tape recorder was turned off when Cecil Glen Barnett arrived at Catherine's home and she introduced him to the interviewers. The tape is turned on again as Mr. Barnett and Mrs. Weimer were discussing their years in Flat.]

- 054 Rolfe introduced Mr. Barnett.... Rolfe explained the site map that is being used in the interview.... Mr. Barnett pointed out various land marks on the map that he recalls....
- 072 Rolfe set up a separate interview time with Mr. Barnett and asked him if he has any photographs of Flat.... Mr. Barnett indicated that he had photographs and negatives that he took in Flat....
- 111 Mr. Barnett stated that there were nine men in Iditarod when he was in that area, and they were all named Charlie....
- 115 [The tape recorder was turned off when Mr. Barnett departed, then was turned on again].
- 116 Catherine Weimer stated that Glen Barnett's family and her family were neighbors until Catherine got married in 1934 and moved away.... When Catherine and her husband bought her present house in 1954, the Barnett's bought their house in January of 1955, and they have been neighbors ever since.... Both Catherine's and Glen's fathers worked on the Alaska Railroad....
- 134 Catherine's father moved to Anchorage in 1915.... The Nome rush was pretty much over. Catherine's grandparents had a hotel in Nome called the "Green Tree". Four of their six children were already married when "gold fever" in Nome began to die down. Everyone in the family left Nome the same year, but later one of the daughters married a miner from Nome and they moved back to the Kougarok area.
- 145 In the summer of 1915, Catherine's father got a job drilling, proving ground, in the Hope area. They were at Sunrise in the summer of 1915.... Catherine's maiden name was Cavanaugh. Her father proofed ground down at Crow Creek as a summer job. In September the railroad started making the port and headquarters for the railroad at Anchorage. So they went to Anchorage, probably on one of the small freight boats common in Cook Inlet at the time. Her father, Mr. Cavanaugh, worked lightering freight. The tent town was already started. He bought a lot in Anchorage in the second lot sale, not the first Anchorage lot sale.... They were not in Anchorage at the time that the first lot sale took place for the Anchorage townsite.
- 175 During the winter of 1915-1916, Catherine's parents lived in a tent that was located in the present area near Cordova and 3rd Avenue. The tent had a wooden floor and frame.... They gradually built their cabin, which was located about where Second Avenue is, near the present Coca Cola bottling plant. Just above that lot is where the railroad built the first hospital.
- 189 The Cavanaughs moved into their cabin about the 1st of March. Catherine was born around the middle of March. Sometime after that the cesspool from the hospital broke

- and flooded their lot. They were "rescued" and they moved to another lot in a different part of town. Catherine's parents lived in Anchorage until Mr. Cavanaugh retired from the railroad in 1936. He died in 1940 in the States.... The name Cavanaugh is spelled C-A-V-A-N-A-U-G-H Catherine provided information to Diane Brenner at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art about her years in early Anchorage....
- 213 Rolfe asked more about Sunrise... In the 1930's the Alaska Railroad had an excursion to Moose Pass. She and her parents rode on the Estes Brothers truck from Moose Pass to Hope. That was the first time Catherine's parents had been there since they had been in Sunrise in 1915. Hope was connected to Seward by road, but there was no road connection between Moose Pass and Anchorage. One could only get to Moose Pass and Hope from Anchorage by Train. Some people went down there for the fishing.... During that trip to Hope, Catherine and her parents went by Sunrise. They did not get out of the car.... There were just a couple of buildings left in Sunrise at that time. Catherine's parents' names were Peter and Agnes (Ross) Cavanaugh....
- 260 Catherine was in Flat in the summer of 1935 and 1936.... Her husband went to Flat first looking for work. He flew over there in about April and Catherine joined him a little later. He worked for two weeks cutting wood for the people who owned the [Riley] dredge [Donnelley and Sheppard].... He cut stove wood with an axe. When they saw what a hard worker he was, they said he could work for them over the summer. As soon as housing arrangements were made Catherine joined her husband in Flat. Their cabin was not too far from where the Donnelley and Sheppard Store was located. Just across the tailing piles.... Catherine did not remember the Moose Hall.... She recalled that the Donnelleys and Sheppards lived on Flat Creek Road.... Catherine said that the Kardanoffs also lived up Flat Creek Road....
- 320 Catherine stated that their cabin was located close to the airfield.... The Pattersons lived right on the edge of the airfield. "Boy, I tell ya, a plane would come in and Mrs. Patterson was out the door, she was the official greeter..." Mrs. Patterson was the first person Catherine met in Flat. Unfortunately, Catherine became airsick on the ground after getting out of the airplane.... It was a beautiful flight, but it was a little plane.... The pilot was Johnny Moore. She was so tense during the flight, that when she got on the ground she got sick....
- 354 The Weimer's cabin was located somewhere behind the [Donnelley and Sheppard] Store, sitting on the tailing pile. The cabin was right next door to where Johanna [Jensen] Rude [Kerr] and her husband lived.... Johanna's maiden name was Jensen. Johanna was married to a Mr. [Bob] Rude, and they had a three-year-old girl. The Weimers were able to rent the cabin next door because the owner of the cabin, a miner, was away somewhere out on a creek on a job. So the Weimers rented the cabin....

- There were several buildings between their cabin and the store.... The cabin was between the Donnelley and Sheppard Store and the airstrip.
- 374 The ground out at the end of the runway had never been mined at the time Catherine arrived in Flat. They were thawing ground, and Mr. Weimer's work that summer was to drive points. He climbed a little ladder and pounded the points down into the ground. He had been a coal miner. He was short but a very husky, strong man.... Later the Weimers moved from their cabin to the Patty Savage's house. The Savages had a little greenhouse and a garden. Catherine took care of things, making sure the greenhouse was watered and such.... This was during their first summer in Flat.... The Savage house was located across the road between the town, the airstrip and the Miscovich's Home [Building Y, IDT-094]....
- 419 Catherine's husband worked the night shift, as she recalls, because he came home early in the morning. Summer workers took the 4th of July off. Other than that, they worked seven days a week. He usually came home at 5 in the morning and they had breakfast together. One time she and her husband walked up to the ditch line, having heard that there was good fishing there. Her husband was not much of an angler. It was a hot, sunny day, and the white socks were really bad. Catherine was wearing a straw hat and a head net. Her hair was hanging loose, and the insects managed to crawl under her garments and through the head net into her hair. She could feel them biting her. By the time she got home, after they had walked the ditch... and Catherine took off her headnet, "the back of my neck was like a raw beefsteak" from all of the insect bites.... There was a lot of swelling and redness, and it was just awful. She could hardly turn her head....
- 463 The next summer... in 1936, Catherine and her husband went back to Flat. Catherine's husband worked for a "hard rock operation"... possibly the "Golden Horn" Mine. Catherine remembers being at the [Peter] Miscovich camp, but she is not sure whether her husband worked for Miscovich. Catherine's husband worked for the Dunkle mining operation [Golden Horn Mine, IDT-228]. Catherine and her husband always called it the Dunkle outfit. Dunkle was running the mine for the Canadian company that owned the mine.... Mr. Weimer had been a coal miner in Pennsylvania. As Catherine recalls, the summer of 1936 was the last time they took concentrates from the Dunkle underground mine.... It was an underground mine. Scuttlebutt around town was that the reason the mine closed down was that Dunkle was not interested in the property, that he was more interested in the Independence or Lucky Shot Mine that he was running in the Willow Creek [Hatcher Pass] area....
- 496 Catherine thought that Flat was a very interesting place. [Peter] Miscovich had his own way of mining, and Glen Barnett could probably tell more about that. Peter Miscovich always bragged about inventing this [device]. It was basically a siphon. They used the

- giants down in the cut to dig down to and dig up bedrock; and they had the water going in such a way that the pipe would be like a siphon, hauling the gravel up out of the cut so that they could wash it.... That was different from the dredge or the hard-rock mining.... Catherine thought they had to smelt the gold to get it out at the Dunkle operation.... Miscovich was doing open pit mining....
- 531 Catherine did not have any photographs from the time she spent in Flat.... Catherine said her husband worked for either the Dunkle operation or Miscovich at the end of the first summer they were in Flat [1935]. The second summer, Mr. Weimer worked on the Donnelley and Sheppard [Riley] Dredge as an oiler....
- 557 Their second summer in Flat, Catherine and her husband lived in a little cabin.... During that summer, Minnie Brewster and Jensen lived in a house next to the [Donnelley and Sheppard] Store [Building H, IDT-077]. The Weimers lived in a small cabin [on the east side of Flat Creek Road] just south of the spot on the site map marked IDT-085 [site of present day Donnelley House].... The Jensen family lived on the other [north] side of the [Otter] creek.... Many people lived on the road going up Flat Creek, including the Donnelleys, and the Kardanoffs. The Kardanoffs were between the Donnelley House and...the road took a little bit of a curve along there. The Kardanoffs were one [the west] side of the road and the Donnelleys were on the other [east] side. The cabin Catherine and her husband stayed in may have been in the vicinity of buildings "FFF" and "EEE" [IDT-132] on the interviewers' site map.... There was a series of houses on both sides of the road between the store and Building FFF on the site map.... Catherine could not remember the exact location.... There was a lean-to shed in the area marked "EEE".... Rolfe showed Catherine a 1993 photograph of the building at "FFF" [IDT-132], and Catherine said that was not the building she remembered in that general location....
- 629 The second summer Catherine and her husband were in Flat, Fritz Awe was mining tailings along Otter Creek. It was right downtown, and they must have got the water from Otter Creek.... Catherine recalled the Alaska Signal Corps (ACS), but could not recall where it was located.... Catherine recalled that one had to cross Otter Creek on a bridge in order to get to the Turner store.... She only went over there about one time.... She recalled that the Jensen family lived on the north side of Otter Creek [Site CCCC, IDT-153].... Turner' Store was [tape runs out].
- 682 [End of Side A, Tape 1]

Tape 1, Side B:

- 001 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Side A.... Rolfe showed Catherine some photographs taken in 1993 of buildings on Flat Creek Road in the general vicinity where she stayed during the summer of 1936....
- 010 Catherine stated that the cabin she and her husband stayed in was made of logs. Rolfe asked whether most of the buildings in Flat were made of logs. Catherine did not think it was predominantly one way or the other.... Rolfe continued showing Catherine photographs of buildings on Flat Creek Road....
- 038 Catherine stated that the Kardanoffs lived on a bit of a rise on Flat Creek Road. Mrs. Kardanoff passed away within the last couple of years. The Kardanoffs spent most of their later years in Fairbanks.... Catherine asked to see a photograph of the [Donnelley and Sheppard] store building....
- 056 When the Weimers were in Flat, the Donnelleys did not live in the house next to the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077]. The Sheppards lived in that house, then the Jensens, who was [sic] the former teacher, lived up the road, and then the Brewsters. The Weimer's cabin was farther down [up] the road, but not too far. She used to visit with Mamie [Minnie] Brewster and Mrs. Jensen. In those days, they did not use first names indiscriminately....
- 062 Catherine stated that the Moose Hall [Building S, IDT-070] must have been where they held the weekly dances, but she did not remember calling it by the name "Moose Hall." It was just known as the "Community Hall." Almost right next door to the Community Hall was the Signal Corps Building. The Signal Corps office was in the same building as the employee's home. Catherine was acquainted with Tanya Shadora, one of the Shadoras from Kenai. [She was married to] Jimmy Ellison, the Signal Corps man in Flat.... They had a little girl. The buildings [in that area] were all very close together, as Catherine remembered. That was kind of the core of the town. The Signal Corps building, the Lawrence Hotel [Building P, IDT-089]. Lawrence had a bakery. The Lawrences were in Flat the second summer the Weimers were in Flat....
- 094 Sam Applebaum also lived up the [Flat Creek] Road from the [Donnelley and Sheppard] Store. Applebaum ran the store. And Donnelley... Catherine remembered they had a cleanup [on the dredge] and Donnelley showed the Weimers the cleanup and an ingot of gold that he got from the cleanup....
- 102 Catherine did not remember a bank being in the Donnelley and Sheppard Store when she was there. She and her husband did not do any banking. They did everything through the store.... Catherine did not recognize a photograph of Sheppard, as she did not know him. She knew Donnelley, however. He was a small, nice looking man. When he was a youth in Nome, Catherine's mother and Donnelley went to the same church

- Sunday school in Nome.... Donnelley later left Flat and moved to Kodiak.... Donnelley married a woman, and they had no children. His wife was one of three sisters. The three sisters were from Iditarod, and they had a telephone exchange. Lillian Watson is the person who owned all that gold nugget jewelry and stuff that is in the Anchorage Museum. Harry Watson was her husband. Mrs. Donnelley was one of the three sisters, and Mrs. Watson was another sister.... They did not call people by their first names. Mrs. Donnelley was "a real sweet lady". Catherine asked if Johanna Jensen is still alive.... Catherine had not seen her for many years. She worked at the [Alaska] Railroad, and retired from the Railroad....
- 135 Rolfe asked how Catherine spent her time when her husband was working in Flat. What was her life like? Catherine replied that her life was "pretty awful." She said Flat was quite a social place for the people that lived there year-round.... Johanna [Jensen, Rudd, Kerr]'s mother, Mrs. Jensen, was very neat. "You could eat off her floor." Her house was so neat and tidy, and she was knitting. She was pure Indian.... She trained her kids. She would come and visit Catherine, and knit by the hour. Catherine remembered her fondly. Mrs. Jensen spoke Indian language, her first language, and she would get the genders mixed up.... Mrs. Jensen loved colors and would knit socks with nice cuffs on them and patterns. She would say "I like things kind of fancik." Mrs. Jensen had no use for a Shageluk woman, who Mrs. Jensen said was no good. Catherine could not recall who the Shageluk woman was....
- 167 There were not many Natives living in Flat. It was a mining town, not a Native village. There was another family, in which the older people were both Indian. They had a grown daughter who worked for Mrs. Sheppard.... Rolfe asked if it was the [Charlie and Mary] Marcells, but Catherine could not recall the family's name. The same family also had a daughter that was blind that had been sent out to school. That girl was amazing, would go around like a sighted person. She could crochet....
- 181 There was a ladies club in Flat in the wintertime. Mrs. Savage went to Flat as a teacher. And Mary Patty. There was one lady who held bible classes. Johanna Jensen used to tell Catherine about her.... It was Mrs. Matheson.... Catherine did not recall much bible activity in Flat.... Catherine met Mrs. Matheson. She was a rather large woman, as she recalls.... There was no church in Flat.... The bible classes were sort of an informal type of gathering, but Catherine never attended those gatherings. The second summer that Catherine was in Flat, she recalled that Mrs. Donnelley had a luncheon. Mrs. Donnelley's sister was visiting at the time. Not Mrs. Watson, but her other sister, who had a son. The two of them put on the luncheon. All the women in town were present. "It was such a nice affair."

- 210 The Awes lived in Flat at the time, and Mrs. Fritz Awe was very popular.... Catherine did not remember Mrs. Awe's first name.... The era was more formal. One was brought up to call people Mr. or Mrs....
- 222 There were two stores in town: the Donnelley and Sheppard Store and the Turner and Wood Store. Rolfe asked which store Catherine shopped at. "Well, Donnelley's of course, because they owned the [Riley] dredge and everything we spent, we spent in that one store. And we settled up the wages and the store bills. It was like a company town, practically...." It was like lots of company towns in mining areas. It was not cash exchanging hands....
- 233 Flat was "not a particularly happy place" for Catherine because she was away from home for the first time. It was a strange community.... "There wasn't much socializing because people worked long hours." There were dances once a week. Catherine thought there would have been more socializing in the winter time.... Card playing, that sort of thing.
- 245 Catherine did not remember any bars in Flat... Not when she and her husband were there.... Her husband never drank. If there was a bar in Flat, she would not remember it because they did not drink. She did not remember anything about bars being in Flat....
- 258 Catherine knew of the prostitutes in Flat. She did not remember the full name of the prostitute known as the "Black Bear" who was involved in the mail robbery scandal in the 1920's. The "Black Bear" [Nellie Beatty] and her husband mined up at Willow Creek... Catherine met the "Black Bear" and just kind of chuckled to herself because she remembered when she was a very little girl she lived in Nenana when they were building the [Alaska] railroad. One of her mother's old friends from Nome had a husband who carried mail. And her mother's friend talked about the likes of the "Black Bear." After Catherine got to Flat, there was a young woman who came from north of Seattle... who worked at a bank. This woman did financial work for the bank, and the banker told the woman who the "Black Bear" was.... They [the Duffys] were working high up on Willow Creek, and there was a lack of water. One time Catherine and her husband Bob had a day off and walked up Flat Creek Road. And the Beattys came along in a jitney, and took the Weimer's up to the top. The Weimers later walked home, but she was amused [at having met the "Black Bear"].... She was no longer a prostitute, that was long past. The Beattys wintered in Tucson [Arizona].... Catherine recognized the name "Tootsie," but did not remember ever meeting her. She remembered hearing about Tootsie.
- 312 Catherine remembered the man who lived where the [Alaska] Road Commission [headquarters in Flat] was. He had a team of beautiful white dogs. The summer of 1936

- was very hot and the bugs were awful. She did not recall seeing many dogs in Flat.... She recalled seeing a husky type dog and the miserable old white socks had bitten that dog's belly.... This man's dogs at the Road Commission had their own separate houses, and they were very well cared for. He greased the dogs around the eyes to protect them from the bugs.... The Road Commission headquarters was in the general area of Turner's Store, rather than the area of Donnelley's store in the main part of town. Catherine did not recall the name of the man who owned the dogs....
- 341 Catherine visited Iditarod. She and her husband did not have wheels [a vehicle]. She did not get out very much. Across the creek and on the way to the Miscovich's place there were a couple of miners: Fred Lusher and a man called Saylor. They each had a little one-man [mining] operation. Catherine remembered going to visit Mr. Fred Lusher with Mrs. Patterson and Mrs. Brewster, a young woman from Anchorage, and one or two others. Mr. Lusher and Catherine's grandfather were friends in Nome. Catherine and her husband, Bob, visited Saylor, who mined. Saylor had some kind of a little dam to catch every bit of water that he could. It would fill up, then he would sluice a little and have to wait a little [until he had more water in his dam before sluicing some more]. Catherine did not get out very much. One time during the second summer [1936], Catherine walked up Flat Creek to visit the Savages.... They were mining up Flat Creek on some property... up near where the Strandberg's camp was located. Or maybe they were mining Strandberg's ground. The Savages had a nephew that was later killed on that property. He [Bill Savage] was carrying explosives when he tripped and fell. It was not always a very happy place.
- 384 During the summer of 1936, Catherine was expecting her first child. Her husband Weimer felt that they could have lived the winter in Flat. But Catherine insisted on coming back to Anchorage. She was not going to be stuck over there, as there was no medical care in Flat. Mrs. Lawrence was the closest thing to medical care in Flat.... She was a nurse or a practical nurse. She would attend people and deliver babies. Catherine chose not to stay. As it turned out, Catherine felt that she and her husband made a good decision in returning to Anchorage. After they left, there were several tragedies in Flat. Mrs. Sozoff's little boy was blinded. Another man who Catherine's husband worked with, who came from the Balkans, brought a young woman to Flat. The woman had a toddler, and the baby died tragically from lack of medical care. Mr. [Bob] Rude got sick in Flat, within five years after Catherine and her husband left. He was a strong, husky, very healthy man. He was Johanna's husband. By that time she had three children. He died of diphtheria or another disease. They sent him to Anchorage, but he died before he got to the hospital.
- 423 Lots of things like that happened. Catherine was young, but still had sense enough to know that Flat was no place where she wanted to live the rest of her life. Her husband was not particularly interested in gold. He did not have "gold fever". He had been a

- coal miner, but he did not have gold fever. The wages were higher in Flat than they were in Anchorage. They often wondered which would have been best, going fishing at Bristol Bay or mining in the interior. He made good money, but he worked awfully hard. Catherine felt that the working people in Flat did not really have a chance, because they would spend all the money they earned in the summer during the winter. There was more opportunity over there. Catherine has never regretted coming back to Anchorage.... If she had been older and more mature, she probably would have found Flat to be a much more interesting place. Catherine was 19 when she was in Flat. She was 21 when her son was born. She missed friends and family. Her husband was working ten-twelve hours a day, and she did not see much of her spouse while they were in Flat. It was not like today when women can find all sorts of jobs. There were not many single girls in Flat. There was a single girl named Konig who worked at the roadhouse/restaurant as a cook....
- 481 Rolfe asked Catherine about Native men in Flat. She replied that Mr. Kardanoff was part Native as Mrs. Kardanoff was.... There were not too many Natives in Flat, but there were some. To Catherine's recollection, there was no separation between whites and Natives. The only Native people as a family unit in Flat was the family [Charlie and May Marcell] with the blind daughter. The woman was older than Catherine. The woman did a little work.... Rolfe asked if the family name was "Marcell," but Catherine could not recall the family name.... They lived off the road right on Otter Creek, and they had a daughter that was blind....
- 561 As a young woman, first time away from home, Catherine did not find her experience in Flat to be a particularly good time. Maybe if she was single and had a job there... it might have been different.... Catherine later remembers hearing the name Gularte, and it was not until many years later that she met Tony Gularte, who lives in Anchorage.... Catherine did not know Tony Gularte when she was in Flat.... Catherine did not really make close associations or friends in Flat. Catherine knew Johanna Jensen, because they were neighbors. The Jensens later moved into Anchorage, and her father ended up in the Pioneer Home in Sitka....
- 602 Catherine did not remember many children in the community. There was a predominance of childless couples in Flat. The Kardanoffs had two little boys.... There really was not very many children in Flat at that time. Mining had just started up good again after the price of gold changed [went up]. Catherine's impression was that many people just moved in there for the work.... There were not very many kids. The Jensens had a pretty good sized family.... Two little girls, the Jensen girls, including Clara [Clair]. Both the Jensen and Kardanoff families had kids....
- 631 Mrs. [Lena] Alderson was the postmaster in Flat at the time.... Mr. Alderson was the brother of Mrs. Patty Savage. There were lots of family connections.... Fritz Awe had

a brother. In 1936 Catherine also met at least two of the Konig girl's sisters that had come to visit or live in Flat. They were younger. There were three Miscovich girls. They were unmarried at the time. John was the youngest Miscovich child. He and his brother were in their teens when the Weimers were in Flat. John and his brother were wearing out his father's machinery.... Mrs. Miscovich was very concerned about who her three daughters were associating with....

683 [End of Tape 1, Side B].

Tape 2, Side A:

001 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Side B, Tape 1....

004 Mr. Patterson was the dredge master on the Donnelley and Sheppard [Riley] Dredge.... Catherine did not recall the school teacher's name. She was a slightly built woman. The school teacher lived at the school, and was single. Most teachers were single at that time. They had housing provided.... Catherine did not recall a city marshall in Flat. The only official she recalled was Jimmy Ellison at the Signal Corps. "It was a self-policing community, I guess...."

029 Closing remarks by interviewers....

034 [End of interview]

GLEN BARNETT INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED ON JANUARY 20, 1994

This interview was conducted with Cecil Glen Barnett on January 20, 1994, at his home at 607 West 12th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska. The interview session was conducted by historian Rolfe Buzzell and student intern Ursula Schwaiger, both of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. This is the first of two interviews with Mr. Barnett. The following is a summary of his comments, unless quotation marks are used.

Tape 1, Side A:

001 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....

010 Glen Barnett was born in Miami, Arizona and came to Alaska from Pennsylvania in the April of 1922. His father came to Alaska in the spring of 1921 to work for the Alaska Railroad. The rest of the family joined him a year later in the spring of 1922, when Glen was five years old. Since then, he has lived in Anchorage all of his life.... Glen has been involved in the Anchorage Pioneer Families Project sponsored by the Alaska Museum of History and Art.... He was married in May of 1946. Glen was unmarried and had just graduated from high school when he went to Flat seeking work.

022 Glen was just out of school and looking for work when he decided to go to Flat. He met a man in Anchorage named Dave Browne who had a mining interest in Flat. Browne assured Glen that he could make enough money to pay for his airfare there and back. Glen went to Flat in the spring of 1935. He flew to Flat with Merle Sasseen. He went to work for Dave Browne doing assessment work on a few claims.... These claims were on Flat Creek, quite close to the town. While working for Browne, Glen also made the rounds of the mining camps looking for work. Glen got a job working for Peter Miscovich, cleaning bedrock. Glen worked for Miscovich for a week, until all the bedrock was cleaned off. Then Miscovich laid off most of the crew, except for his family. Next, Glen got a job working for Donnelley and Sheppard in the "point field" thawing ground for the [Riley] Dredge. That was right along side the airfield in Flat. He worked in Flat that summer until freeze up or until they quit thawing ground. That was in September.

041 Glen went back to Flat in the spring of 1936 and worked for Alex Matheson. Matheson had the other dredge in Flat. Glen worked on a thawing crew and worked up on the ditch. When they were through driving points, they laid off a bunch of people, and Glen

- was one of them. Then Glen went to work for Patty Savage up on Flat Creek. He worked there until Savage ran out of water. Savage then lined Glen up with a job with the [Gus] Uotila and [John] Ogriz outfit up on Slate Creek. His first job with them was "panning on the drill". They were prospecting with a placer drill. There were just two of them, Glen and the driller. Glen's job was to help the driller and pan the dirt that they brought up with the drill to see if they had any "pay dirt". When they quit drilling, Glen went down into the "cut" where they were mining and ran the [hydraulic] nozzle. Glen worked on Slate Creek until the fall of 1936....
- 058 Glen went out to Flat again in the summer of 1937. He worked for Andrew Olson out on Happy Creek, operating a bulldozer....
- 068 In 1935, Glen stayed in a log cabin across from the Post Office in Flat.... They [miners] moved that town around a lot.... They moved the town so many times. Every time they lengthened the [bucket] ladder on the dredge, they would go down a little deeper and mine the property again....
- 080 Rolfe pointed out the current location of some buildings in Flat on the site map....
- 111 Glen stated that there was no Joe Parker's Bar in Flat when he was there in the 1930s.... He only remembered one bar or pool hall in Flat, and that was Andy Miscovich's place [Building Q, IDT-071]. Andy was Peter [Miscovich]'s brother.
- 116 There was a restaurant called "Durand's Cafe" somewhere between the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [Building H, IDT-077] and the Miscovich Bar. It was located just southwest of Andy Miscovich's bar.... Glen remembers Joe Parker's name, but could not recall Parker having a bar.... The Community [Moose] Hall was located in the vicinity of "AAAAA" on the site map....
- 134 The big white house up on the tailing piles was the Matheson House [Building II, IDT-102].... There was a bridge across the [Otter] Creek right around the Fritz Awe/Fullerton Shop [Building AA, IDT-096].... The cabin that Glen stayed in was just a bit south and east of the Fritz Awe Shop. The Post Office was in that area as well just to the left if one was crossing the foot bridge and going south. Ralph Alderson was the name of the Postmaster at the time. He was an engineer on the dredge. His wife [Lena] ran the Post Office. Glen's cabin was right nearby....
- 164 Glen recalled that the area just north of the Flat airstrip was pretty rough ground.... Glen remembered Julius Shaffrick's name.... [Shaffrick lived in the log house, IDT-145, just north of the airstrip]....

- 175 Glen recalled that the Pattersons lived in the area marked on the site map as "SSS". Fred Patterson was the dredge master. The area marked "RRR" was the Pan Am Building. Will Lane was Pan Am's radio operator. That is where he lived and had his radio station. He maintained radio contact with the airline for flight schedules.... The area to the north of the airstrip was kind of rough....
- 192 Glen told a story about one particularly memorable landing on the airstrip. The pilot was flying a little high in relation to the runway. The pilot was "in the bag", drunk.... It was the pilot's first trip out to Flat. He had one passenger and a crate of eggs. He landed and completely totaled the airplane, though no one got hurt. The crash did not break an egg....
- 209 Glen lived in three or four different places during the years he was in Flat. He lived in a log cabin across from the Ralph Alderson House/Old Post Office [Building DD, IDT-076] one year.... The next year Glen lived in a cabin up Flat Creek Road... roughly across from the building marked as Building KKK [the Cap Becker House, IDT-138] on the site map. Another year he lived in a cabin located approximately in the area of Building HHH on the site map [Harry Agoff's old house, IDT-135].... Rolfe showed Glen photographs of buildings along Flat Creek Road from 1993. Glen did not remember any of them. Glen recalled there were many residences along Flat Creek Road.
- 254 Glen asked about Building JJJ on the site map [IDT-137], and Rolfe told Glen that was the Silas McConeghy/Tom Balange House. Glen recalled that Silas McConeghy was an old timer in Flat who died while Glen was in Flat. Silas came into the country during the gold rush.... Once he made a trip outside to see what the boat had brought in. He ordered a cup of tea, but got a teapot instead. A string was hanging out of the teapot, and a piece of paper was attached to the end of the string. "And he thought, now that waitress is going to be embarrassed if she sees that, she doesn't know that's in there, it shouldn't be in there." He reached over and pulled the string out so that she wouldn't be embarrassed. It was a tea bag, but Silas had never seen one before. He pulled the tea bag out and spilled the pot of tea all over. Silas was embarrassed....
- 268 Rolfe described the buildings behind the Silas McConeghy House [IDT-137] but Glen did not remember the site....
- 278 Glen recalled living on both sides of Flat Creek Road at various times.... In the spring of 1936, Glen lived on the east side of Flat Creek Road. Three or four of them lived together: Ray Leonard, Jack Davidson and Glen.... Glen did not remember the name "Miller". Glen remembers [Nick] Sopoff.... and the name "Fullerton," but he could not attach a face to the name.... Glen's nephew, who worked for Alaska Airlines, knew the Fullertons, but Glen does not recall individuals from the Fullerton family from his days in Flat....

- 310 Rolfe asked Glen about the Henry Crook/Milo Caughrean House [Building MMM, IDT-140] on Flat Creek Road. Glen thought it belonged to Milo Korins, which he thought was spelled K-O-R-I-N-S. Glen had a picture of the aircraft *Willie Mae* when Wiley Post flew around the world and got lost and wound up in Flat. Wiley Post ran out of gas and landed in a ditch.... Glen had a picture of the plane that Milo took. Glen's nephew has the photograph now. It shows the *Willie Mae* after it crash landed. And in the photograph are Milo Korins [Caughrean], Johnny Beaton and two or three other guys....
- 331 Glen remembered a fella by the name of Jensen who live on Flat Creek Road.... Glen recalled a man named [Harry] Kardanoff living on Flat Creek Road also....
- 346 Glen recalled meeting a fella named Johnny Baquir in Goodnews Bay in 1937.... Glen did not know Johnny when he was in Flat, however....
- 366 Glen lived with a man named Whitley Ray one summer. They lived on the west side of Flat Creek Road in the general vicinity of building KKK [IDT-138] on the site map. Ray was a cat skinner, working for [Ed] Olson on Flat Creek during the summer of 1936.... Glen could not recall whether they lived above or below the Martin Creek Ditch [IDT-142].... The Kardanoffs and the Sopoffs were two names that Glen remembered from the Flat Creek Road area.... Quite a few people lived up along that road in the 1930s. Johnny Beaton lived up there. Glen lived up the road from where Johnny Beaton lived.... Glen remembered Bob Acheson. Glen's brother Bob worked with Bob Acheson. Bob Barnett lives in Homer. Bob Barnett went to Flat that spring a little earlier than Glen. Glen lived in a cabin with his brother Bob and a man named George Rosander....
- 412 Glen mentioned a man named Johnny Baquir, whom he met in the spring of 1939 in Goodnews Bay. Glen was looking for work there. There was a dredge up the Goodnews River, up at Wattamuse Creek. The watchman at Kow Kow Creek was Harry Close. The dredge operator was named Howard [last name]. Glen had met him in Anchorage.... The man who had been watchman that winter wanted Glen to go up and prospect with him, but the weather was really bad so Glen would not go. So they got Johnny Baquir to go instead. Glen was going somewhere too, so he ended up traveling with "Jack" Baquir.... Harry Close was coming with the dog team. Glen and John Baquir walked together, and stayed the night at a cabin (in exchange for buying fuel) at a trading post up the trail. Long after dark, Harry Close arrived with the dog team. Harry had been traveling slowly because of the bad weather.... Glen had met a guy named Joe Wilson in Nuka Bay. Wilson was hauling freight up to Wattamuse Creek. Glen made arrangements to travel with him. Jack Baquir decided to go with the dog team, and Harry went with Glen.... Baquir chose a different route than Harry and Glen.... Harry and Glen were going to Kow Kow Creek. Harry began to tire along the way.... They met two Native men with a dogsled on the trail. "The next thing I knew,

- why, he had the Natives on the sled and he was driving the dogs. And they were a skinny bunch of dogs...."
- 502 They parted ways, and the fog rolled in. The men told him that he would be able to find the camp by looking for the dragline. In the midst of the white-out conditions, Glen spotted a few black objects on the hillside, and decided that he should go investigate. It turned out to be the camp that he was looking for.... The cook spotted Glen as he trudged into camp.... "Come in here!" said the cook. "Sit right there!" There were many men in the dining hall, but no one said a word to Glen. They just passed him food. "After I got through eatin', why, the conversation got goin'". And I found out that this fellow had been the watchman up there and had left the place in a heck of a mess. When I said that I had teamed up with Harry Close, why, then nobody wanted to talk to me." Harry had been the watchman at that camp.... Things got better when the men found out Glen had only been travelling with him for convenience sake.... The camp did not have any extra work then and was short of grub, so Glen had to return later.... Glen walked back out to Goodnews Bay.... It was whiteout conditions much of the way back.... Glen did not see Jack Baquir again until one night years later in Anchorage. He is not sure that Baquir is the same guy that was in Flat....
- 573 When Glen worked for [Peter] Miscovich, Miscovich had a camp [IDT-221] several miles up Otter Creek from Flat on the old discovery site.... They had a bunkhouse, a mess hall and a couple of shops.... This was in the summer of 1935. The Miscovichs were working a piece of ground near there.... Glen did not remember much about the camp....
- 605 The bunkhouse that Glen remembered staying in at the Peter Miscovich Camp was made of logs.... "All it was was four walls, a roof, door and a board floor." They stayed in bunks with no mattresses.... Meals were eaten in another building, the kitchen and the mess hall.... Glen recalled that the mess hall was a frame building.... After looking at a 1993 photograph of the mess hall [IDT-222], Glen pointed out that the mess hall he ate in did not have a shed addition on the side.... Glen remembered a blacksmith shop at the camp.... It was not a very big building. Rolfe showed Glen a photograph of the blacksmith shop [IDT-227] and Glen said "That looks about right...." The whole Miscovich family stayed at the camp, including sons, daughters, and Peter's wife. The Miscovichs did not stay in the bunkhouse. He was not sure which building they stayed in.
- 669 The Miscovichs also had the bathhouse [Building Y, IDT-094] in town. Glen and the other workers used to go into town once a week for a bath. Glen looked at photographs of other buildings at the Peter Miscovich Camp taken in 1993, but he did not remember any of them....

680 Rolfe asked Glen how large the community of Flat was during the summer when Glen was there....

684 [Tape runs out. End of Side A, Tape 1]

Tape 1, Side B:

002 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Side A....

007 Glen said there were about a dozen people at the Slate Creek Camp at the time he was there. There was a camp at Happy Creek, another at Willow Creek. Ed Olson had about the same type of operation going on down in town [Flat]. There were at least sixteen people there. And there were two dredges operating. Charlie Yost was mining up on Flat Creek with a small outfit doing hand [mining] work. And Patty Savage. He hired three or four people when he had water.... Glen estimated that there was close to 400-500 people in the Flat area.... Most of them were working out on the creeks. Many of the workers were seasonal help. The [Alaska] Road Commission provided seasonal employment. But some people lived in Flat year-round.... They were the people who ran the hotel, the pool hall, the Donnelley and Sheppard Store, Turner and Wood Store, and the Post Office. There were probably 400-500 people in Flat in the summer time. In the winter time, they got pretty scarce.... Most people left, went out for the winter....

039 The Turner and Wood Store sold general merchandise.... It was located somewhere on the north side of Otter Creek, in the general area of IDT-157 on the site map. There was a foot bridge that one had to use to get across the creek to the Turner and Wood Store. Glen did not do much business over there.... He did not get over on the north side of Otter Creek much....

053 Flat's "red light district" was called "Hollywood," when Glen was there.... Glen did not know why it was called "Hollywood." There were several houses in the district. Many of the prostitutes arrived in the spring and then left again in the fall. There were also some residences in the northern part of town. Elmer Katuri [possibly spelled Keturi] lived over there. It was a Finish name.... Katuri worked for Alex Matheson and also wrote a book, but Glen could not remember what the book was about. Glen never read the book. It may have been about Alaska, but he was not sure about the specific topic. There was a small pipeline that ran from the ditch on the hillside north of Flat down towards the north section of town, past Katuri's house. Katuri poked a hole in the pipeline with a pick so that he would not have to haul water.... Rolfe asked if there was a ditch on the north side of town as well as the two ditches on the south side of town, and Glen said there was....

- 078 There was an active "line" (Red Light District) in Flat in the 1930s. Glen did not remember many of the prostitutes' names. He remembered two prostitutes who were hanging out in the pool hall, Andy Miscovich's place [IDT-071], one day. They had a small dog, like a Pomeranian, who really liked beer. The dog would drink beer out of long neck Budwiser beer bottles. The prostitutes would put a bottle on the floor once they had drank most of the beer out of the bottle. The dog would put his paw on the neck of the bottle to get the beer to run out. Then the dog licked the beer up off the floor. "When he couldn't get any more beer out of the bottle he'd get mad and start barkin' and fightin'. And he'd hit that bottle and make it spin until the beer came out and he would lick the beer up. Then he'd fight that thing until he couldn't get any more beer out of it."
- 094 Glen remembered seeing several prostitutes around Flat. One was named Harding or Hardy, a red-headed gal, who was involved in a plane crash one spring. An Alaska Airlines Balanca was coming into Flat. The plane went down in the brush somewhere between Flat and McGrath. The woman was in the airplane. There was also a young man in the airplane who had a broken leg.... They brought him into Flat and Doctor Waulk came over to help. Glen helped them load the guy with the broken leg into the airplane. The red haired gal was not hurt in the accident, only shook up a little bit. The guy was hurt bad, with a broken leg....
- 110 Glen remembered "Tootsie", the prostitute. She was a colored gal.... He did not remember her operating a restaurant when he was in Flat. He remembered a man named Jerry Baker, a civil war veteran. He had black hair and was around eighty years old. He used to go to the saloon in the back of Harry Lawrence's Hotel [IDT-089].... Jerry Baker used to be over there hanging around, and the guys would come in from the creeks and have a few drinks. Jerry Baker chewed tobacco. "When you bought him a drink... the shot would go down and the tobacco would go with it, then he'd have a fresh chew of tobacco." When Jerry got too old to live in Flat anymore, people helped him move to Anchorage.
- 130 There were five men who lived out in Iditarod: they were all named Charlie. One was Charlie Lamont. He was a river boat captain.... Then there was Indian Charlie. He was 5 foot eight inches tall, slender, with a grey beard.... They were about the only people living in Iditarod then. Glen worked in Iditarod for a week or so. He and Charlie Lamont worked together, cutting the lips off abandoned Guggenheim Dredge buckets in Iditarod.... The dredge had been in Flat.... The log cabin that Glen stayed in during his first year Flat was right next to the Ed Olson outfit which was mining the Guggenheim tailings in Flat.... Glen went over to Iditarod to work for Dave Browne. Glen and Charlie Lamont were cutting the lips off the Guggenheim Dredge buckets that were over there. They used a coal chisel and a hammer to cut the lips off the buckets. Charlie held the chisel and Glen swung the hammer....

- 155 Rolfe asked where Glen stayed when he was in Iditarod, referring to site map of Iditarod.... Charlie Lamont lived in a house near the warehouses. Glen did not recall a bank vault in Iditarod. Glen recalled the large warehouses in Iditarod, and remembered that they were in pretty good condition at that time.... He stayed in Charlie Lamont's House [IDT-179] in Iditarod.... This one street [the main street in Iditarod] still had big buildings on both sides of it in the 1930s....
- 198 Glen said that he has some photographs of people in Flat, including Peter Miscovich, the Miscovich daughters and various workers at the mines. He also had photographs taken of the ditch, the dredges and airplanes.
- 203 Glen has a picture of the Pilgrim Aircraft that is at the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum in Anchorage now.... They wrecked that airplane out in Flat.... One man started a gold rush at Goodnews Bay.... and this guy decided to go down to Goodnews Bay to get rich. Oscar Winchell, flying the Pilgrim for Alaska Airlines, was going down to Goodnews Bay, when he was taking off from Flat. The engine quit and he crashed on the north side of Otter Creek in the bushes. He was going to land, but a wagon was lying in the way so he had to land in another spot. The plane's landing gear did not function, so the plane's belly was destroyed after landing.... The plane rested there all winter. They moved it over near Patterson's House. A Ford Tri-motor airplane came in with new wing struts and other parts and two mechanics to make repairs. They used bed sheets to repair the hole in the belly. They also rebuilt one wing tip and taped the slits in the wings that had been made to inspect the interior of the wings. They fixed the plane in the spring.... "They ... climbed in ... fired it up, and away they went!" They flew it back to Anchorage, where they rebuilt it.... The plane crash happened in the fall of 1935. They flew it out in the spring of 1936, and Glen has a photograph of the airplane when they were getting set to depart from Flat. He also has a photograph of the Ford Tri-motor aircraft....
- 242 Glen worked for Alex Matheson one summer.... Matheson was "a nice guy".... He lived in the biggest house in town. [Marge Barnett entered the room and Glen introduced his wife to the interviewers].... Glen thought Matheson was a nice fella....
- 253 Glen recalled a story about "frozen foot" Paul Willenberg. He and a man named Otto Webber came into the country together. Paul was a young fella. It was their first winter, and they went up Otter Creek to cut wood for the steam thawing. Willenberg came into town to work but Otto stayed up Otter Creek. Otto was still up Otter Creek when Glen was in Flat. One winter Paul Willenberg was going to take a load of supplies up to Otto. The weather had been warm and nice, and he loaded up the dog team with all the supplies and headed up Otter Creek. Glen heard this story when he worked with Willenberg driving points. Driving points was a very "monotonous job," so they often told stories to each other. They had ladders along the row of points, which are shown

in Glen's photographs, and they would climb the ladders and pound the points into the permafrost.... On a break, Willenberg would start telling Glen stories....

Willenberg froze both his feet and they were cut off right across the instep. "He used to walk around kind of unsteady because the front of his shoes were stuffed with newspapers... he didn't have any false feet." Paul told Glen how he lost his feet. One winter Paul was taking supplies up to Otto and he went through an overflow on Otter Creek. He managed to get the dogs and sled out, however, and only got a little wet. He kept on going, and the weather began to get colder.... Then he went through an overflow again and could not get the sled out. He finally cut the dogs loose and started walking, trying to get to Otto's cabin. He was wet and knew he was freezing, so he stopped to take a rest. He laid the dogs around him to warm his legs and tried to rest. After a time his feet were frozen so badly that he fell down. He crawled to a tree and pull himself up. He had to crawl that last bit of the way to Otto's cabin. Otto let him in and cut his shoe packs off from his feet. The next day Otto took Willenberg back to Flat in a sled. In Flat they amputated both of his feet at the instep. Somehow this memory reminded Glen of Alex Matheson. Matheson was seriously injured in an accident, and Joe Cummings helped him. Matheson gave Cummings a job for life.

310 Glen knew who Marie Matheson was but was never acquainted with her. She did not travel in the circles that Glen did. She was older.... Most of the people Glen knew were miners. Glen met Mrs. Fritz Awe and Mrs. Lawrence, she patched up his leg.... There were not many women in Flat. There were some families like the Kardanoffs, the Jensens, and Caughreans--families that lived in Flat year-round. Glen was never around their wives and families. He worked seven days a week, sometimes twelve hours a day. He worked twelve hour days for Matheson up on the ditch. He started at 7 am and quit at 7 pm. "There was not much of a social life at all." At one point, he worked nights when he was in the point fields for the Riley Investment Company, which was owned by Donnelley and Sheppard.... After Glen worked that one week for the Miscovichs, he worked nights all summer driving points for the Riley Investment Company. They worked seven days a week, ten hours a day. When he worked on the ditch, he worked twelve hours a day. The Fourth of July was about the only day off for workers all summer.... The rest of the time they just worked....

348 Glen had some photographs from a Fourth of July celebration in Flat. He remembered a few foot races and "the normal stuff for the Fourth of July".... There was also a dance held that night at the Moose Hall. Everyone seemed to congregate in the center of town, near the pool hall.... That was where the store, the restaurant, and the pool hall, etc. were located. Across the river [Otter Creek] was the Turner and Wood Store.

370 Glen was at the Turner and Wood Store a couple of times. Once he tried to buy a bath towel from Sam Applebaum at the Donnelley and Sheppard Store. Applebaum told him

- "They're two for a dollar and a half." Glen only wanted one bath towel, but Applebaum insisted on selling him two. Glen got so frustrated that he went to the Turner and Wood Store and bought a towel there.... If Applebaum did not have an interest in the Donnelley Store, then he just worked there....
- 381 "I went over there [to Flat] broke, just out of school," Glen said. "... I didn't know a hell of a lot and had no money. I charged my airplane fare. I had a few dollars in my pocket, and I smoked in those days. I went up to the store, and Sam waited on me.... I got out my money and he said, 'No, that's all right, you don't have to pay for it. No, your credit's good, you don't have to pay for it.' I had never seen him before in my life, but that was the way things were then...." The store owners allowed one to buy things on credit, and then one would pay what was owed at the end of the season. There were disadvantages to this system. If you did not see the money, it was easier to spend!.... "That's the way a lot of those people lived. They go over there and it's all on credit." All year they get charged their purchases, but got paid only after the clean-up. They would go out and pay their bills and the money would be all gone.... Some of them would get drunk until the bar tender cut them off.... Then they would go out to winter on the creeks, supposedly prospecting. Then they would come back in the spring and start drinking until the bar tender cut them off. They would go back out to the creeks and work for the summer. That was their life.... "It was a lot easier to keep your money if you spent it every time instead of just going in and putting it on the cuff [credit]...."
- 422 Glen was 18 years old the first summer he went to Flat. His first winter back in Anchorage, Glen worked for the Alaska Railroad. He worked clearing a big slide in Healy Canyon.... He also cleaned ditches along the tracks.... After that job he worked the freight shed until he got laid off. He then worked for Anchorage Drug until Christmas. Then he drove a cab.... but he did not make any money doing that....
- 448 In Flat, Glen made a dollar an hour, worked ten hours a day, seven days a week. It cost him ninety dollars a month for board and room. Durand's Restaurant fed all the dredge crews. There was not much time to do anything beyond eating, sleeping and working.... There was not much else to do anyway.... Another year, after returning from Flat, Glen cut wood out where Fort Richardson is now for \$5 per cord.... He drove a cat, and whatever else he could find to do....
- 471 Glen did not remember shops and sheds out by Matheson's House. He was not familiar with the name North American Dredging Company.... He did not go up in the area where Matheson built all of his shops. Glen recalled seeing Matheson's House.... In the summer of 1935 most of Glen's time was spent at the [Peter] Miscovich Camp and then out on the point fields working for Donnelley. In the spring of 1936, Glen worked for Matheson on the pipeline that ran down along Flat Creek.... Glen helped put the

- segments of pipeline together using tar and burlap. Then they would light it to make a good seal.... He suffered a leg injury while working on the pipeline job for Matheson.... One of the cables broke and hit Glen in the leg. It bore a hole in his leg about the size of quarter. They went back to work, but after a while he had to get it treated. This occurred in the vicinity of Building LL [IDT-123] and Building CCC [IDT-124]....
- 542 After the injury, Glen went to see Mrs. Lawrence, who "patched him up".... Mrs. Lawrence was a registered nurse.... She saved Fritz Awe's life when he had blood poisoning.... Fritz Awe had a really swollen arm, and was lying in bed with his arm in a tub of hot water....
- 552 Glen worked for Patty Savage, and that was pretty tough work. Everything was granite boulders and bedrock. The workers used to wear out several pair of gloves a day.... They bought gloves by the dozens.... One day Glen was handling some cable that had a spur sticking out of it, and he scratched two fingers. His fingers healed up, but then after he left Patty Savage and went to work on Slate Creek they began to swell. His condition began to worsen steadily. His job at Slate Creek was to operate the [hydraulic] nozzle, so he could get by with just one hand. Glen decided something had to be done about his finger.... He jabbed his finger with a sterilized needle and it did not even bleed. So he got a razor blade, and George Rosander, one of the shovel runners, sterilize it and sliced his finger open and clean it out.... Glen went down to the mess hall to soak his finger, and someone gave him a piece of bacon to wrap around it. The bacon was supposed to draw the poison out.... The condition of his finger worsened.... So Glen went down to Mrs. Ogriz place and she soaked his hand for him, and tried to soothe his fears that it was blood poisoning. At that point Glen already had red streaks running up his wrist.... Mrs. Uotila's husband, Gus, did not think that it was blood poisoning.... Finally Glen decided it was and he wanted to go into town to see Mrs. Lawrence, the nurse. "She took one look at it and sent me over to the store and told me what to buy." He returned and soaked his hand for an hour. Then he wrapped it with the medication for an hour... This process was repeated throughout the day.... The next day she cut most of the skin away to the bone.... "If it hadn't been for her, I don't know what would've happened to me." Mrs. Lawrence helped many people in Flat.... There were no doctors around, and people did not think of going to doctors like they do today....
- 649 Glen knew who Harry Donnelley was, though he was never acquainted with him.... Donnelley eventually moved to Kodiak.... Glen also knew Fritz Awe and the Miscovich family....
- 668 Glen talked about working one week for Peter Miscovich.... Glen was just out of school and was pretty soft. Cleaning bedrock [tape runs out] was very hard work.

683 [End of Side B, Tape 1]

[Tape 2, Side A]

004 Glen described working for the Miscovich family. Peter Miscovich showed Glen how to clean bedrock with a shovel.... Peter would sit on the edge of the cut, and he would be there all day long.... "He kept his eye on you all the while. You'd get paid for ten hours and you worked for ten hours.... It [working for the Miscovichs] was interesting. It was a job, and that's what we needed," Glen stated.... "

043 Glen described the interactions between various members of the Miscovich family....

064 The work Glen did at Flat was hard, and most of it was "man-powered." When Glen worked for Patty Savage, they did not have water all the time.... When they had water they used the nozzles. They had a dam on the creek up on the hillside with a float and a flag. Sometimes they had a lot of water, sometimes not. When the dam was full the flag would come up they would use the nozzle and wash the dirt through the boxes.... But when the water ran out, they had to pick the rocks and granite boulders out of the cut and the boxes by hand. When they could not move them, they blasted them. They used a wheel barrow made of 2 inch x 6 inch boards to move the boulders.... It would take sometimes three or four people. One man to run the wheel barrow, and three to balance it. It was just man power, and they worked their tails off....

087 Patty Savage's operation was on Flat Creek. Strandberg was not mining on Flat Creek when Glen was there. Strandberg was mining at Goodnews Bay and other places.... Patty Savage and Yost had a place on Flat Creek, and there were two cowboys, Jules and Joe, working farther up the creek. They had shallow ground.... All those places were just hard, back breaking work....

106 Bill Duffy was the name of another man who lived over the hill from Flat Creek on Willow Creek.... He was a great big old guy... his clothes just hung on him.... He was married to the "Black Bear" [the former prostitute, Nellie Beatty]. Glen used to see them when they came into town.... Glen talked to Bill Duffy a couple of times.

114 "Handsome Harry" Panter was the head of the [Alaska] Road Commission in Flat. He was a big guy who came into the country in the early days and stayed. He had supposedly been a real good looking man in his younger days. He was a big guy, tall, broad shoulders, built kind of lean, hook nosed....

121 Glen did not recall any of the Alaska Road Commission buildings in Flat, or the other buildings on the road out towards Iditarod.... Glen did not get out that way much,

- although he did get to Iditarod once. Glen knew a fella that worked for the Road Commission, Harold Brewster. He and his wife were there when Glen was, in 1935....
- 130 They would get eaten by the gnats.... Glen used pine tar and citronella as mosquito repellent at that time.... They used to mix it with lard and apply it to the dogs as well. Glen remembered a Frenchman who had several dogs. One day the mosquitoes were so bad that the man put the dogs in his basement to give them a break from the bugs. The dogs were down in the dark. Later, the man forgot where he had put his dogs. Sometimes his dogs would run off and go to town. The dogs were down in the basement for three or four days before their owner finally remembered where he had put them. The dogs did not whine or bark, even though they had no food or water. They were just happy to be away from the bugs....
- 150 Rolfe explained interview procedures and asked Glen to sign a release form.... Glen signed the release form.... Glen's first name is Cecil, but he goes by his middle name, Glen.... Rolfe explained the purpose of the interview and plans to combine the interviews into a volume that will be distributed to libraries....
- 175 Glen described working for the Miscovich family.... When they had clean ups, there was a lot of buckshot mixed in with the gold, because that area was good ptarmigan hunting ground.... Some of Glen's photographs include pictures of Peter Miscovich panning gold....
- 193 Glen related a story, told to him by a friend who had a nephew who worked for the Miscovichs after Glen did. One day they were digging in the cut and one of the crew found six twenty dollar gold pieces. The gold pieces had been lost in the early days.... At that time, people were not allowed to have gold coins any more, after the United States Government went off the gold standard.... Of course that opened up a lot of mining, when the government went off the gold standard. A lot of marginal ground suddenly became profitable. At one of Alex Matheson's clean ups, they found a gold pocket watch, chain, and fob. It came out of the cleanup....
- 240 When Glen was in Flat the Riley Dredge was digging just north of the airfield. The Matheson Dredge was operating just west of town. Glen worked in the point fields just north of the airfield, along side of Patterson's House.... In 1935, the Matheson Dredge was just west of where the Donnelley and Sheppard Store was located....
- 249 Rolfe thanked Glen for his assistance and explained how the information in the interview will be used in writing a historic building survey report on Flat....
- 275 [End of interview].

GLENN BARNETT INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED ON JANUARY 26, 1994

This interview was conducted with Cecil Glen Barnett on January 26, 1994, at his home at 607 W. 12th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska. The interview session was conducted by historian Rolfe Buzzell and student intern Ursula Schwaiger, both of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. This is the second of two interviews with Mr. Barnett. The following is a summary of his comments, unless quotations marks are used.

Tape 2, Side B:

- 001 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....
- 007 Glen asked Rolfe about the Julius Shaffrick House [Building PPP, IDT-145].... Glen stated that somewhere in the vicinity of "QQQ", "RRR" or "SSS" on the site map was where Harry Steen, the dredge master, lived.... Steen was the dredge master on the Riley Dredge.... Patterson lived at site "SSS," and Harry Steen lived at either "QQQ" or "RRR".... There was a bridge across Otter Creek [pointing at the site map, right about where the current footbridge is that leads towards the north side of Flat].... The footbridge was just north of Building IDT-096.... Fritz Awe lived right in that area [Site Z].... Glen believed that the more northerly road, extending from the air strip to the center of Flat on the site map, was the road used in 1935 to get between town and the airstrip.... There were a lot of buildings along that road in 1935. Arnold Kobler, an engineer on the Riley Dredge, lived in the area between IDT-099 and IDT-095 on the interviewer's site map.... Kobler had a sign on his house that read: "Seldom Inn".... His house was just south and west of IDT-097.... Glen lived just south of Arnold Kobler's place....
- 056 Glen stated that in the first interview session he had referred to one of the stores as the "Jensen" Store. After talking with his brother [Bob Barnett] since the interview on January 20th, Glen concluded that Jensen was a partner in or employed at the Turner and Wood Store. Jensen was married to a Native woman.... They had a son, Pete Jensen, and they had a few daughters also. One of the daughters was Johanna [Rudd Kerr], who married Bob Rudd. Johanna had three kids that worked for the Alaska Railroad. Bob and Ernie were Johanna's two boys and she had a daughter, but Glen could not remember the daughter's name.... Glen did not know Johanna's sister [Clair Jensen Marks].... Bob Rudd was a truck driver....
- 078 Harry Kardinoff lived on Flat Creek Road and Milo Caughrean also lived up there. Another fella named [Rasmus] Neilson, who Glen may have called Jensen in the last inter-

view session, lived up Flat Creek Road. Neilson had a wife and two or three kids. They all lived on Flat Creek Road...

085 Rolfe showed Glen the contact prints made from Glen's negatives. Rolfe numbered each contact print and negative, using the numbers 1-58.



Figure 3. Barnett Photograph #1: Glen Barnett working on the Flat Creek Ditch, 1936.

090 Glen identified himself in Photograph #1. Glen was cleaning the screens where the ditch came down from Flat Creek.... Glen was working for Matheson during 1936 when the photograph was taken. That ditch [IDT-144] came down Flat Creek.

102 Photograph #2 is a photograph taken from an airplane.... Glen believed it was Slate Creek, which is up Otter Creek past the Pete Miscovich Camp and then off to the right [south].



Figure 4. Barnett Photograph #2: View of Slate Creek taken from an airplane.

109 Photograph #3 is a little shack next to the ditch

on Flat Creek shown in Photograph #1. The shack was Glen's cover to get out of the weather when he was working on the ditch [IDT-144]. Glen's job was to keep the screens [in the ditch] clean because the water brought a lot of dirt, grass, twigs and other things that would go down into the points and plug them up during thawing operations. First they had a big course screen, and he cleaned it with a brush on a long handle. That is what Glen was doing in Photograph #1.... Photograph #14 is another view of the same ditch and shack as shown in Photographs #1 and #3. Photograph #14 shows the ditch coming down Flat Creek....

133 Photograph #4 was taken up at Patty Savage's mine. It was up Flat Creek Road, on the east side of the creek. Savage had a small camp there. Photograph #4 shows



Figure 5. Barnett Photograph #3: Glen Barnett standing next to a ditch maintenance shack on the Flat Creek Ditch.



Figure 6. Barnett Photograph #4: Bill Savage (left), Dudley (center) and Jimmy Stenberg (right) at Paddy Savage's Camp on Flat Creek.

the bunkhouse. Savage had another building where he lived with his wife and that also served as the mess hall. The three fellas in the photograph were Savage's crew.... Bill Savage, Patty Savage's nephew, was on the left. The fella in the center was Duddley, but Glen could not recall if Duddley was a first or last name. Jimmy Stenberg was on the right.

- 149 Photograph #5 is Patty Savage's operation, with all of the boulders. Glen worked for Savage in 1936, during his second season in Flat. Glen worked for [Alex] Matheson on the ditch shown in Photographs #1 and #3 until sometime during the summer [of 1936], when they got all of the points driven. When they got the points down as deep as they were going to thaw, then they took the points out and put in a "sweater," a pipe hooked to a hose. Then there was nothing to do except go around and listen to each pipe. If Glen could hear the water running through the sweater pipes, everything was fine. If he could not, then he had to tap it and get the water going again. When Glen finished working for Matheson, he got a job mining with Patty Savage. Glen worked for Savage until it quit raining and there was not enough water in the creek to continue placer mining in the usual manner. They did a "splash" a day. Patty finally laid off most of them, but lined Glen up with a job on Slate Creek. Glen worked there [in the photograph, on Slate Creek] until the end of the season.



Figure 7. Barnett Photograph #5: Patty Savage's mining operation on Flat Creek, 1936.

- 166 Photograph #6 is another view of the same operation by Savage on Flat Creek. In Photograph #5, one is looking up the boxes toward the wings. The water came from up above, and they were washing the dirt into the boxes. In Photograph #6, the view is looking the same way only the viewpoint is from farther down the boxes. They were having a splash, and they were working in the boxes.... Photographs #5 and #6 are in the same area and looking in

the same direction. Glen and the others were just keeping boulders rolling down the boxes to keep the boxes from being plugged up.

186 Photograph #7 is of the same operation. The view is from the other end. The "wings" are on either side [of where the men are standing]. The wings are also shown in Photograph #5. That photograph was taken from the lower end of the boxes looking up to where the dirt was being washed in. Photograph #7 is at the upper end of the boxes looking the other way. The ramp in Photograph #7 is the ramp Glen mentioned in the first interview session in which they were removing boulders with a wheel barrow. They



Figure 8. Barnett Photograph #6: Another view of Patty Savage's mining operation on Flat Creek, 1936.



Figure 9. Barnett Photograph #7: Three of Patty Savage's crew working on the Savage mine on Flat Creek, 1936.

wheeled the boulders and large rocks up the ramp shown in Photograph #7 and dumped them on the other side. Old "Two Story Bill" ran the wheel barrow. It was all that he could do to hold it up there and go a few steps. Then he would put it down, take a break, and go again. The rest of the crew would hold the boulder [on the wheelbarrow], balancing it. When they got the boulder on the other side of the wings, they kicked it off.... When the boulders got to be too big to be moved manually, and they had to be moved, then they dynamited them. And that is what took care of Bill Savage [the guy on the left, Photograph #4]....

- 206 When they had to blow up the big rocks, they bulldozed them, then put five sticks of dynamite on top, covered the sticks with mud, and touched them off. They had a little shack up there, half of which was the blacksmith's shop and the other half was where they kept their powder. Bill Savage was working at night at that time, and Glen was no longer working for the Savages. Only Bill and Jimmy Stenberg were there, although Duddley might have been there. Glen had gone off to work at Slate Creek. The boys had dinner one night, and Stenberg later told Glen that he heard Bill shooting. Stenberg thought the blast went off early. Stenberg looked over toward the cut and saw a root flying through the air. Stenberg couldn't figure out why Bill would be shooting stumps. It turned out to be Bill's leg and a gum boot. They figured that Bill had fixed up his dynamite and stuck the primers in, the cap on the end of the fuse.... It did not take much pressure to set off a dynamite cap. What they figured happened was Bill had all his powder set up for the rocks he was going to blast and he was carrying it in his arms when he stumbled and fell on it. And the thing blew up and scattered Bill all over the country....
- 228 Bill Savage was buried in Waterbury, Connecticut. They picked up what [pieces of Bill] they could find, about 60 pounds. They found the head without the face and the upper chest area.... They had the lower part of his leg and gum boot, and they may have found an arm or a hand, and the rest was what they picked up off the side of the building and the bushes. It was kind of a gruesome story. They had a "tinner" and he made a box to ship the remains in. In the summer, the weather was warm. Before an airplane came along, the box sat there for several days. They put the box in the airplane, and the pilot flew all the way to Anchorage with all of the windows open.... Bill's remains were shipped back to Waterbury Connecticut, which was Bill's hometown....
- 242 Photograph #8 is Flat Creek Road. The view is looking down towards town.... The kids in the photograph may have been Harry Kardanoff's kids, but Glen was not sure of that. Harry Kardanoff lived on that road. Glen was living in a house on Flat Creek Road at the time he took the photograph....
- 261 Photograph #9 is the Pilgrim airplane that Oscar Winchell put in the bushes over on the other [north] side of Flat Creek. Winchell was taking off from Flat when the engine quit, and he went over Otter Creek. His gear was too low to clear the cut bank and he landed in the bushes. He wiped out the gear and the belly of the airplane. They took the airplane

apart and dragged the airplane back over the creek to a spot near Patterson's place. When Glen returned to Flat in the spring of 1936, the fuselage was sitting over there and the wings were laying up against a shack.... The crash occurred in the fall of 1935 after Glen left Flat in September....

In the photograph, which was taken in the spring of 1936, the wings have been put back on, and the white bed sheet patch has been put on the belly of the airplane.... Pete Bystedt, a kid Glen grew up with and was later killed with Hans Mirrow in a crash looking for another lost airplane, and another mechanic made the repairs to the fuselage and the wings.... Glen helped Pete fix up the airplane....

295 Photograph #10 is the same as photographs #1, #3, and #14.... The



Figure 10. Barnett Photograph #8: Two children on Flat Creek Road. The view is looking north.



Figure 11. Barnett Photograph #9: Oscar Winchell's Pilgrim aircraft in 1936, following repairs from the 1935 crash.

photograph is another view of the temporary shelter Glen used while maintaining the ditch line.... Glen is the person shown in Photograph #10....

304 Peter Miscovich is shown in Photograph #11. That was the day they were having cleanup. In the pan is mostly gold and black sand. It is stuff that they had taken out of the boxes. Peter was panning some of the dirt out of the gold after they took the dirt out of the boxes. The photograph was taken in 1935.

312 Photograph #12 was taken on the Matheson Ditch where Glen was working. The person in the photograph was Jack Davidson. Glen could not recall where Jack was from, but they lived together in the summer of 1936.... The Matheson Ditch [Flat Creek Ditch, IDT-144] was on the east side of Flat Creek and curved around toward the upper part of Otter Creek drainage. Another ditch and penstock were on the hillside on the west side of Flat Creek [Martin Creek Ditch, IDT-142]. Glen was not sure where the water came from for that ditch.... On the hillside above [and south of] the Flat airstrip was penstock for the Riley Company Ditch [not located during 1993 field season]. Glen

thought the water from the Riley Ditch came from farther up Otter Creek drainage.... Glen worked on the Riley Company Ditch when his brother got blood poisoning. Glen replaced his brother on that job. Glen recalled being up on the Matheson Ditch when a fella named John Paul came over from the [Riley] Company Ditch. Glen had gone to work without his watch, and was telling time by the sun all night long. John Paul walked over from the other ditch and Glen asked him if it was 2 o'clock, and John said it was.... The water [on the Riley Company Ditch] came from up Otter Creek valley somewhere....

360 Photograph #13 is a wood pile made up of small poles. The guys cut them slantwise... The poles were all cut with an axe, like stakes.... They were stacked like a hay stack.... The wood was used for firewood. Short lengths of wood.... It was a wood pile for someone's house, the only one like that Glen had ever seen.... It reminded Glen of a hay stack. The poles are not very big and are all cut at an angle....



Figure 12. Barnett Photograph #10: Glen Barnett sitting on a temporary shelter along the Flat Creek Ditch, 1936.

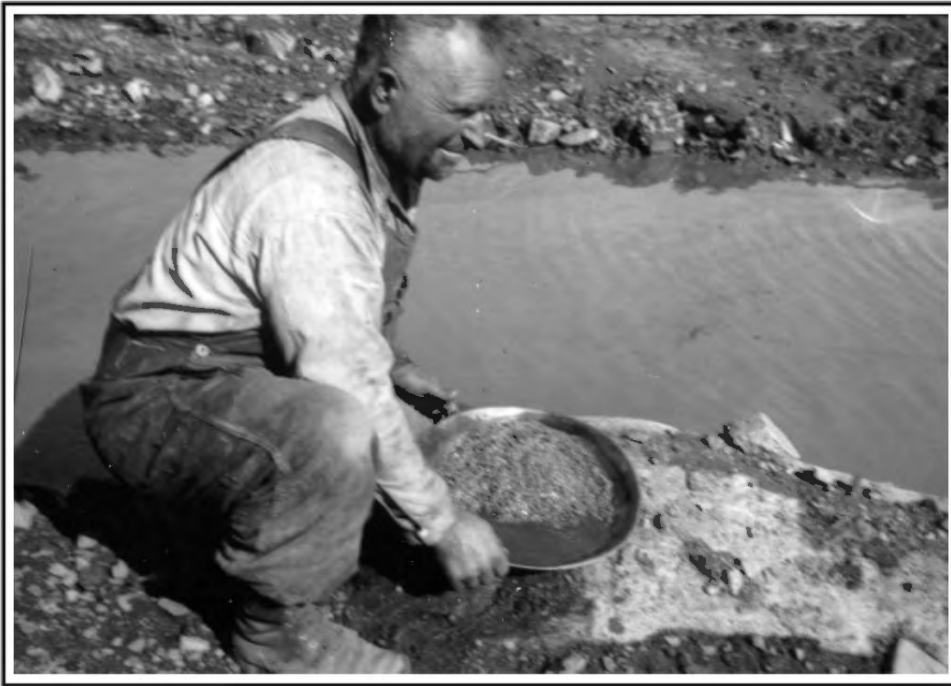


Figure 13. Barnett Photograph #11: Peter Miscovich panning dirt from a cleanup on his claim, 1935.



Figure 14. Barnett Photograph #12: Jack Davidson working on the Flat Creek Ditch, 1936.



**Figure 15. Barnett Photograph #13:
Firewood stacked outside
a residence in Flat.**

378 Photograph #14
is the ditch
coming down
Flat Creek, that
was identified
earlier. It is the
Matheson Ditch
[IDT-144], the
same as in
photographs #1
and #3....

381 Photograph #15
is the same
ditch as shown
in Photograph
#14. The
photograph
shows Glen
cleaning the



**Figure 16. Barnett Photograph #14: Flat Creek Ditch
and ditch maintenance shack.**

screens.... There is snow on the hillsides in the back-round....

389 Muriel and Ken Lohnes are shown in Photograph #16.... They are old time Alaskans. When Glen first met Ken, Ken was working for the Alaska Railroad. One time while Ken was working as a fireman on a locomotive, he slipped on ice on the deck of the locomotive's tender... and went out the gangway while the train was crossing a bridge.... After the engineer realized that his fireman was missing, the engineer stopped the train and they found him still hanging on to the bridge. His skull was fractured in several places.... He survived and retired from the railroad.... In 1936, Ken was in Flat working on the Matheson Dredge.... Muriel was the nicest lady Glen ever saw..., as much of a lady as anybody Glen ever met.... Later on, Ken was an electrician, and last Glen heard of him he was working in Ketchikan. Ken retired to Edmunds, Washington.... In Photograph #16, Ken and Muriel are standing in front of a one room cabin that Jimmy Stenberg had built. Jimmy Stenberg married a Native girl named Amanda Anderson.... It was about the worst match ever made.... Jimmy had the house built, and he moved into it with Amanda.... Ken and Muriel were renting the house at the time. The house was up on ... the tailing piles on the bluff in the general vicinity of the Matheson House [IDT-102].... The Lohnes lived not far from Glen when Glen lived near the footbridge that crossed Otter Creek. The Lohnes lived to the south of Glen, on a little bluff.... Both Ken and Muriel are now deceased....



**Figure 17. Barnett Photograph #15:
Glen Barnett cleaning screens
on the Flat Creek Ditch.**

472 Photograph #17 is a 60 Caterpillar gas Cat. It belonged to the Olsons up on Flat Creek.... Ed Olsen mined one or two years in the tailings in the downtown [of Flat]. In 1935, they were mining close to Glen's cabin in Flat. The following year, the Olsons mined on Flat Creek. The cat shown in the photograph was driven by Whitley Ray, who also appears in Photograph #20.... A "cat skinner" was a bulldozer operator....



Figure 18. Barnett Photograph #16. Ken and Muriel Lohnes in Flat, 1936.



Figure 19. Barnett Photograph #17: Whitley Ray driving a cat on Flat Creek, 1935.

491 Photograph #18 is a picture of Glen Barnett. It was taken in 1935 at the Miscovich camp. Photograph #17 was taken in 1936, as was photograph #20....

502 Glen lived with the guy in Photograph #20, Whitley Ray, during the spring of 1937. One day Glen was walking up Flat Creek Road, and Ray came by on a tractor and gave Glen a ride. Ray let Glen steer it up the road to the Olson's camp. Another time, Ray let Glen drive a little 30 gas cat about the same distance.... In the spring of 1937, Glen walked out to Happy Creek one day to look for work. The guy there said he would not have any work for a week. Glen walked away, and the guy called him back and said he was supposed to have a dozer operator coming from Fairbanks, but it did not look like the cat skinner was coming. The guy asked Glen if he had ever run a dozer, and Glen said no, but he had driven a cat a little bit. Glen did not tell him how little.... A week later the same man came down to Flat and told Glen to get his gear as he had a job for him. So Glen went out to Happy Creek to run a bulldozer. Nels Westland, a dozer operator, was also working at Happy Creek. He showed Glen how to operate a dozer.... It was not long before Glen got onto it, and there was nothing to it [running a dozer] after that.... Glen told a story about stacking tailing with a dozer....



Figure 20. Barnett Photograph #18: Glen Barnett at the Miscovich Camp, 1935.

577 Photograph #19 shows a dragline and bulldozer. The photograph was probably taken on Happy Creek... in 1937. Ed Olson was working in town in 1935, then up on Flat Creek in 1936. The following year Ed worked out on Willow Creek. Andrew Olson operated out on Happy Creek.

595 The dragline in Photograph #23 was out on Willow Creek. Pete Jensen mined out on Willow Creek, and that was his dragline. It was the biggest piece of equipment in the Flat area. Ed Olson mined on Willow Creek after Jensen left there.



Figure 21. Barnett Photograph #20. Whitley Ray at his home on Flat Creek Road, 1937.



Figure 22. Barnett Photograph #19: Dragline and bulldozer on Happy Creek, 1937.

601 Photograph #19 was taken on Happy Creek, where they were stripping dirt to get down to bedrock. They had to push the overburden off to get down to the pay dirt....

609 Photograph #20 shows Whitley Ray's cabin on the west side of Flat Creek Road, fairly close to town.... The cabin was located in the area of IDT-138, IDT-139 or IDT-140 on the interviewers' site map, or maybe a little further down the road....

623 [End of Side B of Tape #2].

Tape 3, Side A:

002 Introduction by Rolfe Buzzell, and continuation from Side B of Tape #2....

004 Photograph #21 is the Ford Tri-



Figure 23. Barnett Photograph #23: Pete Jensen's dragline on Willow Creek.



Figure 24. Barnett Photograph #21: Frank Dorbandt's Ford Tri-motor aircraft at Flat.

motor aircraft at Flat. That airplane originally belonged to Frank Dorbandt, who was quite a colorful character in Alaska in his day. The airplane was wrecked in Flat and sat along side the airfield for quite a while. It never flew after that. The front section of the aircraft was moved to the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum in Anchorage.



Figure 25. Barnett Photograph #22: Oscar Winchell's Pilgrim aircraft at Flat, 1936.

010 Photograph #22 is the same Pilgrim aircraft shown in Photograph #9.

012 Photograph #23 is a dragline out at Willow Creek....

014 Photograph #24 is a point field for the Donnelly [Riley] Company Dredge. The dredge [IDT-220] is



Figure 26. Barnett Photograph #24: Point field for the Riley Dredge (in the background), 1935.

shown in the background. The photograph shows what it looked like after all the points had been taken out and the "sweaters" were in the ground [during thawing operations].... The photograph was taken in 1935.

- 018 Photograph #25 is of Peter Miscovich, taken in downtown Flat on the Fourth of July. The building in the background is the Moose [Community] Hall [Build-ing S, IDT-070].... Glen did not re-cognize any of the other people in the background.... The photograph was taken in 1935.



**Figure 27. Barnett photograph #25:
Pete Miscovich in Flat on the
Fourth of July, 1935.**

- 026 Photograph #26 shows Bob Barnett, Glen's brother. He worked for the Donnelley [Riley] Dredge operation. The photograph was taken in 1935. Bob Barnett was also in Flat in 1936, and probably worked for Donnelley again that year. Glen believed that the garage [IDT-096] in the background belonged to Fritz Awe.

- 034 Photograph #27 is the cut at the Miscovich mining operation. The photo-graph was taken in 1935 when they were almost finished mining and had taken everything out of the cut.... A hydraulic lift is shown in the photograph. The Miscovich flume with sluice boxes is also shown [on the right].

- 040 Photograph #28 is a pipeline coming from the penstock on the Riley Ditch, carrying water for the point field for the Riley Dredge.... The photograph was taken in 1935. The airfield is visible down there [in the background] and buildings are visible also. Patterson's House is there [on the right in the background].... The view of the photograph was looking from south to north, and the buildings are on the left hand side.

- 049 Photograph #29. The fella on the motorcycle was Paul Wabnig, and he worked on the Riley Dredge. Glen was sitting on the fender of the automobile.

052 Photograph #30 shows Glen sitting on Paul's motorcycle. These two photographs were probably taken in 1935....

057 Photograph #31 was taken up on Slate Creek, when Glen was working for [Gus] Uotila and [John] Ogriz. Photograph #31 and Photograph #32 were taken at the same place and on the same day.... These photographs were taken during 1936.

066 Photograph #33 was taken out in the point fields for the thawing operation for the Donnelley [Riley] Dredge. That was out near the airfield. Photograph #34 is the same thing.... These two photographs were taken in 1935, and the view in both is looking south up Flat Creek. The airfield is in the background.... Patterson's House is here [on extreme right in Photograph #34].... The view is looking towards the south....

081 Photograph #35 is Whitley Ray on the gas tractor, the same as Photograph #17. Both photographs were taken about the same time period.

084 Photograph #36 was taken at Peter Miscovich's [mining operation in 1935]. That was the last day in the cut and they were just starting cleanup. Everything else was done when they started working around that dump box, and they were starting the cleanup.... There are about eight people in the photograph.... Glen explained how a cleanup was done... taking all the riffles out of the boxes.... Then they cleaned the pay dirt by hand. In Photograph #36, they were just finishing up putting the last of the dirt in the boxes.

123 Peter Miscovich with the pan of gold is shown in Photograph #38.

124 Photograph #37 is Annie Miscovich [Williams], Peter's daughter.... Annie is standing in front of the mess hall... at the Peter Miscovich Camp [IDT-221].... Glen pointed out that



**Figure 28. Barnett Photograph #26:
Bob Barnett standing in front of
Fritz Awe's garage, 1935.**



Figure 29. Barnett photograph #27. Open cut at the Miscovich mining operation, Otter Creek, 1935.



Figure 30. Barnett Photograph #28: Pipeline from the Riley Ditch, 1935.



Figure 31. Barnett Photograph #29: Paul Wabnig (left) and Glen Barnett (right).



Figure 32. Barnett Photograph #30: Glen Barnett on Paul Wabnig's motorcycle, 1935.



Figure 33. Barnett Photograph #31. The Uotila and Ogriz dragline operation on Slate Creek, 1937.



Figure 34. Barnett Photograph #32: Dragline operation of Gus Uotila and John Ogriz on Slate Creek, 1936.



Figure 35. Barnett Photograph #33: Point fields for the Donnelley Dredge, Otter Creek.



Figure 36. Barnett Photograph #34: Driving points for the Donnelley dredging operation, Otter Creek.



Figure 37. Barnett Photograph #35: Whitley Ray on a gas tractor, Flat Creek, 1935.



Figure 38. Barnett Photograph #36: Open cut on one of Peter Miscovich's claims, Otter Creek, 1935.



Figure 39. Barnett Photograph #38: Peter Miscovich panning gold after a cleanup, Flat Creek, 1935.



Figure 40. Barnett Photograph #37: Ann Miscovich [Williams], 1935.

there was no porch on the front of the Miscovich Mess Hall [IDT-222] at that time. It was built with rough looking timber, but Glen was not sure if it was made of logs.

- 137 Photograph 39 was taken at Happy Creek. Nels Westland was standing in front of a D-7 Cat.... The photograph was taken in 1937.



Figure 41. Barnett Photograph #39: Nels Westland standing in front of a D-7 cat at Happy Creek, 1937.

- 141 Photograph #40 was taken in front of Whitley Ray's cabin. The man on the left was named Jackson. Mannard Taylor was sitting in the cab of the pickup, and Glen was on the right. The house in the background was up on Flat Creek Road, but Glen could not recall whose house it was.



Figure 42. Barnett Photograph #40: Mr. Jackson, Mannard Taylor and Glen Barnett in front of Whitley Ray's cabin.

147 Photograph #41 may be of Happy Creek, but Glen was not sure.... The bulldozer is the same one as in Photograph #19. There were two draglines in the picture. Photograph #41 was taken in 1937.



Figure 43. Barnett Photograph #41: Dragline and bulldozer operating on Happy Creek, 1937.

164 Photograph #42 shows the Matheson Dredge [IDT-118]. The buildings in the background are in Flat.... On the right hand side in the background is the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [IDT-077]. During the years that Glen was in Flat, the Matheson Dredge was working ground near the Donnelley and Sheppard Store Building.... The Donnelley and Sheppard Store appears to be in the background on the right side of the dredge in this photograph.... Glen used to go on the Riley Company Dredge to eat lunch at night....



Figure 44. Barnett Photograph #42: The Matheson Dredge in Flat in the late 1930s.

202 Photograph #43 was probably taken out at Happy Creek. Glen did not recognize the man in front of the bulldozer, but that is the same tractor as in Photograph #39. The tractors have the same headlight and exhaust....

214 Photograph #44
 ... shows a cat
 and a hydraulic
 nozzle. Glen
 was not sure
 where the
 photograph was
 taken....

231 Photograph #45
 was taken in
 downtown Flat
 on the Fourth
 of July. The
 building was
 the Pool Hall
 [IDT-071] that
 be-longed to
 A n d y
 Miscovich.
 Glen did not
 recognize any
 of the people in
 the photograph....



Figure 45. Barnett Photograph #43: Unidentified man standing in front of D-7 cat on Happy Creek, 1937.

237 Photograph #46
 was the cabin in
 Flat that Glen
 lived in during
 the summer of
 1935. Off to the
 left of the cabin
 was Arn-old
 Kobler's House.
 Then there was
 the Post Office,
 and then Fritz
 Awe's place [Site
 Z] was further off
 to the left [not
 shown].



Figure 46. Barnett Photograph #44: An hydraulic mining operation using a tractor on an unidentified creek.



**Figure 47. Barnett Photograph 45:
Downtown Flat on the Fourth of July.**



**Figure 48. Barnett Photograph #46: Glen Barnett's cabin
in Flat in 1935. Arnold Kobler's house is on the left.**

244 Photograph #47 is the [Donnelley] Company [Riley] Dredge.

246 Photograph #48 shows Glen Barnett in front of the Moose Hall [IDT-070].... That photograph was taken in 1935....

259 Photograph #49 ... may have been taken up on Slate Creek. The terrain was like that around Slate Creek, the cut was not very deep, and they did a lot of panning up at Slate Creek. There was slate bedrock, and they were always panning to see if they were down deep enough.... That was taken in 1936. They kept panning and going deeper and deeper John Ogriz was very optimistic about the amount of gold they would recover. Glen finally made a bet with Bob Gertler, the guy bent over panning in Photograph #56, that the cleanup would not be more than \$5,000.... And Glen won the bet....

281 Photograph #50 shows a man on a motorcycle, Paul Wabnig, and a man beside him, Forest Englehorn. The building behind them is Fritz Awe's Shop [IDT-096]. It is the same building as in Photograph #26. The photograph was taken in 1935 or 1936. Forest worked on the Donnelley [Riley]



Figure 49. Barnett Photograph #47: The Riley Dredge operating near Flat in the late 1930s.

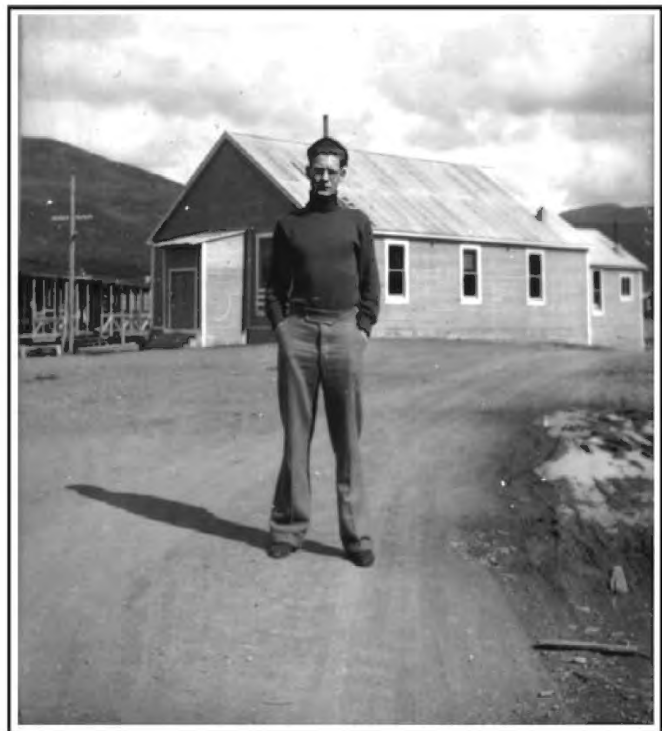


Figure 50. Barnett Photograph #48: Glen Barnett standing in front of the Moose Hall, 1935.



**Figure 51. Barnett Photograph #49:
An unidentified miner panning for
gold on Slate Creek, 1936.**



**Figure 52. Barnett Photograph #50:
Forest Englehorn (left) and Paul
Wabnig (right) in front of Fritz
Fritz Awe's shop, 1935 or 1936.**

Dredge. Paul Wabnig, a German fella, also worked on the Donnelley Dredge. Glen ran into Forest about 10-15 years ago. Glen had not seen him since Flat.

301 Photograph #51 appears to be the Riley Dredge [IDT-220].... Photograph #42 appears to Glen to be the Matheson Dredge....

320 The two women in Photograph #52 were the Miscovich girls. Annie was on the left and Olga was on the right.... They are holding baby goats. The Miscovich had an old billy goat and one or two nannies.... The photograph was taken in 1935. One of the two girls married George Rosander, the fella on the left in Photograph #56.

335 Photograph #53 shows someone driving points. The guy was standing on a ladder. Glen did not recognize the person on the ladder, but it must have been taken while thawing ground

o n t h e
M a t h e s o n
D r e d g e .
T h e b u i l d -
i n g s i n t h e
b a c k - g r o u n d
a r e i n
d o w n t o w n
F l a t G l e n
i s n o t s u r e
w h i c h
b u i l d i n g i s
i n t h e r i g h t
b a c k -
g r o u n d .
G l e n d i d n o t
r e m e m b e r
c r e w s
d r i v i n g
p o i n t s i n t h e



Figure 53. Barnett Photograph #51: The Riley [Donnelley] Dredge.



Figure 54. Barnett Photograph #52: Annie and Olga Miscovich holding baby goats at the Miscovich Camp, 1935.

the town of Flat during the years that he was there....

364 Photograph #54 shows another man driving points.... The building in the background may have been the Donnelley and Sheppard Store [IDT-077].... The man in the photograph kind of looked like George Matheson, but Glen could not be sure. Glen stated that in the earlier interview session, he said Alex Matheson took care of someone. The guy he took care of was someone who did something for Matheson when Alex lost his leg. The guy's name was Joe Cummings, who was working down on the point fields.

388 One beautiful, clear, hot day, all of a sudden it turned cold, and before long there was slush ice running down that ditch. Glen started having trouble with the screens that he had to knock dirt out of on the Matheson Ditch. He took all of the screens out of that box and continually scrubbed them to get the water through the screens. With all that slush ice coming down the ditch, he threw it off to the sides.... It was a mile up to the head of the ditch to shut it off. Glen was afraid to leave his position to shut off the flow of water out of fear that the water would run over and wash out the penstock on the hillside before he could shut it off. Glen stayed there and worked his tail off. It finally quit running ice and warmed up.... Joe Cummings told everybody that the guy up there that night [Glen] was sleeping, because Joe could not keep the points going due to clogging in the lines.

415 Glen remembered something else about Joe Cummings. Joe told Glen that he once sailed on a vessel around the tip of South America or South Africa. During that voyage, one night he was standing the midnight watch. All of sudden, he heard his father call him. When he got home, he found out his father had died, and had died just at the moment that Joe had heard his father calling him on the midnight watch....



**Figure 55. Barnett Photograph #53:
An unidentified employee of the
Matheson Dredge driving
points in Flat.**

426 The guy kneeling down in Photograph #54 appears to be George Matheson, but Glen was not sure. The hat looks like the one that George Matheson used to wear....

429 Photograph #55 shows a dragline feed-ing boxes on a trestle. The photograph was taken in 1935 and it must have been Ed Olson's dragline. They were mining the old Gugg[enheim] Dredge tailings [in the area where the Matheson sheds and workshops were located in 1993, south and east of the Matheson House, IDT-102].... Glen's cabin was close by the Olson operation and he thought he would never get any sleep that summer. Glen was working nights, and the Olsons were working days with the dragline outside his cabin. They had the bulldozer running, as well as a big booster pump for water in the flume, and the dragline All that was going on right outside of Glen's window. Glen could have thrown a rock and hit them. But after three days, the only time he woke up was when they made unscheduled shut downs.... That was in 1935....



**Figure 56. Barnett Photograph #54:
Another unidentified Matheson employee
driving points in the town of Flat.**

462 Photograph #56 was taken in 1936.

The fella with the pipe on the left was George Rosander. The man bending over the tub panning was Bob Gertler. And the fella with the hat on the right was named Jackson. He was a cat skinner.

470 Glen used to get on one of the dredges every night when he was eating his lunch, and they sent hot lunches out every night at 11 o'clock from Durand's Restaurant. About midnight, Glen would go over to the dredge and up into the winch room and have his lunch.... He would see Ralph Alderson, the engineer, in the captain's chair, leaning back with his feet up, sound asleep. The dredges were very noisy, with the engine and equipment running.... Glen would put a little stick in the bull wheel for a few moments, then take it out. The sound of the stick in the bull wheel would wake Ralph up, but then he would back to sleep again.... Glen would do that again a few minutes later. Then Glen would go up to the

winch room
and have lunch.
Alderson would
come up to the
winch room
later, but he
never did catch
onto what Glen
was doing....

499 Whitley Ray is
on the dozer in
Photograph
#58.

501 The guy sitting
on top of the
airplane, a
B a l a n c a
belonging to
Star Air-ways,
in Photograph
#57 is Ray
Leonard. The
fella pre-
tending to be
"propping" the
airplane is Jack
Davidson....
They were, like
Glen, looking
for work, and
they both found
work in Flat.
Photograph#57
was taken in
1936. Ray
Leonard was
from Redding,
California.
Glen did not
r e m e m b e r
where Jack
Davidson was



Figure 57. Barnett Photograph #55: Ed Olson's dragline mining the old Gugg Dredge tailings near the Matheson Camp, 1935.



Figure 58. Barnett Photograph #56: George Rosander (left) and Jackson (right) watching Bob Gertler pan gold, 1936.

from. The three of them lived in a house in Flat....

516 At Rolfe's request, Glen amended the oral history release by adding the date of this second interview....

524 Glen agreed to donate the 58 negatives to the U. S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management/State of Alaska project documenting historic buildings in Flat.... Glen's nephew has the original prints.... Glen gave all the original photographs away to his nephew. Glen had one son, who was killed in a car crash....



Figure 59. Barnett Photograph #58: Whitley Ray on a bulldozer on Flat Creek, 1935 or 1936.

553 Rolfe ended the interview and thanked Glen for his assistance....

577 [The tape recorder is turned off].

578 [The tape recorder is turned back on]....

583 Glen recalled [John] Popovich who worked at the Miscovichs' Camp at the same time as Glen in 1935. Popovich and Glen were cleaning bedrock with pick and shovel and wheelbarrow. Peter Miscovich would tell Glen to "do like Popovich, Popovich a good man. Thirty years on bedrock!" ... Popovich was an old-timer there by the time that Glen worked in Flat.

594 A big Irishman that worked for the Miscovichs was Billy Burns. He lived to be about a hundred years old. Billy used to go to work carrying half a pick handle. Billy and Peter Miscovich had a row once about whether Billy was working hard enough. Billy took the pick handle, according to the story that Glen heard, and threatened Peter with it. After that, Billy always carried that pick handle to work, and Peter did not bother Billy any more.... Glen did not know if the story was true or not....

613 Glen worked with another Irishman, Jimmy Burns, on Happy Creek. One day they sent the crew to build a road for the dragline, to get the dragline up to where they were going to do some stripping. They did some shooting [with explosives], and got most of the frost leveled off, but then they did not move the dragline right away. It set there for three or four days, the frozen ground, and it all melted. They had to build another road over it, and there was a section that had not been shot yet. Jimmy Burns was mad about the delay in moving the dragline, creating extra work. He drilled three rows of holes in that hump, and he put a whole case of dynamite in the holes.... On the day they were shooting, Jimmy was smoking a pipe. He lit the pipe and the tobacco swelled up on top.... He took dynamite caps out of his pocket, took the paper off of them, and stood there with a pipe full of coals ready to fall off into the dynamite caps.... Glen saw this, turned around, put his hand over the dynamite caps, and told Jimmy that he ought to put that pipe out....



**Figure 60. Barnett Photograph #57:
Ray Leonard sitting on top of a Star
Airways Balanca aircraft at Flat, 1936.**

650 They were getting ready to shoot off the frozen ground, and Glen climbed up on the dragline for more protection. He pulled the door shut and stood between the wall and the motor. At the last minute he decided to get around on the other side of the motor. When the shots went off, something hit the dragline, rocking it back and forth.... Where he had been standing earlier, between the wall and the motor, there was now only a space three to four inches wide after the blast.... But they got the hump of dirt out of there....

676 [End of interview. Tape recorder turned off].

ALVIN AGOFF INTERVIEW

SUMMARY OF TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED MARCH 4, 1995

This interview was conducted with Alvin Agoff on March 4, 1995, at his home near Palmer, Alaska. The interview was conducted by historian Rolfe Buzzell of the State Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information about the history of Flat, Alaska and historic buildings in that community. Also present during part of the interview was Mr. Agoff's wife, Kathleen Agoff.

The following is a summary of Mr. Agoff's comments, unless quotation marks are used.

Tape 1, Side A:

- 000 Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....
- 004 Alvin explained that Louis Miller was one of the white men in Flat that was married to a Native woman. Three men were married to Native women. Emil "Paprika" Jensen, George Turner, and Louis Miller. Miller's wife was a Williams from Anvik....
- 013 Rolfe explained the Flat Historic Building Survey project, and explained the purpose of the draft Historic Context and the draft Historic Building Survey Report documents....
- 027 Alvin stated that Louis Miller lived in a house on Flat Creek Road (IDT-141). Miller had nine kids. Eleven people lived in that house.... They must have had a system for living together, Alvin said, because they never seemed to be pinched for room in that house.... Three of Miller's daughters live in Anchorage now.... Miller had the biggest family of the three men in Flat who married Native women....
- 040 George Turner was a merchant. Mr. Agoff has a picture of Turner's House during one of the winter floods in Flat. They used to get some real thaws in the winter, warm winds. The snow would melt. The river was frozen, so the water would come up and over the ice and flood Otter Creek. Turner had his house built up high. He had a ground level basement under the house, so flooding did not bother him. He would move a few things up from below. A part of the house was covered with vertical galvanized sheet iron. He had quite a stairway leading up there....
- 048 Turner's house burned down in 1952. Before that, Turner moved the house when he moved his Store with the false front (IDT-086) across Otter Creek. The store used to be on the north side of Otter Creek. Turner's house was just a little downstream from the

store. Turner moved the house across the river [Otter Creek] and Mattie Crosby, known as Tootsie, acquired it. She burned it down later. The house caught fire. She was not home at the time. She was doing assessment work on her claims down at Nyac. Old Mike Burns, her caretaker, left a stove open or something and the house burned down. The house was right next to Alvin's Shop (IDT-120), the building with the tapered roof on the south side of Otter Creek, below the present auto bridge. It was a miracle that Alvin's Shop (IDT-120) did not burn when Turner's old house burned....

- 064 Turner moved his house south across Otter Creek when he moved his store across the creek. They brought the Olson brother's D-8 Caterpillar in from Willow Creek. It was around the end of March and they wanted to get the building across the creek before the creek ice got too soft. Alvin and his friend, Harry Kardanoff, were watching the tractor pull the building.... They did not trust the ice. They crossed first with the tractor, then pulled the building across with a long strap. The ice held. They did not want the tractor and Turner's House on the ice at the same time....
- 078 Turner's House was a single gable roof building.... The house was right along side of the road (on the north side of Otter Creek). Billie Harding's House (IDT-160) had three gables and was on the north side of Otter Creek. She was the last person to run that house. Alvin did not know if Harding was a prostitute, but she used to have parties down there, and the boys would go down there with a bottle and celebrate.... Alvin did not recall if Finn Annie lived in the house before Billie Harding. Finn Annie was before Alvin's time, and he did not remember her.... Billie Harding ran that building in the early 1940s....
- 090 Billie Harding left Flat in 1941 or 1942. She was quite a character. She cracked up in a Star Airways plane crash at Fourth of July Creek, near Moore Creek. They were coming over the summit on their way to Flat when the plane came into fog and piled up. Billie laid there for about three days with a broken back. The pilot, Dan Victor, was not hurt in the crash. He walked into Flat and got help. One of the other passengers got killed in the crash, as he did not have a seat belt on. Billie had a broken back. Seventeen men got together to go pack her into Flat on a stretcher. They were pretty loyal to her....
- 103 Rolfe asked Alvin about his family history.... Alvin was born in Akiak, Alaska in 1931. His mother came to Alaska as a teacher in the fall of 1928.... She was teaching at Otter Territorial School in Flat, the same school building (IDT-093) that is still standing.... Alvin's father was a miner. He came to Flat from Kennecott Copper Company. Kennecott was his last job before he came to Flat. Alvin's father came to the United States from Russia.... He became a naturalized citizen. He came to Flat in the winter of 1917. He had been at Flat for about eleven years before Alvin's mother arrived.... He left Russia before the civil war in Russia. World War I was already under way when

Alvin's father left Russia.... Alvin's father was Harry Agoff. His name was originally Argazaroff in the old country. All of those guys changed their names because their names were so hard to pronounce.... They simplified their names, or changed their names to Smith or Jones....

- 126 Harry Agoff was a laborer and he came to Flat about Christmas time in the winter of 1917. He walked in over the [Iditarod] trail with three home-town boys from back in Russia. The other two guys left soon after. They did not like life around Flat and they took off. But he stayed....
- 133 Alvin's mother came to Flat in 1928 when she came to Flat to teach school. Her maiden name was Evelyn Hoverson. Both of Alvin's parents are buried in the Anchorage cemetery. His mother died in 1981. His father died in 1962. Her family came west, and her father went broke in North Dakota because of the dry years. A lot of people moved from the mid-west to the west where they could find employment after the wheat farms dried up. Alvin's mother had taught school in North Dakota a few years before she and her family ended up in Seattle. There were no school jobs available there, but there was one in Flat. That is how she came to Flat. Her sister, Thora, thought Evelyn was following some kind of hoax to Alaska because the town of Flat was not on any maps.... It took her almost a month to get to Flat. She told Alvin later that she had the funniest feeling when she was coming up the Iditarod River, just like she was coming home.... She came down the Yukon River on the stern-wheeler *Alice* and up the Iditarod River from Holy Cross to Iditarod on the stern-wheeler *Seawolf*. George Turner and Willie Newman were operating the *Seawolf* back then.... She liked it when she arrived in Flat in September. Back in those days they did not have those "contagious rains", there used to be nice weather. She really liked it around Flat, but she had definitely planned to stay just one season. She ended up being there for 53 years.
- 165 Alvin was born in 1931. Alvin had a brother, Sergie, who was two years older. Sergie has been dead since 1968. He was born in 1929. Alvin also has a sister, Ruth Green, who lives in California. She is the youngest of the three. She is four years younger than Alvin.
- 175 Harry Agoff mined with another old Russian, Walter Sakow. They had a lease on some of the pay left on the side hill on [Odin] Strandberg's claims on upper Flat Creek. It was called the "upgrade." There is a boiler house up there yet and a few old buildings [the Odin Strandberg Mining Camp, IDT-235). Strandberg had it pretty well worked out, but there was side pay, places that could be mined on a small scale. And that is where Harry Agoff and Walter Sakow were mining. They were getting about done mining up there, when an old timer on Prince Creek, Bob Laurie, told Harry that he was going to drop all of his claims on Prince Creek and go over to Ophir. Alvin's dad staked the claims on the upper end of Prince Creek in his own name. That was where the

prospecting had been done in the early days. There was no prospecting in the early days down further on the creek, and that was where the real money was. On the steep part, there was no gold. Everyone figured the lower end of the creek was worthless, even though it had been prospected.... Every once in a while, Alvin runs into an old cribbed shaft on the lower end of Prince Creek made by early prospectors. They cribbed the ground so it would not cave in.... The ground that paid in modern times would not have paid back then, because everything was done back then by hand. There was too much gravel that needed to be moved....

- 204 Alvin, his brother, and their father have been working Prince Creek from the early 1930s to the present. Harry Agoff had a small scale operation. They have been on that property roughly since 1929. Harry moved in there about 1930. He had a combination hydraulic and hand mining operation. He was way up at the upper end of the creek where there was grade, where he could get rid of the waste gravel. Down below on Prince Creek, they had to have equipment to move the waste gravel out of the way. In the early days, Harry Agoff was up where the drainage had grade. Down below it is spread out.... Later the family switched to mechanical equipment, in 1957.... The machinery they had before 1957 was worn out.... It took a little experience [working with mechanical equipment], and they finally got going in 1957....
- 223 Alvin went to school in Flat at the old School House (IDT-093). Alvin's name is carved on one of the desks that is still in the school. He said he was "a great one for carving." He was in the fourth grade at the time.... The School House was previously the Guggenheim Hospital building. Doctor Behla was there in the early years. Behla's son was also a doctor, and Alvin met the son in Seattle when John Fullerton had an operation on his back. Doctor Behla operated on Fullerton, and he told Alvin that his father had been the physician at the hospital in Flat in the 1910s.
- 240 There was another school house in Flat before the Guggenheims built the hospital building. The first school house was a little log cabin. John and Jane Fullerton used to have a picture of that.... In the photograph, all of the kids were standing outside the log cabin. The Miscovich kids, the Fullerton kids, the Browne kids, and the Mutchler kids.... It was a little log cabin with a big old fashion window. Back then, they used to make those real picturesque windows... with the row of diamonds (lights) across the top. Alvin did not recall if the first school house burned down or what became of it. Alvin never saw it, he only saw pictures of it.
- 255 Alvin's memory only went back to 1935 because that is when he started remembering things. The present School House (IDT-093) has not been moved in the years since 1935. It was moved prior to that, but Alvin is not sure when. It has been in the same location since 1928 when his mother came to Flat. She had pictures of it during her first year and it was in the same place that it is now....

- 262 Alvin said the people of Flat lost the town twice to fires before they finally wised up and started spacing buildings out a little more.... The fire in 1924 was a real bad one.... That was the major fire that took out practically the whole business district. They had nothing to fight it with except water buckets. Over in Iditarod they had a little skim pump, but that did not help much either. The town of Iditarod burned down and Alvin had a picture of that fire that someone at the Northern Commercial Company gave him. Jim Cassidy, who was involved in the Alaska Centennial of 1867-1967, from Alaskaland, had an extra photograph of the town of Iditarod burning in 1911. Alvin stated that the little water pumper at Iditarod is still over in Iditarod. It had wagon wheels on it and a 200 gallon tank. It was a lot better than buckets. Flat never had anything like that.... The people in Flat were too busy extracting gold to ever think about having a fire like that....
- 291 Rolfe asked Alvin if he has other comments on the draft Historic Context on Flat that Rolfe sent Alvin....
- 302 Alvin said that Ira F. Wood was not a miner. He was a trader. Ira was buried in Cottonwood (Flat's Cemetery, IDT-247). He had one of the first cement headstones in the cemetery. The others buried there had wooden crosses. Everyone called him Woods, but his name did not have an "s" on the end.... His marker is a cement block with bronze lettering. Wood was in his late fifties or early sixties when he died. Alvin knew one of the guys that worked with Wood, Alex Edwards from Holy Cross. It was a hot day and Wood was unloading a boat about six miles below Iditarod. The boat was hung up on a reef during low water, and they had to unload the boat. They had a boom and a hand windless to raise the stuff up and put it on the bank. And they had just eaten lunch. Wood did not take time to let his dinner settle. He went right back out there, the worse thing he could have done. He had a bit of a heart condition and he dropped dead. Alex Edwards told Alvin that the next project was to forget unloading the barge and get Wood into town and get him buried. That was before World War II, about 1937....
- 331 Ira Wood and George Turner used to have the trading post there in Flat, and another one in Holikachuk, and other ones in Holy Cross, Shageluk and Anvik. Turner was a real enterprising merchant. He had a series of trading posts....
- 339 Commercial activity in Flat was divided between Turner and Wood on the one hand and Donnelley and Sheppard on the other.... There was a clique. Harry Donnelley was pretty well educated and he had the feeling that he was a little bit better than everybody else. Donnelley spent his time mostly running the bank, as Alvin remembered, but he had an interest in the Donnelley and Sheppard Store (IDT-077). Alvin remembered that Donnelley was always working in the bank. He was President of the Miners and Merchants Bank. His store was run by Sam Applebaum, who had owned a store over in Iditarod. Alvin has a slide somewhere – he has a lot of color slides – of when Alvin and

his brother were tearing Applebaum's Store in Iditarod (IDT-181). It was "falling to wreck and ruin." It had sawdust insulation in the walls. The outer walls were rotting away, and they salvaged what lumber they could out of that building. Alvin took a picture just before they jerked the building down, it was ready to collapse. The picture shows Alvin's brother standing in the doorway, and one could still see the little awning pulley on the front porch. Applebaum had painted on the awning on the front of the building: "Sam-L Applebaum"....

- 367 Kathy Agoff pointed out that Dave Wintz spells his name "W-I-N-T-Z", not Wince....
- 372 Applebaum, according to Alvin Agoff, was kind of a character... He and Turner used to have some rough arguments. When John Stevens moved the Donnelley and Sheppard Store--there was a spot under the store that Donnelley and Sheppard paid Matheson \$7,000 so they would not have to move the store when the Matheson Dredge came by. The building was very heavy. Later, in the 1960s, it took three D-8 tractors to pull it. Alvin ran one tractor, his brother ran another, and John Stevens ran the third tractor. And they were pulling it down hill. They had it on steel spuds from the dredge, using them for stringers. They moved the building, and it started getting a little out of line. They had to get it squared up and back in line. They had it moving, but it froze to the ground. There was a little bit of snow in late October, but the friction of moving it created heat and froze the building to the ground. They had to get hydraulic jacks and break the stringers loose again before they could resume pulling the building.... That was in 1966, when John Stevens was making his last pass through Flat with the dredge.
- 402 Kathy asked Alvin about the history of the old chicken coop that Dave Wintz bought and fixed up, the building at Dave and Vickie's House (IDT-121). Alvin replied that it was Debo Sagoff's old house.
- 405 Rolfe introduced maps of the different geographic areas in Flat and said he would use the maps as an outline for asking questions about the buildings in Flat.... They started with mid-town Flat....
- 428 Alvin recalled that the saw-toothed building, Billie Harding's house, was still there when Kathy Agoff came to Flat. The shades were still pulled on the building and there had not been anyone in the building for years. It had three identical gables....
- 436 The Mike Demientieff House (IDT-092) is one of the oldest houses in Flat. The barn behind [northwest of] the house (IDT-243) was the old Peter Miscovich House that was moved to Flat from Discovery. Demientieff's House was originally the Guggenheim Office Building in Flat. It was built about 1912.... As far back as Alvin could remember, in 1935, Gus and Nina Uotila lived in that house. They were real old-timers in Flat, and they may have moved into the house after the Guggenheims left. They were

living in the house in 1935.... It has not been moved since 1935. And the barn, which was moved shortly after the Miscovichs left Discovery, has not been moved in the years since 1935. Uotila pulled the old Miscovich House down to Flat from Discovery and used it as a horse barn....

- 460 The Miscovich House (IDT-094) was the Jake Mutchler House, and Alvin's mother told him about when Peter Miscovich moved the house right in there by the School House (IDT-093). Peter's oldest daughter, Eva, stayed in the house while it was being moved. She was about 13 at the time.... The house was so heavy, they had an old Best 30 gasoline tractor, and they had to move it with a four part line with block and tackle, to get enough leverage to move it.... Ina and Gus Uotila stayed in the Mike Demientieff House (IDT-092) and they sold it to Andrew Miscovich, who had only one arm. He lost the arm in a buzz saw accident in Flat.
- 481 Old [also known as "Little"] John Miscovich lived in this house (IDT-095). He had the same name as John Miscovich, but they were not related.... That is the house where Kathy Agoff stayed the first time she visited Flat. Little John Miscovich had the house built in such a way that he did not have to go outside. The wood shed [on the east side of the building] had an out house in it. "You did not know if he was dead or not," Alvin said of Old John Miscovich, "until you saw smoke coming out of his chimney." Old John Miscovich was 80 some years old when he died and he did not have a grey hair on his head.... He used to work for the Riley Dredge Company. He was a ditch man, keeping the ditches open. The ditches required constant maintenance. He worked for Riley Dredging for years. When they closed down, he worked for [Peter] Miscovich. They were all Yugoslavians, they were pretty clannish. Just like any other people, they liked to be together. There were all those old country Yugoslavians up there during the war. The boys were all in the army. They mined, and they overhauled the old diesel 50 tractor all by themselves [Alvin showed Rolfe a photograph of the tractor with Alvin standing in front of it]. That was one of the first diesel tractors in the camp. Peter Miscovich, old John Miscovich, and his brother Gero.... They had to put a clutch in it. Old Peter was a smart man. He had never gone to school, but had taught himself to read and write.... Those guys were capable....
- 544 Old John Miscovich was living in that house (IDT-095) as far back as 1935, and it has not been moved in all that time. The only building that has been moved out of that low area since 1935 was Durand's Restaurant, which in later years was Joe Parker's Bar (IDT-072). It used to be over there by the river [Otter Creek] (between IDT-094 and Site Z). Joe Parker moved it out of there because he was afraid of the creek glacier in winter. It was originally located directly north of Old John Miscovich's place and east of Peter Miscovich's House. Parker used to throw garbage in the river. Every one used to do that in the old days.... Fritz Awe's House used to be directly behind Kepler's Shop (IDT-096). After they moved Durand's Restaurant building and made it into Joe

Parker's Bar, then Fritz moved his house over to the spot where Durand's Restaurant had been.... Awe put so much money into that house, and the roof went bad and weather destroyed the house....

- 586 Joe Parker moved Durand's old restaurant building out of the low area and up on to the hill in the spring of 1945. That was when Joe decided to go into the bar business. Andrew Miscovich was not coming back to Flat anymore. Andrew closed up his bar (IDT-071) in the summer of 1943 and died in the spring of 1945. The back end of that building is caved in.... Harry Lawrence and George Turner had a bar connected to the hotel (IDT-089), but they had closed up too. There were a lot of old-timers in Flat and they liked to have a bottle of whiskey now and then. In addition, they liked to play pinochle and poker, and there was not a place for them to play any more. So Joe Parker and Fritz Awe went into partnership in a new bar. They were partners for a couple of years, but there were just not many people left in Flat. So Fritz sold out to Joe for a few thousand dollars. Joe did not keep the bar open much longer, as he was feeling kind of tough [bad health]. He closed the bar in 1954. After Joe Parker died, his wife [Stella] sold off the inventory that he had had in the bar. She never ran the place. Parker opened the bar on the Fourth of July, 1945. He had already dug the basement, but he did not have the building in its final location yet. The building was in the middle of the road when he opened up on the Fourth of July. He made pretty good money up until 1948. After that, the old-timers either died or moved away.
- 637 What really seemed to put the skids to Flat was when the ACS [Alaska Communications System] Building (IDT-130) closed. Clyde Day told Alvin and Sergie that he ran a skeleton crew, one man and himself, on the river during the summer of 1950. He said that was going to be his last year. Without the wireless, the ACS Station, Day's business dropped right off. Day had to haul a thousand barrels of gas, roughly 55,000 gallons a year, for the ACS Station. And when the ACS closed up in Flat, Day's profits for his business, Day Navigation, just went right down like that. So Day sold out to Black Navigation in the spring of 1951.

655 [End of Side A)

Tape 1, Side B:

- 000 Continuation from Side A. Introductory remarks by Rolfe Buzzell....
- 002 Clyde Day sold out to Black Navigation in the spring of 1951. He brought an old timer with him, Gregory Kokrine, who had not been to Flat since 1910. Gregory and old Bill Burns, who was the same age as Gregory, recognized each other. They had not seen each other since 1910.... Bill had a big nose, and people called him Jimmy Durante....

- 012 Mark Kepler's Shop (IDT-096) was in its present location in 1935. Fritz Awe and Henry Durand built the Shop. They had a freighting business before they got into the mining business. They had a couple of trucks and they were carrying freight between Iditarod and Flat. They built the shop in the early 1930s because Awe did not come to Flat until 1933... So it was built somewhere around 1933 or 1934.... That building has never been moved....
- 022 The building to the east of the Awe Shop was one of Gus Uotila's horse barns (IDT-097). Uotila had a big team of horses. He had a freight service. Mark Kepler has a photograph of Uotila sitting on a freight sled. Gus had a wisp of hair that hung in front of his eyes. They all called it "Gus' hair do." Gus had big black horses, like Clydesdale horses. Alvin does not remember those horses. From the time Alvin started remembering, there were only two horses in Flat and they belonged to Henry Durand. They were big horses too.... Big old plow horses. Uotila had already gotten rid of all of his horses [by 1935]....
- 033 The building right above the Horse Barn used to be a Blacksmith's Shop (IDT-098). It is all caved in.... Both buildings have been in that location as long as Alvin can remember.... The Horse Barn (IDT-097) was moved sometime before 1935 and survived the 1924 fire. There used to be a house between the Horse Barn and the present foot bridge over Otter Creek. That was Sam Applebaum's House (IDT-114), and that house is up by Alex Matheson's place. John Stevens made a shed out of Applebaum's House. There is no floor in the place now.... John Stevens pulled it up to a point just south of the Matheson House (IDT-102), but it is not there now. It has been move elsewhere.... Matheson had some warehouses south of his house.... Applebaum's old house had no floor on it, and Stevens pulled it up behind the Matheson House for use as a shed....
- 077 John Stevens built a ramp up into one building (IDT-107) to keep his car in. That building used to be Harold Byrd's garage, it used to be over by Byrd's House (IDT-133) on Flat Creek Road....
- 086 Site UUU used to be part of Charlie Salami's cabin. Bill Williams moved that out of there and incorporated it into his home (IDT-101). Charles Solami was an old Finlander. Bill Williams moved the main part of the house out of there and built his whole house around it. Salami's house was a one room cabin. One of the residents of Flat died in there. Kathy Agoff tried to give the guy artificial respiration, but he died.... There used to be a bunch of buggies and carriages to the north of Site UUU.... There was a livery stable back in there, but it is grown up with brush now....
- 116 Bill Williams died last summer. He fell in the river. William's new house (IDT-101) was built in the 1980s. A fire destroyed his old house in the spring of 1979. They started building the new house (IDT-101) several years later. Site UUU is all that is left

of the Salami House.... The Salami House was originally to the south of Site UUU, but Bill Williams moved it to site UUU because the area where it was originally located would glacier so bad. Water would come out through the tailing piles [to the south] and ice would build up around it. So he moved it to a higher spot.

- 130 Rolfe asked Alvin about Building IDT-099.... That building was there as long as Alvin could recall.... There was a jail house to the west of IDT-099. The jail house was across the road [south] from Uotila's Barn (IDT-097).... The false front of the jail house faced north. Arnold Kobler lived in the jail house. The front end was converted into a shop....
- 146 The building floor at the edge of the airstrip (Site SSS) was Frank Lott's place. He was the husband of Peggy Lott, who had the restaurant in Anchorage across from Merrill Field, Peggy's Airport Cafe. That is the Lott family that use to live in that building (Site SSS) in Flat. That building was torn down seven years ago. Peggy Lott was a cook. She was also the U.S. Commissioner in Flat for five years. Frank Lott worked for the U.S. Navy.... The Navy had a radio station in Flat, and he called in the weather reports. The Navy paid for the biggest chunk of his time. Something to do with signals. The Lott House was east of the Shaffrick House (IDT-145).
- 164 The Marcell House (IDT-100) was way down, just in back of the Salami House, on the edge of the river [Otter Creek]. The river is cutting under it, and all that is left is the floor.
- 168 The Shaffrick House, a log cabin (IDT-145), is at one end and the Lott House was at the opposite (east) end of a line of buildings along the airstrip. The little green shed (IDT-146) was Shaffrick's light plant. All that remains of the Lott House is the floor outline.
- 174 Alvin Agoff helped tear down the Marcell House (IDT-100). John Stevens was supposed to have owned the house. Stevens was supposed to have gotten in touch with Mary Marcell, Maggie Marcell's daughter. She told Stevens to tear it down and salvage anything out of it she could. So Stevens gave it to Minnie Brink. Alvin and Big Foot [Ernie Norman] tore the house down and Alvin bulldozed around it with a tractor. That was about 1967. It had partially collapsed by then. Minnie got a rocking chair out of the house. The house had one of the first spiral staircases Alvin had ever seen. The staircase was located in one corner. In the early days, the house had belonged to Charlie Uotila, Gus Uotila's brother. The building was lined with canvas, and when they tore the canvas off it was lined with newspapers from Finland. The house had a spiral staircase in the corner.... It was a two story house. Charlie Uotila had two boys, and the oldest, Eugene, is still living in Fairbanks and is about 80 now.... Charlie Uotila lived in the house before the Marcell family. The Marcells moved into the house (IDT-100) in the early 1930s and always lived there when Alvin was growing up.

- 201 Alvin remembered the Marcell girls. He recalled when Nellie Marcell got married to Slim Williams. Then Mary Marcell built a little cabin (IDT-168) on the other [north] side of the river, which is Darrell Olsen's place now. Olsen added on to it. It was a nice little cabin that Mary built. Darrell Olsen and his friend added on to it and ruined it. Bertha [Dahl] lived in the cabin for a while.... Bertha Stevens bought the house from Mary Marcell, and Bertha sold it to Emory Friend, and Emory Friend sold the house and his traps to Darrell Olsen about 1977.... Friend got discouraged with trapping and decided to move out of Flat.... Mary Marcell built the house in the early 1930s. Alvin said it was always there as long as he could remember.
- 224 There used to be an old house just a ways upstream from Mary Marcell's House. An old madame from Dawson, [first name unknown] Carter, had some gold claims around Flat. She lived in the house, which has long since burned down. Bill Williams pulled it over across the creek, and when William's House burned down [in 1979] the Carter House burned with it.... It used to be just up from Mary Marcell's House....
- 232 Darrell Olsen had a partner come to Flat, and Darrell added on to the building (IDT-168). The house did not look good after he added a big addition to the small building....
- 246 Kathy Agoff stated that she first came to Flat in the summer of 1966. She came up from Florida and was working in the Public Health Hospital in Tanana. Alfred Miller, who was raised in Flat, was working at the hospital. He was going to go back to Flat, so she went with him and his wife Mary Ellen. They came down the River from Tanana to Holy Cross, then flew from Holy Cross to Flat. They stayed in Old John Miscovich's place (IDT-095) and went out to Prince Creek where she met Alvin. They got married the following year in Florida.... They have been married 27 years.
- 270 Alvin has an aerial picture of Flat taken by a nurse in McGrath in the spring of 1959. In the picture, there is no brush at all around Flat. The brush grew up all of a sudden....
- 275 The Moose Hall (IDT-070) was moved in the fall of 1943. It was located directly down the hill, across the road from the Adams Hotel (IDT-089). In the winter of 1942, the town flooded after one of those big thaws, and there was water all over the place. There was over a foot of water in the Moose Hall. It kicked the floor boards up and ruined the floor. Old Julius Shaffrick, who had the log cabin (IDT-145) near the airstrip, took a lot of pride in the Moose Hall. He got some old-timers, Joe Cummings and Bob Camel, to help him move the building to higher ground. They started in September. Cummings was under the building with screw jacks, lifting it off the ground. They got it up and moved it on skids after the first snow. They got Miscovich's D-8 and Fritz Awe's old gasoline 60 tractor. They used them to move the Moose Hall down to the Turner and Wood Warehouse (IDT-087), and then pulled it up the hill to its present location.... They separated the back end of the building from the main part of the building and took

the back end up separately. They could never quite get the addition back together with the main part of the Moose Hall. It still has a little space between them. That separation between the building and the addition (the kitchen) is beginning to cave in now. The wood shed on the back is already caved in.

- 320 The building behind the Moose Hall is Joe Parker's light plant shed (IDT-073). The barber chair used to be in Joe Parker's Bar (IDT-072). After Joe Parker died, his wife took the chair and put it in the log cabin (IDT-073). The light plant shed is a log cabin. The roof has caved in.... That cabin used to be up Flat Creek, and it belonged to George Adams, the guy that built the Adams Hotel. It was a little shack that Adams and his wife lived in till they got the hotel built. Joe Parker got his light plant in 1948, he moved the log cabin, which had been sitting by the road up Flat Creek for quite a while, down near the Moose Hall. It was a nice warm little cabin. It had celotex on the inside of the log walls.... It is located just down and on a step below the Moose Hall.
- 346 The Fullertons own the garage (IDT-074) to the east of the light plant. The garage used to be Patty Savage's garage up on Discovery. Savage moved it down to Flat in 1948.
- 354 The Fullerton Town House (IDT-075) is to the east of the garage, and the Agoff Town House (IDT-122) is across the street (south) of the Fullerton Town House. The Agoff Town House was built in Iditarod. The original foundation is still over by the Iditarod Slough. It was built by John Hill, a Finlander. He liked to drive nails and the house is full of nails.... They pulled it over from Iditarod in the winter of 1945. Clyde Day had a house in Flat, which he pulled over to Iditarod, then he pulled the other house (IDT-122) from Iditarod to Flat.... It was fixed up nice over in Iditarod with plumbing and everything. After they moved it to Flat they had a honey bucket system. The Agoffs put plumbing in it after they bought it. Alvin bought the house from Andrew Miscovich for \$200 in the fall of 1968.
- 383 Clyde Day moved the house (IDT-122) to Flat. It was Clyde Day's mother's house. His father, Glen Day, died in the house in the fall of 1943. He had a heart problem and he died over there. Clyde Day did not want his mother being alone in Iditarod while Clyde was gone up the river, sometimes for ten days at a time. So the next year, Clyde moved the house to Flat and set it up where it is at now. The same builder built the Fullerton Town House. They were the same kind of houses, built eight miles apart, then they wind up across the street from each other. The Fullerton House has always been in that one spot. It was built by the guy that ran Durand's Restaurant, the one that they turned into Joe Parker's Bar. The builder of the Fullerton's House was Gunner Gustafson. He had a dollar bill tacked on the wall. The first dollar taken in by Gunner Gustafson in the restaurant business, October 1940. Don Glass, the old bush pilot, gave Gustafson the first dollar he earned in the restaurant, and Gustafson tacked it right on the wall. The girls that painted the house took the dollar bill down....

- 408 The Flat Post Office (IDT-124) used to be at Site HH-1. That building has been moved out of there.... It was moved by Josephine Demientieff when she was the post master. They moved it down near her home (IDT-092). Kathy Agoff was post master when Big Foot [Ernest Norman] died, then Josephine Demientieff ran the post office. She ran it where it was at (Site HH-1), then moved it down by her house near the school building. After the Keplers became post master, the Keplers moved the post office building (IDT-124) up near their house. Originally that building was Alex Matheson's office building. He used to have his gold scales in there. Matheson built it about the same time he built his house (IDT-102) in the late 1930s. Alex Matheson had the building over behind his house (near IDT-106), and John Stevens moved it (to Site HH-1) near the present location of the Agoff House.
- 447 The last year that the post office was run by Lena Alderson in the Alderson House (IDT-076) was in 1957. John Stevens used the little building (at HH-1) as the post office until the spring of 1961 when he moved the post office into the store (IDT-077). Stevens had the post office for 20 years, from 1958 until 1978.... The Aldersons left in the fall of 1957, then John Stevens had the post office in the little building until 1978....
- 464 Alex Matheson only had one leg. Once when Alvin went over to the Matheson place, the snow was pretty deep. Alfred Miller and Alvin moved Alex over to the office building (which at the time was near IDT-106). One of Alex's slippers came off, the one from his artificial foot. That did not mean anything to Alex, but it made Alvin's feet cold just looking at that foot. They moved him over there with a sled, and Alex had to get some papers out of the building, which was right straight back of the little green building (IDT-103) that is there now. Alvin assumed that Matheson built the office about the same time he built his house (IDT-102), in 1937.
- 476 Before Matheson built that big house, he had a place northeast of Matheson's Shop (IDT-110).... That was about the spring 1937 or 1938. Alex was still living in the old house, which was covered with sheet iron. It looked almost like the shop that he has there now. The next fall when Alvin came back to Flat, Matheson had that new house up there on the hill (IDT-102). Matheson built it in 1937 or 1938.... Marie Matheson stood in the doorway and waved to them as they went by with the dogs....
- 501 Harry Donnelley built his house (IDT-085) about the same time, or a little before. The Matheson House used to be bright sun-shiny yellow.... The same color as the little post office building (IDT-124), as Matheson built them both about the same time.
- 507 The Alderson House (IDT-076) was the post office. It has a lightening arrestor on the flag pole.... Ralph Alderson was from Nebraska, where they used to have hellish electrical storms. So he put the lightening arrestor up.... The house was originally

down at the foot of the hill, near Kepler's Shop (IDT-096). Alderson built a cement foundation and moved it up on top of the hill about the fall of 1945. Alderson started working on moving the building during the war, in the spring of 1945....

- 541 Alvin and his brother [Sergie] moved the storage shed behind the Alderson House in the fall of 1958. Alvin's mother took care of the post office after the Agoff's bought the house from the Aldersons in the spring of 1958. Stevens still had the post office and he wanted Alvin's mother to run it for him. So he put all the books back in the Alderson House just like when the Aldersons were running the post office. The main part of the Alderson House is a log cabin, and it was moved from Iditarod. Ralph Alderson told Alvin that he and his wife pulled it to Flat from Iditarod in about 1933 or 1934. They kept adding on to the house. The post office part [east wing] is the newest section. That was the first house that Alvin and Kathy lived in after they were married. Ralph built the back additions with scrap material. The log part of the house is the living room, bedroom and kitchen. It has looked like it does now for as long as Alvin could remember. It originally had black tar paper on it, but Ralph Alderson put green tar paper on it.
- 575 The Alderson House was down at the foot of the hill. The front door opened toward the bank of the hill. He had so much trouble with glaciation off that bank, he pulled the house up the hill during the summer of 1945 to its present location. The post office addition has been on the building as long as Alvin could remember, so Ralph Alderson probably added it on shortly after he moved the building to Flat and while it was still on lower ground. John Fullerton's mother was the post master in Flat before Lena Alderson became post master. Anna Fullerton left Flat in 1933, so it would have been 1933 or 1934 that the Aldersons added the post office addition.... The post office part of the building is not on a cement foundation. It was moved up the hill separate from the rest of the house and scabbed on to the rest of the house....
- 607 The shed behind Alderson's House used to be way up the side of Flat Creek Road. It was Bob Acheson's wood shed. Only the floor is left of Acheson's House (Site WWWW) on Flat Creek Road. It was the furthest house up Flat Creek Road. Alvin moved the shed down behind the Alderson House in the fall of 1958. It was an easy building to move.... His brother, Sergie, helped him.... Everything was solid on the building. Acheson moved into the place on Flat Creek Road in 1938, so the shed was probably built by Acheson in 1939 or 1940. There was a piano box on the tundra behind Acheson's house, and Alvin thinks that box is still up there. Acheson used the box to store his dog harnesses....
- 643 Part of Acheson's House is up on Boulder Creek, way up on the mountain side. Alvin hauled it up there in the fall of 1958.... They moved Sergie's House (IDT-246) up on the hillside in the spring of 1963. Part of the Acheson's House was Harry Donnelley's old garage when Donnelley had the old house built on pilings on Flat Creek Road....

655 [End of Side B]

Tape 2, Side A:

- 000 George Turner had grease and oil. Applebaum and Donnelley were the Standard Oil agents and they had all the products. But Turner and Donnelley could never get along. Turner, being a merchant, figured Donnelley could give him a rate on hauling the fuel. Turner was going to go into mining. So he wanted a merchant's rate [discount] on bringing the fuel up from Holy Cross. Donnelley said nothing doing. Turner was just another customer as far as Donnelley was concerned. So Turner bought a brand new D-7 tractor. He already had some sleds that had belonged to the Guggenheims. So they hauled fuel to Crooked Creek by boat on Tibb's Navigation, then Turner went over and got it with a tractor in the winter time. Harry Turner, George's oldest boy, is the only one of those guys that is still living. He is in his mid-60s. He and Sam Parent and Al Remington hauled 700 barrels of fuel overland that winter. So George Turner was completely unaffected by the low water [on the Iditarod River] the next summer. He had all the fuel that he needed. Turner kept it in this building (IDT-088) or he might have taken the fuel up Black Creek where he was mining.
- 023 Introductory comments by Rolfe Buzzell for Tape 2....
- 026 The Turner and Wood Warehouse (IDT-087) is right across the road from the other Turner and Wood Warehouse. The second warehouse was always there, as far back as Alvin could recall. Turner hauled a lot of wood in the winter time with the 30 tractor he had before he got the D-7 tractor.... It may have been there when the Turner and Wood Store was on the north side of Otter Creek. It may have been a warehouse that Turner was just using at the time. Turner kept stove pipe and paint and tar in that building.... Joe Mitchell's old flat bottom row boat is still in that building (IDT-087). That building was there as far back as Alvin could remember. He recalled Turner hauling wood to the building with the 30 gasoline tractor. The building has a side door for a kind of a garage at one [south] end, and a front door on the other [east] side. The building has been leaking and Alvin did not know why the building had not caved in.
- 051 Alvin has not been down to the Adams/Lawrence Hotel (IDT-089) in a long time.... Alvin and his brother bought the building from the Turner boys back in the winter of 1966. It was partly torn down even then. When ever they were short of lumber, they would go and get a load of lumber from there. The building was getting to the point where it was dangerous. Alvin was going to go down there with a tractor and knock it down.... The Flemings boys wanted to tear it down and use the lumber to build a house. Shawn wanted to build a house across Otter Creek. Alvin gave them permission, but told them to start way up on top of the hotel so they would not get killed.

- 063 The Adams Hotel was a two story building with a gable roof covered with galvanized tin. It had a false front. The false front on the building shows on the upper left hand corner of the photograph on page 10 in the draft Flat Historic Context [John Miscovich's 1928 photograph]. Each window in the photograph represents a room. Alvin stated that the photograph was taken later than 1928, because Alvin's mother said she remembered Adams building the hotel and she arrived in 1928. Alvin's mother told him that Adams built the hotel about 1930.... Lawrence was down at Anvik when the hotel was built. Lawrence later built a bar on the north side of the hotel.... Alvin had a photograph of Lawrence and Harry Brink standing outside the bar in the spring of 1943. Brinks had a cigar in his mouth and Lawrence had his hand all bandaged from cutting it on the big old Lange wood stove in the hotel. He cut his hand while trying to shove a stick in there.... The bar was on the far end of the building....
- 093 The bar from Andrew Miscovich's Bar (IDT-071) was taken to Alaskaland in Fairbanks. It was a show case [glass case]. Andy used to have cigars and candy in there. Andrew's place used to be filled with tobacco smells....
- 099 The Adams Hotel closed in the summer of 1943. It was still open on the Fourth of July of 1943. Then Harry Lawrence moved down to Anvik. He locked the place up in 1943. Andrew Miscovich slipped and broke his ankle in 1943. He went out to Fairbanks. When he finally came back, he was in Flat for a month, and boarded up everything in his bar and left. His wife Aurora sold out to a guy named Tex Johnson. She told Johnson about all the money he could make. So he came to Flat in the summer of 1947 and found that Flat was a ghost town. But Johnson had a lot of money. He was an oil man from Texas.
- 115 Alvin and Sergie bought the hotel. The floor was coming up, it was so swampy down there. They bought the hotel and the Shop (IDT-120) for 500 bucks from the Turner boys, Frank and Harry.... George Adams left Flat about 1933 or 1934. That was about the time that Lawrence came to Flat from Anvik.... Lawrence and Turner were partners in the Hotel and Bar.... Lawrence was pretty well healed.
- 129 Dr. LaRue used to set his dentist chair up in the hotel about once a year, when he came to Flat. LaRue always said he tried to get a room up over the lobby because if he got one of the hallway rooms--it seemed like it was always cold back then in the winter--his water for shaving would be frozen solid in the pitcher in the morning.... There was no insulation in those days. The walls were lined with cheese cloth and wall paper. The last time Alvin talked to Lawrence was in Fairbanks in 1951. Lawrence told Alvin they burned 60 cords of wood in that place every winter. Alvin recalled the wood piles....
- 145 When Alvin bought the hotel building, it had been abandoned for years. The Turners still owned it. Alvin asked the Turners about getting one of the old sheds near the Dog

Barn (IDT-090). The stalls of the Old Dog Barn are still standing.... That dog barn was always a dog barn, as far as Alvin could recall. There was a brand new galvanized shed next to the Dog Barn, but Alvin does not know who tore that building down.... When Lawrence had the stroke and left for Fairbanks, Turner must have bought him out....

- 161 There was just a garbage dump in the low spot (Site AAAAA) east of the hotel. The hotel had a tapering roof in the back, and Lawrence had a toilet up there on the back end of the hotel. Lawrence would stand the five gallon [honey] buckets right on the edge, and then he would kick them off the edge. He did not bury the waste or anything.... The low area was full of cans and bottles.... There was water running down in there, so the water would have carried some of that [human waste material] away.... Alvin later got some planks out of that low area. The only good lumber left was on top.
- 181 Mike Demientieff helped Alvin salvage lumber from the hotel, which had a tin roof with a good pitch on it. Turner took the old barrel stove in the hotel to Holy Cross....
- 194 The building ruins (IDT-091) west of the Dog Barn are all that is left of the old Wireless Station.... Minnie Brink tore that building down for wood and Alvin dozed around it for her. The building was caved in when she salvaged wood from it. It had been the Wireless Station when Jim Ellison ran the wireless before John Felix came into Flat. The building was large and not insulated. It cost too much to heat. The ACS had a generator, so that is probably what the small concrete foundation inside the building was for. Alvin took a D-8 tractor and shoved the brush away from the building so Minnie Brink could tear it down. That was in 1966. It was pretty well caved in. It served as the Wireless Station in the early 1930s. The ACS moved up to Donnelley's old house on Flat Creek Road about 1937, then they built the new Wireless Station (IDT-130) in the fall of 1942. They moved into the new building in 1943 and closed the facility on Flat Creek Road. John Felix was an Army Signal Corps man. When he came in, they moved the Wireless Station up to Flat Creek Road. Before that, Jimmy Ellison ran the station. His daughter was the same age as Harry Lawrence's daughter.... Before they tore the hotel down, you could see where they were writing their names on the entry way. The girl's name was Joyce Ellison, and they called her Joy. Joy Ellison and Eva Lawrence were writing their names on the entry way.
- 231 The ACS used the building (IDT-091), but it was too cold to maintain, so the ACS moved up to Donnelley's little house when Donnelley moved out....
- 235 Harry Donnelley had an Assay Office (IDT-079) next to the store and bank (IDT-077). John Stevens put a cable on it and dragged the Assay Office across the street. Now it is laying further away. The tin building (IDT-078) was the Cold Storage Building.... Stevens moved the Assay Office in 1966. He jacked the building up. Donnelley and Sheppard paid the North American Dredging Company, Alex Matheson, \$7,000 for the

block of ground the store was sitting on because Donnelley did not want to go to the expense of moving it..... Alex went on the values from drilling on the ground above and below the store, and estimated \$7,000. And that was what Donnelley paid him. Donnelley left the store where it was at, and Matheson dredged around the building. John Stevens knew about that, so he moved the Donnelley and Sheppard Store to mine under it. He also had to move the store because the underpinnings were getting all rotten. The first thing Stevens did was pull the Assay Office out of there so he could get under and jack up the Store building....

- 260 The Cold Storage Building (IDT-078) came over from Iditarod. Gus Uotila pulled it over to Flat with horses. The Cold Storage Building was not always there after it got to Flat. It was over by Andy Miscovich's Bar before Donnelley and Sheppard moved it over to its present location in the 1940s because Alex Matheson was coming through with the dredge. When the dredge came through, they had to move the building, and that was about 1940.
- 275 Stevens moved the Donnelley and Sheppard Store (IDT-077) to its present location about a year after Stevens moved the Assay Office. It took Stevens over a year to get that building (IDT-077) jacked up. He pulled the Assay Office out of there in the spring of 1966. Donnelley used to have gold melting crucibles in the Assay Office.... Stevens moved the store in the fall of 1966. Stevens used his own D-8, the Fullertons' D-8, and the Agoff's D-8. Stevens had three big steel digging spuds from the dredge under the building....
- 290 The Cold Storage Building (IDT-078) was moved from near Andy Miscovich's Bar to its present location in about 1940, when Matheson came through with the dredge. Near where the Moose Hall is now, there was a big dump, and Matheson leveled all that up.... There were cans and honey buckets floating around in the dredge pond when the dredge went through there. It was kind of a ravine in the hill.
- 301 Paul E. Keller took pictures of everything as it was back then in Flat.... His address is 9341 W. Country Line Road, Canby, Indiana, 46113. Keller came to Flat in 1934 and was there until 1938. Canby is a suburb of Indianapolis.... Keller was in Alaska a couple of years ago and he had some of the pictures with him....
- 320 The frame building (IDT-080) right in front of where the Donnelley and Sheppard Store used to be was Turner's Warehouse. It was originally located down by the river [Otter Creek], down near Turner and Wood's tin shed warehouse (IDT-088). John Stevens pulled the Warehouse Building (IDT-080) out of there and moved it across from where the Donnelley and Sheppard Store used to be. Donnelley bought the building after Turner sold out, but that was originally Turner's warehouse. The Tin Shed (IDT-088) was out near the river [Otter Creek], and the Warehouse (IDT-080) was right next to

it.... Turner moved it in there when he moved his store across the creek. Then John Stevens moved the warehouse during the summer of 1956 to its present location. Stevens built the little porch on the east side of the Warehouse. It was not located there when Donnelley had his [commercial] operation going in Flat.... It was just a general warehouse.

- 346 Alvin corrected himself, and said that Donnelley moved the Assay Office (IDT-079) west and across the road from the Store Building so the front was facing east. Later, John Stevens hooked a cable to it and dragged it to where it is now. Stevens did not use skids or anything when he moved the building. He did not have to move it very far to get it out of the way. Donnelley moved it first.
- 360 Tommy Balange built a tunnel [an above ground structure] connecting the two warehouses (IDT-183 and IDT-184) with Donnelley's House (IDT-185) so Donnelley could go from his house through the warehouses to his store (IDT-077) without going outside.... Donnelley moved the Assay Office away from the Store and across the road about 1935. Henry Durand had a restaurant just northwest of Donnelley's Store that burned down in 1935, and Donnelley became afraid that he would burn everything down because those torches in the Assay Office used to get hotter than hell. That is probably what prompted Donnelley to move the Assay Office across the road.
- 378 Donnelley got that shiny "Standard Oil Products" sign about 1941. He tacked that on the warehouse building (IDT-084). That rusty tin warehouse has been there as long as Alvin could remember. 1941 was about when Donnelley hit his peak in dealing with Standard Oil.... Those two [connected] warehouses were either built there or moved in there, but they have been there as long as Alvin could remember, which was from 1935 on.
- 392 Donnelley's little car Garage (IDT-081) is across the street. And the building next to it (IDT-082) was a lumber warehouse.... The Lumber Warehouse and Garage have been there as long as Alvin could recall. The garage was used to shelter the 1938 Chevy pickup that Mark Kepler is still using. Donnelley also had a Chevy four door sedan that he used to park in that garage....
- 412 The Donnelley House (IDT-085) was built in the late 1930s, about 1938. Alvin remembered when Donnelley lived in his other house on Flat Creek Road. Alvin and young Harry Kardanoff used to go over there because Mrs. Donnelley was good about baking cookies and giving them some. Cookies and cocoa. She always wanted boys. She said that when she and Harry got married they were going to have six boys. But then they never had any kids. She liked to think she had boys in Flat....
- 431 Eddie Barge, who lives in Talkeetna, is an old-timer who walked into Flat from Holy Cross. His first job was with Peter Miscovich.... Barge took pictures.... A lot of those

guys were camera bugs. They had cheap cameras, but they took awfully good pictures.... Barge still has lots of pictures of Flat, albums of them, which he was showing Alvin the last time Alvin saw him. Barge does not have a telephone, but the locals in Talkeetna know where he lives.... His cabin is on Christian Lake just as one drives into Talkeetna.... He was still sharp as a tack.... ten years ago.... Eddie is about 81 years old, because he was born in 1914....

- 469 Alex Matheson dug the Martin Creek Ditch (IDT-142) in the summer of 1954. He was going to ground sluice way down by the river, but the pay got so weak that he abandoned the whole thing.... Matheson dozed that ditch, then gave up on it because the pay on the ground he was going to use the ditch on was so weak....
- 483 The first building on the west side of lower Flat Creek Road (IDT-133) had a little addition (on the south side) where Anna Fullerton had the post office. Milton Roper used to live there. After Roper left, Harold Byrd moved in there.... That was the Fullerton House when Mrs. Fullerton ran the post office. That is where John and Richard Fullerton grew up. Gus Uotila moved the house from the other side of the river [Otter Creek], and Gus said that was the hardest house that he ever moved. Gus spoke with a Finnish accent.... When he moved that house, Gus said "not one door or window was blumb", meaning plumb.... The house had a tin roof shed connected to it on the north side. That house was moved long before 1935. It was original located on the north side of Otter Creek. Milton Roper was living in the house in 1935 when Alvin started remembering things. He was there after 1933 and until the fall of 1946. Then Harold Byrd moved in. Fullerton lived there first, then Mrs. Fullerton married Henry Durand. Then Roper lived there and later Byrd lived in the house until 1951. After that the house was abandoned....
- 540 Bill Duffy lived in the next house up Flat Creek Road (IDT-134). Duffy moved the house from down near where Alvin's shop is located now (IDT-120), near where George Turner's house burned up. After Duffy left, John Baquir (pronounced B-O-K-A-Y) bought the house from Bill Duffy. Baquir and his wife lived there until the summer of 1952. It has been abandoned since, except for Rudy Demientieff. Rudy, who lives in Anchorage now, lived in it one summer. There was a Victrola record player in there and an old piano, which Sherry Kepler has now. Duffy moved the house to that location about 1937 or 1938, because the dredge was going to take out his house. The house shows up in the photograph that John Miscovich has with the Wiley Post Airplane drawn on it.... Nellie Duffy was like Marie Donnelley. She was really good to boys. She had day dreams of having a family of boys. Alvin and his friends used to be down there all the time. Old Bill Duffy was a character and all the kids liked him.... Flat had not changed since John Miscovich took the picture in about 1935....

612 This old house (IDT-135) was the Harry Agoff House that Alvin grew up in.... It has a pointed [hipped] roof.... Alvin recently told Mark Kepler to tear it down. It is good for nothing but kindling. It is up on blocks. It was way down behind that house that Dave Wintz lived in, the house that George Walters has now. The Agoffs pulled the house (IDT-135) to its present location in 1948. No one has lived in the house at its present location. They just left it there.... The house came from Iditarod. Harry Agoff pulled it up the Iditarod River and up Otter Creek valley over the old wood road on a sled with George Turner's old Caterpillar 30. That was in 1933. Alvin told a story about moving the building.... Harry built the lean-to onto the house shortly after they got it to Flat. Alvin barely remembered the house because the family spent two years in Seattle when his mother had trouble with her teeth. When they came back in 1935, they never lived in the main part of the house. They put a lot of work into this house, putting in a new floor and lining the house with celotex. In the fall of 1940, a relative of Harry Agoff....

682 [End of Side A]

Tape 2, Side B:

000 they put celotex and the flooring in. They never really lived in that place (IDT-135) after 1939.... The original part of the building had the rounded [hipped] roof. Harry Agoff built the lean-to addition after moving the building to Flat. In the spring of 1948, the Agoffs put skids under it and moved it because the North American Dredging Company was going to dredge there. That was a hard one to move.... Those buildings were heavy.... They got water logged over the years.

018 The remains of a floor from a building (IDT-136) is the next site up Flat Creek Road. Minnie Brink tore that building down. Jule Stuver had an old shed there. Stuver paid his ex-wife, Amanda, when she left Flat in the fall of 1958. She did not have any money at all. Jule Stuver gave her \$50 for the old place and Minnie Brink went up there and tore it down. Amanda Anderson lived there. John Miscovich has a picture of her standing by the airplane *Winnie Mae* when Wiley Post piled up the airplane at Flat. Amanda was about 17 at the time. She owned the house on Flat Creek Road (IDT-136). It had been moved in there out of the way of the dredge. It originally was back there on the tailings, sitting on blocks. It was moved before 1935. She never lived in it. It just belonged to her. Her ex-husband, Jule Stuver, bought it from her when she was leaving Flat. It was originally set up over near the shed (IDT-129) over near where the Guggenheim Dredge buckets (IDT-236) are located. That little shed was on stilts. They tore the house down in 1954, and moved the shed over to its current location (IDT-136). It was sitting on blocking. Minnie Brink tore it down about 1967, as she felt it was not worth anything....

- 047 That was John Beaton's house to begin with. It was right parallel with Flat Creek where the creek culvert is located now. Joe Loranger tore it down. Right below that, on the same side, right down the creek a ways was Tom Balange's cabin (IDT-137). It was a log cabin that is pitching into the creek.... It had a pointed [hipped] roof, and the main part was built of log. There was also a shed addition.
- 057 Up the road and uphill from Balange's place, there is a house that is still standing. The cabin had a square roof, and that was Walter Sakow's old place (IDT-138)....
- 063 Tom Balange came back to Flat and stayed for a week during the summer of 1957. He then went to Kodiak and Alvin never saw him again.... Balange worked for Harry Donnelley from 1948 until Donnelley closed up the Store (IDT-077) in the fall of 1951. Balange worked all summer packing up stock that Donnelley sold to Turner in Holy Cross. They took the stock down to Holy Cross in a boat. Balange had the stock all sorted out and stacked in the center of the [Donnelley and Sheppard] Store. Items they knew they would never sell in Flat. Then John Stevens ran the Store from then on....
- 074 Dona La Chance, another Frenchman, lived in Balange's house before Balange, but it belonged to Tommy Balange all along. An old Irishman, Silas McConeghy, who was buried in Cottonwood Cemetery (IDT-247), lived in the cabin (IDT-137) before Balange. Balange used to have a cabin over at Donlin Creek, where he was prospecting.... Balange did not live in the Flat Creek cabin (IDT-137) all the time. McConeghy died in that cabin in the late 1930s, maybe around 1939. The date is marked on his fence at the Flat cemetery. And Dona La Chance left. Balange owned the cabin in the 1930s, and the other two were just living in it. It was a nice little cabin.... It had that narrow fir flooring in it.... Balange may have built the cabin, but Alvin was not sure. The cabin was always there as far back as Alvin could recall.... The ground under the cabin had not been mined, but when the dredge went by it ruined the ground. The dredge got so close that the permafrost started oozing and the ground started breaking up.... The building was constructed before 1935. Paul Keller has photographs of Balange's House, because Keller lived just up the road....
- 104 Building IDT-138 was Walter Sakow's cabin.... Cap Becker lived a little further up the road from Sakow and below the place where Keller stayed. The framework of Becker's cabin was covered with tin from kerosene cans. The front framework is all that is left of the building. It was in the brush. The only thing Alvin recognized about Becker's place was that it was banked right up to the eaves and the whole front was covered with tin cans. The back part of the cabin was a log building. Becker banked it right up to the eaves with dirt.
- 120 Alvin did not know why the Sakow Cabin has not caved in. The Sakow Cabin was there before 1935. It belonged to Harry Bassoff before Sakow got it. Sakow owned another

cabin out by the edge of the road, and Harry Kardanoff was living in that. Sakow lived in the cabin he got from Harry Bassoff after Bassoff went to Fairbanks.... Sakow died of TB in 1950.... He is sometimes referred to as Harry Sakoff, as his real name was Sakioff. Once he got in an argument with his partner in Flat. He had one of those little 25 automatic pistols and he emptied it into his partner. After getting shot, his partner beat him up so bad he just about killed Sakow.... They took him up to Fairbanks to dig those 25 slugs out of him.... Sakow was living in this cabin (IDT-138) in the 1930s. Kardanoff moved out of Sakow's log cabin in the fall of 1941. Nobody has lived in that place since 1941. Sakow used to keep his dog fish in there after he moved to the other cabin.... Kardanoff lived in a big white log cabin that was just off from this building (IDT-138) a few feet. There is nothing left there but a few boards. He tore that down for the wood.

- 145 Freddie Demientieff was a great one for tearing down cabins. He was a hard worker but he did not like to cut [fire] wood. He was really into tearing old cabins down. It was just brutal on the tools, what with the nails and everything in those old cabins. He would rather tear down old cabins than cut wood. Freddie tore down most of the old cabins around Flat.
- 151 Sakow's cabin was a nice cabin, but it did not have a foundation under it. And the walls just deteriorated.... Becker's cabin was a log building and had sheet metal on the front. The cabin behind it was logs and was banked to the eaves. The only portion of Becker's other cabin that is left faces Flat Creek Road. The back of the building has been torn down, so only the front part remains.
- 165 Becker's first name was Edward, but they called him "Cap" because he was a captain on a riverboat, the *Nome*. Cap, as in Captain Becker.... He looked like an old pirate. He had long whiskers. His beard was down about to here [Alvin points to his waist]. Becker left Flat in the fall of 1937. He went up to Fairbanks and died. He had mining claims out on Bonanza Creek, south of the Agoffs, near the mouth of Chicken Creek. The last time Alvin saw Becker was in the spring of 1937. Becker gave some bedroom slippers to Alvin's mother. He had got them from Sears and they were too small for him. He came over to Prince Creek to visit the Agoffs and he had his arm in a sling. He told Alvin's mother that he could not use his arm any more. Shortly after that, they sent him to Fairbanks where he died in the hospital. He was about a hundred years old.... Becker had mining claims on Chicken Creek, and the Awe Mining Company mined those claims out. The administrator of Cap's estate was another old timer, Harry Brink. But Freddie Demientieff tore Becker's log cabin down. It had a very distinctive feature, it was banked to the eaves. It was south and east of, and just up the road from Sakow's cabin (IDT-138).... Nobody lived in the cabin after Becker that Alvin could recall. It was still standing until the mid-1950s. Freddie Demientieff tore it down about 1957 or 1958 for the wood.

- 200 There were a couple of tin sheds located around there (south of IDT-138). One of them is IDT-139. There was another one on the opposite side of the road. These sheds were used for storage of wood or dog harnesses. IDT-139 may have been Becker's shed. It had just sheet iron over a frame....
- 212 The next building up on the same side of the road was the house Paul Keller lived in (IDT-140). Paul Keller took a bunch of photographs of it. There used to be quite a few buildings back there, but Freddie tore them down too. There used to be a real old log barn back there; Freddie tore that down. It was a real old style horse barn and it had real big logs in it. That building (IDT-140) has been abandoned since the summer of 1954. A bunch of G.I.s were in Flat that summer. They had a parachute drop at one time, and they had some military in Flat. The U.S. Air Force had some people working in Flat with the Geodetic Survey, remapping the country around there. And there were some G.I.s staying in the place (IDT-140) then.
- 224 The building (IDT-140) used to have high steps leading up to it. The building has just sunk right into the ground. One of the big floor timbers came right up through the bottom of it.... The back side had a log wall, and that was part of the original building. The other parts of the house were added on later. Milo Caughrean owned that house.... Keller was Milo's step son. Milo was married to Keller's mother. Her name was Keller and she had been married before. Milo lived in that cabin for as long as Alvin could remember. Paul Keller stayed in the house for four years (1934-1938). Paul was like an older brother to Alvin.... Milo did not leave Flat until 1942. He went out to work for the merchant marine during the war.... Milo came back for a short time in 1945 to retrieve a mammoth tusk he had left in the cabin. He could not find it, as someone had thrown it out. Milo lived in Anchorage after the war and had an auto repair shop for a short time. It did not pay off, so Milo ended his days down in San Francisco. He used to get a job now and then working on tug boats. Milo was in Flat for about four days in 1945 looking for the mammoth tusk.... Clyde Demientieff bought the house (IDT-140) from Milo. Clyde died last summer in Holy Cross. He used to have a river boat, navigating on the river. Clyde used to live in it in the winters, and also in the summers. He worked on the dredge one summer. He bought the house from Milo in the summer of 1950. It was standing empty for a number of years after Milo left Flat. Then Clyde was working on the dredge and was living in the Mary Marcell House (IDT-168) for a while. Milo wanted to sell his house (IDT-140), and Clyde got a hold of him and bought it. He said he paid \$300 for it....
- 279 The building (IDT-140) has not changed since the 1930s. The frame additions on the cabin have been there since the mid-1930s.... There were some other buildings out to the west of the house, but they have been torn down. Alvin told a story about young Harry Kardanoff and Alvin locking Paul Keller in the outhouse, because they thought he

was staying in there too long. Paul squeezed out between some loose boards.... Keller was in Flat in 1992 and they reminisced about that incident....

- 299 The Miller House (IDT-141) was across the road from Milo Caughrean's House. That building is caved in. Old Joe Loranger was tearing the building down. A fox had a nest under the roof section Alvin remembers that house was always there in the 1930s. Loui Miller and his wife and kids moved into that house in 1937. Harold Nash lived in the house for a couple of years before the Millers. Nash was working for George Turner. Nash moved the Millers up into that house. The Millers lived in that house until the spring of 1950, when Mrs. Miller left Flat. Loui Miller drowned in the dredge pond in the fall of 1947. He was working on the dredge. He may have died of a brain concussion. He was steaming the rollers on the conveyor belt on the dredge when a big stack of ice fell and hit him on the head. He had a big gash on his forehead. Old Fritz Awe was the emergency medical technician in Flat. He had taken that [EMT] course. Awe tried to revive Miller. This happened about three in the afternoon. They worked on Miller until about midnight, but could not revive him. He would breath for a while, then quit. They figured he died from the concussion on his head. His wife stayed there until May of 1950, when she moved to Anchorage. That place (IDT-141) has been abandoned ever since....
- 335 There was a little shed (Site DDDDD) just down the street from the Miller House, like the shed near Cap Becker's place. It was real small.... Harry Donnelley's old house was straight across from Sakow's House. That is where they had the ACS Station, after the ACS moved out of the building (IDT-091) down by the Dog Barn (IDT-090) near Otter Creek. Donnelley's old house is all gone now. Old Teddy [Terrance] Cassidy tore it down. He was going to build a cabin, but he did not get much lumber out of Donnelley's old place. The boards were all warped out of shape....
- 351 Balange had a cold storage building (IDT-244) behind [west of] his house (IDT-137). That was the refrigeration plant before Donnelley had the Freon gas plant (IDT-078). They used to put the cold storage plants down in the permafrost. It is west of Balange's House... It is caved in now. It was made out of sawdust and there was a little igloo on top. They used to hang meat, reindeer meat from Bethel, from the ceiling. It was a big underground room, but it is caved in now.... A shaft ran down 90 degrees and then off 180 degrees in the permafrost. They used to keep the meat down there. It was insulated with sawdust and they had two doorways.... It had log walls around the top part [entrance]. The underground cold storage was to the west of IDT-137. The shaft went down 40 feet and then went off to the side. They used to keep meat down there. The roof caved in and covered it.
- 383 There were some old cabins to the west of Balange's place, along the south side of the stream. The last one to burn down was Bob Wolfe's cabin (IDT-245). John Stevens

sold him that cabin. He was not home at the time it burned. Wolfe was B.S.ing with Ernie Norman, when someone saw smoke and noticed his house was on fire. He lost everything. His wife was going to cook something with a little Coleman Stove. The button lock stuck open when she pumped the stove, and fuel squirted all over. She panicked, grabbed the baby and ran out of there. She should have thrown the stove right out through the window. She just panicked.... All that is left are a few burned logs and domestic artifacts....

- 405 Bob Acheson's House (Site WWWW) was below the Martin Creek Ditch (IDT-142). There is just a floor left there. When John Fullerton was dozing the brush off the road, he might have buried the greater part of the floor remains. It was right beside the road on the tundra, the last building up there along Flat Creek Road below the ditch.
- 418 Further up the road on the opposite side is the remains of the old Guggenheim Machine Shop (IDT-143). Some of the old-timers, like Joe Loranger, could not remember anything. Loranger told Alvin that building was a horse barn.... There is a big pile of metal lathe peelings as big around as Alvin's little finger on the lower side of the road. That pile is still there. That building was a machine shop. They had a lot of welding rods and they were equipped for welding with a forge....
- 438 Alvin remembers the underground cold storage facility (IDT-244, just west of IDT-137) as being a big, cavernous room with a little entry. It had meat hooks hanging from the ceiling and they used to hang reindeer in there. Just the entry is left....
- 450 Dave Wintz (IDT-121) has a house, a wood shed, and a shop that he built. The Wintz House was originally Debo Sagoff's House, the house of Harry Agoff's partner. Sagoff moved the house from the west, over near where the Agoff House (IDT-135) was before it was moved to Flat Creek Road. Debo's House was originally a short way from Agoff's House, before Sagoff (Alexi Sagareof) moved his house (IDT-121) to its present location. Sagoff has a granite headstone up on the Cottonwood Cemetery (IDT-247). Sagoff's House was built in the early 1930s. Nick Sopoff and Harry Kardanoff helped him build it in about 1933. Sagoff moved it to the east, but not very far, because the Matheson Dredge was coming through there. He moved it in 1946.... Dave Wintz built the Shop Building, then later built the wood shed in the 1980s. He built the shop about 1983, just before he left Flat. He also had a little greenhouse.
- 497 The Pump House (IDT-119) has a big old Washington Diesel engine in it and the building is located on the edge of the river. Alex Matheson used to pump water up to the ground [just west of Flat] that he was preparing and thawing for dredging. He had nozzles washing the overburden off. He had a big pipeline coming up from the Pump House. The engine turned about 200 RPM. The cylinder was huge. They tore it apart one year, and never put it back together.... The cylinder heads are still off. It was a

three cylinder engine.... The Pump House was built out on Willow Creek. It was Pete Jensen's old pump. He was mining deep ground on Willow Creek near where Fullerton's dragline was abandoned. That pump used to run about six nozzles. John Fullerton has a picture of those nozzles in action.... That is where the pump was, out on Willow Creek, and it had that shed around it ever since Alvin could remember.... They moved the building and pump together to Flat. Alex Matheson moved it to its present location in 1946 and put it in operation at that time....

- 536 Matheson was dredging west of Flat in 1946. During World War II, Matheson parked the dredge up near where his house (IDT-102) is located, where a bunch of old cat sleds are sitting out there (IDT-112).... That is where he shut the dredge off in the fall of 1942. Then Matheson mined back over to the west, going by Balange's Cabin (IDT-137) and down Flat Creek and to the west.... That is when he came by Balange's place. Matheson did real good [mining] a couple of summers on the west side of Flat. The Agoffs moved their little cabin out of the way of the dredge in the spring of 1946, but Matheson said they could wait until 1948 to move their own house (IDT-135).... Matheson tried to dig where the Agoff's House was but he busted the dredge all to hell on a reef there. There was good money there, but he could not dig it. So then he went down below Flat and spent several years there. Mining got to be impossible down there, so Matheson turned around and dug his way up Flat Creek and ended up here, in one summer. He mined back up Flat Creek. He was on his way down Flat Creek again, just above the Guggenheim Machine Shop (IDT-143) when he shut off the dredge in the fall of 1957. There is a landmark up there, a tailing pile with a post on the top. That is where Matheson shut down the dredge. The next summer, an outfit from Seattle, a banker named Clark, ran the dredge down Flat Creek and shut it off right opposite the Guggenheim Machine Shop.
- 590 John Stevens acquired the dredge and started [mining with it] down Flat Creek. The dredge had sat there so long that it had frozen to the bottom.... The silt froze, and Stevens was steaming on it for several weeks to get the dredge loose. When Stevens and a guy who was helping him got it loose, it bobbed up and started to leak. A section had ruptured.... They had to build a dam around the leak to get at the metal. They jacked the dredge up and tipped it part way over to be able to work on it.... The leak was right on the bottom of the pontoon. If they had not fixed it, the dredge would have sunk.... [Kathy Agoff departed]....
- 627 Alvin talked about John Miscovich's photograph [Figure 2, page 42] that was taken in late the 1920s or early 1930s....
- 636 Mert Atwood took a picture of the Jenny airplane that John Miscovich has..... Joe Crossen set the airplane down on the hay field at Flat. Crossen was a famous bush pilot in the old days. Crossen brought the plane into Flat during 1926, and old Tootsie was

on the airplane. She had just come back from the penitentiary. They gave her two years in the Washington State Pen for bootlegging. She got a raw deal. Everybody heard the marshall was coming and they took their stills out and threw them out in the brush. But nobody warned Tootsie. The marshals came in and she had bootleg whiskey. So they gave her two years. She had just come back in 1926 when Mert Atwood took the picture of Crossen's airplane. Atwood was only 17 years old, and came to Flat to work for [Frank] Manley. They were digging a ditch over on Willow Creek. Atwood ran the tractor, a gasoline 30. Atwood told Alvin they landed in the hay field right beside the river (Otter Creek). The picture shows the hill in the background....

672 John Miscovich has been around Flat a lot longer than Alvin and has knowledge about early events that Alvin does not have....

680 [End of Side B, Tape 2].

Tape 3, Side A:

000 Introduction by Rolfe Buzzell....

004 Alvin stated that Alex Matheson started freighting his own fuel to Flat in the late 1940s. 1947 was the first year he freighted his fuel. He freighted from Dikeman during the winter of 1946-1947. Dwight Randall, Julius Shaffrick, and Jess Blackwell went down river to freight the fuel from Dikeman. They used those yellow freight sleds (IDT-112) and that D-8 tractor, which was new then. Jess Blackwell and Dwight Randall drove the D-8 to Flat from Nenana over the trail. Day Navigation dropped the fuel off at Dikeman, because the water was shallow. Randall, Blackwell and Shaffrick went down there to get the first load of oil in January. They got hit with a cold spell, the worst one they ever had in the region. They had over a week of 70 degrees below zero.... They had to sit and wait. They did not have enough grub, they ran out of food. Old John Andrews.... had a trapping camp down there.... The weather warmed up to 40 below, and they got the tractors going and got up to Andrews' place. They borrowed grub from Andrews..... They hauled their fuel from Dikeman that year. The next year, they hauled the fuel from Crooked Creek on the Kuskokwim River.... Matheson could get it cheaper than buying it from Donnelley. It was kind of a necessity, in the fall of 1946, because the water on the Iditarod River was so low.... Clyde Day was in Iditarod that winter. It was 78 degrees below at Iditarod for three or four days during that cold spell.... The diesel oil was heavier back then it was No. 27 bunker oil, looked just like waste oil, very black. The old tractors had tanks on the back to heat the tanks to keep the fuel moving it was so thick....

- 039 Alex Matheson freighted from Crooked Creek until about 1951 [later Alvin corrected the date to 1956], then he went back to buying his fuel. After that Matheson started flying fuel in by airplane the last couple of years he was in Flat. Going out on the tractor in the winter time was hard on the tractor and hard on the men. The barrels were hard to handle in the cold with a little snow on them....
- 052 The Turner/Agoff Catshed and parts building (IDT-120) were built by George Turner. Turner was partners with John Baquir, the guy who had Bill Duffy's old cabin. Baquir and Frank Hatten were partners. Turner had a half interest, and Baquir and Hatten each had a quarter interest. They built the shed buildings in 1940 and 1941. They started mining in 1940 at Black Creek. They built the shop there and the buildings have not been moved. Alvin Agoff acquired the buildings in 1966. He bought them from the Turner boys. When he bought the shop building, one of the big doors had been torn off.... They had a heck of a time getting that door back on it. It was heavy....
- 066 The Matheson House (IDT-102) was built in the late 1930s, about 1938. It has not been moved. There is a staircase that runs from the house all the way down the bank.... The Mess Hall (IDT-104) was moved there from Slate Creek. Before that the crew used to board [eat] at Durand's Cafe, at the building Joe Parker later made into a bar (IDT-072). Matheson brought the Mess Hall down from Slate Creek right after the war. He got a big deep freeze and set it in that building. That was about 1946. He brought the Mess Hall down from Slate Creek in 1945 with that old International 40 [tractor, located in IDT-114]. Then he set up the Mess Hall in 1946. Once he got the deep freeze, he was totally independent of Donnelley and Sheppard.... The Cook's Quarters came from above Kepler's House. An old Scotchman, a good friend of Alex's, had that little green cabin. His name was Scotty Dundas. His real name was Andre Dundas, but they called him "Scotty." He was a Scotchman, and had a typical Scotch brogue. That was his cabin, and they moved it down for the cook's quarters. They moved it down there about the same time.
- 097 There was no restaurant in Flat after 1942 and the men that worked for Matheson during 1944 and 1945 boarded at home. Harold Nash was with him. From 1946 until 1957, Matheson had the Mess Hall to feed his men. He closed down his mining operation in 1957....
- 110 Alvin did not know anything about the Matheson Warehouse with a tin roof (IDT-105). Matheson had several warehouse over there behind his house. One had lumber in it. John Stevens put his snow machine in one of them.... The buildings south of Matheson's House were always there as long as Alvin could recall. One of them was a garage with an oil pit in it. Matheson tumbled into the oil pit and broke his leg. He was doing some carpentry work in there and slipped into the oil pit and broke his leg....

- 123 Building IDT-107 was Harold Byrd's Shop that John Stevens moved from Byrd's house (IDT-133) on Flat Creek Road. John Stevens pulled it out of there and over to his place and built a ramp up to the door. He used to put his truck in there. Stevens moved the building about 1977. It was not originally part of Matheson's compound....
- 135 The only two buildings that Alvin recalled Stevens had moved to the Matheson compound were Applebaum's House (IDT-114) that he used for a shed and the Harold Bryd Garage (IDT-107). Stevens thought the Applebaum House would keep his truck warm in the winters, but it did not. So Stevens moved the Bryd Garage over there. The Byrd Garage had a floor in it. The old Applebaum House did not have a floor in it....
- 148 The Parts Warehouse (IDT-108) was part of Matheson's operation. All those buildings over there were part of Matheson's operation. There was a bunkhouse (Site PP), which is now part of the Kepler House (IDT-123). Matheson had a little bathhouse on the edge of the slough bank (IDT-109). It had a shower in it. There was an outhouse hanging over the creek (Feature 2, IDT-109).... The Machine Shop, the big galvanized tin shed (IDT-110), was there in the 1930s. Matheson had a big lath in there. The parts shed was over on the side of the Machine Shop. Matheson had some other buildings over this way [to the east], a tin shed (Site SS) that was built about the same time as the Machine Shop. He must have tore it down. It was a big shed with large doors. They could run a tractor into it....
- 178 Matheson had another tin shed (IDT-111) straight across [south] the road from the Machine Shop that one could keep a cat in either side.... The shed (IDT-111) may have been built after the 1930s, because Matheson used to put the D-8 Caterpillar in that shed. They would back it in, blade and all. There were a lot of parts against the wall.... Matheson got the D-8 in 1946, so he probably built that shop in 1947 or 1948. But the Machine Shop (IDT-110) was built before the war, in the 1930s. A friend of Alvin's, Earl Foss, his dad was an engineer for Alex Matheson. He got [caught up] in that flat belt (on the lathe) and it took him right up to the ceiling and jammed him against the ceiling, killing the engine. His son was so proud of his father that he said: "My dad killed a 100 horsepower engine." Matheson had a Chevrolet engine, rated at about 100 horsepower, in the shop [to run the equipment]. The flat belt [attached to the engine] somehow caught the old man's overalls and took him right up to the ceiling. He was in rough shape, and laid flat on his back for a couple of weeks before he got over that. He was lucky it did not kill him.... That was in the main Machine Shop.
- 202 The next shed (IDT-111) Matheson built right after he got the D-8....
- 205 That was Matheson's Wanigan with the small frame building on it (IDT-112).... They pulled that around, and that was the one they were in when they were in that seventy below weather.... They used the Wanigan in the 1940s to haul fuel. Alvin did not know

who put a sled under the Wanigan.... John Miscovich used that Wanigan for a mess hall when one of those drilling outfits was working on the Golden Horn Mine. John Miscovich may have put one of the Mutchler Sleds under the Wanigan. Back in the old days, the Wanigan just had skids under it.... They put the sled under the Wanigan in the mid-1970s when they were drilling at the Golden Horn. They used it for a night mess hall, as they were working night and day drilling on the Golden Horn. The other freight sleds nearby were ones that Alex used to haul his fuel and wood. They burned wood in the boiler on the Matheson Dredge, and they used the sleds to haul hundreds of cords of wood.

- 223 The next building (IDT-113) was Tommy Balange's workshop. Johnny Stevens moved that to its present location. That building used to be right across the creek from Balange's Cabin (IDT-137).... Tommy told Alvin that if the store had not closed, he would have moved his cabin across Flat Creek Road and along side this workshop. Balange moved the carpentry shop across the road, then he was going to move his cabin next to it. But then the store and bank closed, so Tommy decided it was not worth it.... Alvin remembered when Tommy moved the workshop across Flat Creek Road. He moved it across a gap there in the road and skidded the building across the creek on a couple of logs. It was a carpentry shop. Tommy was a heck of a good carpenter.... Balange worked for Donnelley and Sheppard. The workshop (IDT-113) belonged to Balange and it was not part of the North American Dredging Company operation. John Stevens moved the building over to the Matheson complex about 1972 or 1973.... Stevens talked to Tommy about moving the building, and Tommy said to go ahead and move it. Tommy had a lot of tools in there.... He had clamps, etc. He was completely equipped to make dog sleds....
- 255 The next building is Joe Mitchell's old cabin (IDT-115).... Mitchell was an old Scotsman and a friend of Alex's.
- 261 The shed on skids (IDT-117) is a new shed, built about the 1970s. Alvin did not recall that shed at all. He recalled the Drill Rig (IDT-116), but the shed on skids was relatively new....
- 264 Mitchell's old cabin used to be over by where the Drilling Rig (IDT-116) is located now and it was in the way of the dredge. John Stevens moved it to its present location. Stevens was coming down Flat Creek with the dredge and he moved the cabin out of there. Alvin noted that the cabin sure went to wreck and ruin after that.... The Mitchell Cabin was over there as far back as Alvin could remember.... Mitchell had been a miner around Flat. He worked in the mining camps. He watched the warehouse over in Iditarod for Donnelley and Sheppard for a few years. He left Flat in 1955 or 1956, and never came back. He had some kind of a skin disorder, and he later died in the Pioneers Home in Sitka. He was another personality. He and Alex Matheson were

typical Scotchmen, both of them. Mitchell liked to disagree.... When he first came to Alaska, he was the first mate on a steamer to Nome. He jumped ship up there in 1903. He borrowed the captain's shot gun to go hunting geese and cranes. The tundra was just black with them.... It was an English Greener, finest in the world and a very expensive double barrel gun. He wounded a crane, then ran after it and swung at it with the gun and just busted the stock to pieces. He waited until the captain was asleep and he set the gun outside his room on the ship. Then he collected his belongings and beat it into Nome. He was afraid that old captain would kill him because he just destroyed that shotgun. Mitchell did freighting in Nome, after he got off the boat. He had a bunch of pictures of him and his partner freighting stuff out to the mining camps there. They used big toboggans up there.... the snow was almost always hard as ice. They did not need runners. Toboggans were better. They had 18 dogs to a team. Saint Bernard and McKenzie River Husky crosses that weighed about 160 pounds.

333 When Mitchell came to Flat about 1910, he was one of the first dog mushers to take a load of gold out of Flat to Seward. Mitchell showed Alvin pictures of the dogs on his teams.... In one picture Mitchell showed Alvin, there was no snow on the streets at Seward. The streets were bare dirt and the dogs were pulling a sled loaded with gold over the streets....

350 Rolfe asked Alvin about the tractor shed (IDT-114), the building that is sitting on grade.... There are no 2x4s at the base of the walls. It has a double roof.... Alvin replied that this building sure sounded like old Sam Applebaum's House.... There was no floor on the Applebaum House because John Stevens pulled the rotten flooring up before he moved the building. Applebaum's place had black tar paper on it.... Alvin looked at some photographs Rolfe showed him, and Alvin stated that the building in the photographs sort of looked like the Applebaum House.... Johnny Stevens got a moose one time and hung a quarter in there for Alvin. So Alvin went over there and backed into it. Alvin had not been up there in a long time.... Stevens pulled that building up from just to the right of the footbridge on the south side of Otter Creek, when one is looking north.... Stevens moved the building in about 1972.... Stevens moved it to shelter the truck he used to go out and meet the mail plane in the winter time. It didn't work worth a damn, as Applebaum's House did not keep his truck warm. Stevens did not have a stove in there and there was no floor in the building. It was set right on tailings.... When it was down by the river, Applebaum had a lot of furniture in the house. Alvin did not know what happened to all the furniture.... Johnny Stevens was kind of secretive, he didn't always tell his plans. Alvin asked Johnny what he did with all that furniture that Applebaum had in there, and Stevens said he did not know....

448 The ditch (IDT-144) way up on the bench coming down the east side of the Flat Creek drainage was the Matheson Ditch. Matheson used that ditch to thaw ground. They had to have clear water for the points they used to thaw the ground. They could not use

pump water from the river like they could for pushing water through hydraulic nozzles. They had to have clear water for the points. That ditch is located way up on the side hill. There was a pipeline running up to it.... That fed water to the points. The ditch was used earlier for thawing, before Matheson, in the early days. Alex owned it practically from the start, according to what Alvin's dad told him. They had to have pressure [for hydraulic mining and thawing ground]. That was why the ditch was way up on the side of the hill, so they could get pressure. Matheson used that ditch right up to the time that he quit thawing in about 1954. There are still a lot of those cold water points laying on the tundra down there where they turned around. Matheson's crew was not ground sluicing the mud anymore. They were driving the points right through the moss and everything. That ditch comes into Flat Creek up above Fullerton's old Flat Creek Camp (IDT-234). The ditch was there as far back as Alvin could remember....

- 497 The shed (IDT-129) near the buckets from the old Guggenheim Dredge (IDT-236) was built on stilts. That was part of John Anderson's old place. John Anderson was Amanda Anderson's father and he had a bunch of junk in there. The Anderson's House used to be across the road [to the west] from the shed. Jule Stuver tore the house down. That was near where they dismantled the old Guggenheim Dredge. That is why the dredge buckets are there.... Alex Matheson was going to dredge there so Alex asked Jule Stuver if he could move the Anderson House. Stuver said no way, it had been sitting there for too long, so they tore it down. The little shed (IDT-136) that Amanda Anderson owned and Jule Stuver paid her \$50 for, they moved that over to the other side of Flat Creek Road. Then they tore the rest of the Anderson House down. The main part of the Anderson House was a log cabin. Anderson's old house, before he moved it up there, used to be where the Moose Hall (IDT-070) is located now. Paul Keller would have pictures of that house. It had a funny design.... like a riverboat, with a two story part and a one story part. The kitchen part [one story] was long. It looked like a trailer jammed against a two story house. They moved it over [by the elevated shed site IDT-129], then later tore the house down. They could not move it again because it was so rotten.
- 535 IDT-129 was a shed that was associated with the Anderson House. It was up on stilts, about four feet off the ground. Anderson had a little ladder to get into it. Anderson kept a lot of junk in it....
- 545 The Keplers tore down the back shed part of Bill Burn's Bungalow (IDT-128) because it was all rotten. The main part has a pointed [hipped] roof.... Burns traded another cabin for the building. He got the building from Finn Annie. Burns had a cabin over there [near the Red Light District] and he traded that to Finn Annie for this one (IDT-128). He moved it over to where the Matheson Mess Hall (IDT-104) is now, and when the dredge came by there he had to get it out of there. So Burns moved it to its present location. It was Finn Annie, not Nellie Duffy, who owned the bungalow before

Burns.... Bill told Alvin that Finn Annie did not want to move the building, so Bill proposed that they just trade buildings. Finn Annie lived in Flat, on the north side of Otter Creek. Bill told Alvin that the bungalow (IDT-128) was not originally over with the other houses [on the line]. Bill moved it.... In the 1930s, it was near where the Matheson Mess Hall is today. In the early 1940s, when Alex Matheson came by with the dredge, Burns moved it to its present location. Burns moved it twice.... It was originally on the north side of Otter Creek, but way down below, west of the other buildings and the whore houses. Alvin did not know Finn Annie because she left Flat before Alvin was old enough to remember. But Alvin's mother and father knew her well. She was quite a character....

613 The Kepler Guest House (IDT-127) came from the other side of the river [Otter Creek] too. It was one of Stella Parker's buildings. She called it her roadhouse. She had two of them over there. Dan Crammer got one and Alfred Miller got the other one. Miller moved it to its present location in the spring of 1981. Then Kepler had that school teacher, Jason Bentz, living in there. He put one of the additions on the building, then Curt Spratt and Mark Kepler built that front screened-in porch on it. It was just a one room building when Miller moved it up there after he got it from Stella Parker. It was originally right next to Darrell Olsen's place (IDT-169) on the other [north] side of the river [Otter Creek]. Miller moved it down that road and across the bridge to where it is now. Jason, the school teacher, built the bedroom or lean-to on the one side. Then Mark and Curt built the front porch.

646 Mark is supposed to be building a hanger at Flat this winter right were the Fullertons used to have their hanger. He is going to build a big one....

659 The Signal Corps Building (IDT-130) was built during World War II. They talked about building it before the war, but they never got started building it until the fall of 1942. They started just before the snow began to fall. They got everything in One minute there was a sea of 2x4s, the next minute they slapped that outside celotex on it and the black tarred celotex before the snow came. They moved the [radio] equipment over to the new building from the old place in the spring....

684 [End of Side A, Tape 3]

Side B, Tape 3:

001 The ground that the Signal Corps Building (IDT-130) was constructed on belonged to the Brownes. Dave Browne got to feeling onerous after they closed the ACS [Alaska Communications System] Building. The ACS came in and smashed all the engines and equipment that they did not remove. Nobody could salvage them. The building was just

standing empty and Dave Browne thought he could get the building by just threatening the government. He told them to pay him \$17,000 or get it off his mining claim. Instead of doing that, ACS put it up for sale. The Miscovichs bought it in 1950 for about \$750. They jacked it up in November and put some old dry skids under it. They were going to take it up to Discovery and use it for a camp and just have everything under one roof. That damned building was so heavy that both their D-8 tractors could not pull it, along with their 50 tractor. They just got it off to where it is now and the skids busted. They figured the building weighed about 60 tons. They left it there. It started warping, so John Miscovich jacked it up and leveled it up.... He put a new roof on it. The Miscovichs just barely got the building off Browne's property [mining claim] when the skids broke.... It was so beastly heavy. Those asbestos shingles on the outside, there are about six tons of those shingles on the building. The building was set up real nice before it was moved. There was pretty good money [in the ground] under where the building was originally located. John Stevens ran the dredge down through that spot later, and that was one of the years that Stevens made pretty good money....

- 032 The ACS took two generators out of the building when they pulled out, but they destroyed the rest of the equipment.... The ACS smashed up the equipment left there in the spring of 1949. The spring of 1950 is when Dave Browne got after the government to move the building. They shut the wireless down about November 1949.... Ed Bergeran and his wife were there and ran it until they shut it down in February of 1949. Then the government destroyed the equipment that they left behind.... They took two gasoline jeep generator engines out of there. Clyde Day [of Day Navigation] was hauling a thousand barrels of gas every year for those engines. They ran those engines night and day....
- 067 The Alaska Road Commission buildings (IDT-171 and IDT-172) were there in 1935, as far back as Alvin could remember....
- 074 The log cabin with the old 1941 license plate hanging over it (IDT-159) belonged to old Joe Cummings. A guy from Bethel has the cabin now. Ray Stock fixed it up.
- 078 Slim Williams built the house (IDT-170) across the street from the Alaska Road Commission buildings in 1940. It used to be right above Flat Creek near where the Agoff House (IDT-135) sits now, the one with the pointed [hipped] roof. Slim Williams built that house there. He was married to the Marcell girl, Nellie. He built that about 1940. When he left Flat, it was sitting on blocks for a long time. Gus Bacstrom bought it and moved it to where the building is now. Before Bacstrom bought it, they jacked it up and moved it out of the way of the [Matheson] dredge. It was sitting over near the Cruise House (IDT-132), the house with the old cast iron safe out in front.

- 092 Alvin Agoff owned the Cruise House (IDT-132) and gave Jim Cruise the cabin and everything, but told him he wanted the safe. The safe is still laying there.... That house is covered with green tar paper. The Slim Williams House (IDT-170) sat right across from there on skids for a while. Then Gus Bacstrom, an old Swede, bought the house and moved it down to where it is located now. Now the house belongs to Darrell Snodgrass, the cement contractor from Soldotna. He comes to Flat once in a while and uses the cabin for hunting. Gus Bacstrom was a character. Nellie Marcell had a big mirror built into the wall.... Gus hated mirrors. His father in Sweden told him and his sisters that if they looked in the mirror they would never be rich.... Gus left the mirror in the house when he moved it, but took it down later.... He took the mirror and threw it in the lake. It hit the water and broke into three pieces! Gus moved the house over there [to its present location] about 1950. He used to have a log cabin over by the river, then he bought this building, which was a cold house. When the wind blew, it was just like being outdoors.... No insulation.
- 127 The house with the green tar paper (IDT-132) was John Ogriz's cabin. Ogriz built that house about 1934. He lived in it one winter, during 1935. After that they hardly ever lived in it, just off and on in the spring time when they came to Flat. John Ogriz gave it to Alvin in the fall of 1959. Ogriz charged him for a 1935 Ford V-8 truck. He gave Alvin the house, which he threw in when Alvin bought the truck. The truck turned out to be a damned good truck. Alvin still has it and it runs good. Ogriz quit dredging in the fall of 1959 and gave Alvin the house for \$400, but said Alvin was not paying for the house, only for the truck. Glenn Johnson, the preacher from Soldotna, wanted to buy the house. Glenn had done Alvin a lot of favors and the place was leaking and the floor was gone. So Alvin gave him the house in the winter of 1975. Then Glenn gave it or sold it to Jim Cruise. Cruise fixed it up. He tore up the rotten floor and patched the roof.... Cruise was in Flat the last time in 1989.... to go hunting. By the time Alvin gave the house to Glenn Johnson, it was in such bad shape Alvin was going to tear it down and make salvage out of it.
- 162 The Ogriz House (IDT-132) was all built in one piece, except that Alvin tore a back entry way off of it to use as a pump house in his house. Alvin would have torn it down but he did not have the time to do it. Johnson wanted to fix it up, but did not. Later Cruise fixed it up, but he has not been back for years. The safe that was in the entry way is still there [on the south side of the building by the door]. Jim Cruise is the present owner...
- 177 The Frank Hatten House (IDT-131) is quite a ways off Flat Creek Road.... Harry Kardanoff built that house when he moved out of Walter Sakow's log cabin. Kardanoff took one part of the log cabin, the bedroom that he had built on the side of Sakow's log cabin, and took it over and built a house around it (IDT-131). Kardanoff sold the house to his brother-in-law, Jerry Demientieff in 1946. Demientieff sold it to Frank Hatten.

Flat Creek flooded during the winter of 1942, and water went in there and ruined just about everything. Kardanoff's wife, Tessie, had a couple of coats that were hanging in the closet and the water got to them. The water was way up to the windows. The building is a shambles now. Frank Hatten bought it from Jerry Demientieff in the fall of 1946. Hatten lived in the building until the fall of 1953, never to return. He lived in it about seven years. Jule Stuver lived in there for a short time after Hatten left. Jule was in there in the summers of 1955 and 1956. It was getting so hard to heat that Stuver had the additions blocked off. He lived in there just in the summers....

- 227 The log cabin (IDT-155) near the foot bridge on the north side of Otter Creek is smaller than the frame cabin next to it (IDT-156)....
- 234 Darrell Olsen owned the two shed across the road (IDT-169)....
- 248 The little log cabin (IDT-155) belonged to Harry Brink. The house next door (IDT-156) was originally across the river. The log cabin was moved in there during the early days. There is a lot of saw dust there, as that is where they used to cut wood in the early days. Harry Brink had the little log cabin and he moved it onto the sawdust pile. That was in the 1920s. The frame building was across Otter Creek and Tony Gularte lived in it for a while. It was located up Otter Creek, above the present foot bridge. There used to be a car bridge where the foot bridge is located. One could drive across the creek there. This frame building was sitting up here, a little further upstream [on the south side of Otter Creek]. The accountant that used to be in Flat, Wayne Hubbard, bought the building and moved it up across from Bill Burns cabin (IDT-128). When Harry Brink bought the building, Harry moved it back over [across Otter Creek] and right along side of his little log cabin (IDT-155). That building went all around town.... Brink fixed it up and used the little log cabin for a shed. Glenn Johnson bought it from Jim Flemings. Minnie Brink sold it to Flemings, who moved over to Iditarod. Glenn Johnson, the preacher, bought it from Flemings. But Johnson did not buy the little log cabin. Johnson was afraid the Flemings boys, who were smoking, would burn that little log cabin down and his house too. So Johnson traded the Flemings boys the little cabin (IDT-166) across from the old Parker House (IDT-154) for the log cabin....
- 283 The next cabin below (IDT-164), Shawn Flemings built that cabin with lumber out of salvage.... It was a garage to begin with, but he fixed it up and made it into a house....
- 293 The frame house (IDT-156) was in Flat as long as Alvin could recall. Tony Gularte was living in it in the mid-1930s. Then Wayne Hubbard got it. Wayne moved it in the late 1930s, about 1938 or 1939, over to near Bill Burns' place. Brink moved it back over to the north side of town about the spring of 1954, just before break up.

- 306 The Parker House (IDT-154) has been in that location as far back as Alvin could recall [1935]. The Parkers lived in it as far back as he could remember. A Russian guy named Harry Scott owned it before them, and the Parkers bought it from Scott. That was in the 1920s....
- 313 One of the two sheds (IDT-169) is a little log cabin.... A small place. It was mostly a shed. Old Sturey Stenberg used to live in there.... It was Sturey Stenberg's place to begin with, but Alvin could not recall if Stenberg built it or bought it. It has been there ever since Alvin could remember. It was real small living quarters in there. Most of the building was just shed [storage].... Stenberg lived in there in the 1930s. He vacated it about 1948. He died in 1949. He moved up to that house that Bill and Ann Williams burned down (Site UUU, IDT-101). Stenberg bought the house (Site UUU) from that old Russian, old Johnson Sozoff, and moved out of his place (IDT-169), but he still used that place (IDT-169) for storage. He died shortly after that. Gertrude, his wife, sold that cabin (Site UUU, IDT-101) to Bill Williams before Williams was married.... Bill Williams lived in it until it burned down [1979].
- 341 The next building (IDT-168) is where Bertha Stevens lived until she married John Stevens. It has additions. The ridge pole recently broke and the roof is leaking. It is just a mess.... Mary Marcell, one of the Marcell girls, built that house. Her father was Charlie Marcell.... Her mother's name was not Mary, but rather Maggie. Maggie's daughter, Mary, built that house (IDT-168) because she could not get along with her mother. So she built that little house and lived there. She used to cook [at mining camps] over at Moore Creek and around Ophir. When she came back in the winter, Mary would stay in that little house. It was a nice little house, and Alvin has some slides of that house before all the additions were put on and it was ruined.... Mary Marcell built the house in the 1930s, and it was always there as far back as Alvin can remember. She built it in the early 1930s, 1933 or 1934. Then she got married, and she and her husband, George Keefer, lived there until they left Flat in the fall of 1942.
- 370 Nobody lived in the house (IDT-168) until Bertha [Dahl] Stevens bought it. Bertha lived there in the 1950s. Bertha came to Flat in 1951 to cook for the Miscovichs. She cooked for two years for the Miscovichs. The second year, in the fall of 1952 and winter of 1953, she stayed in that house. She and her husband, Chris Dahl, had split up and she was not going to go back to him. Then she and Johnny Stevens got married in the spring of 1955.... She lived in that house until 1957.... she was cooking for Johnny Stevens before they got married. Johnny Stevens used to live in the bank portion of the old store (IDT-077). He would go down to Bertha's place. He supplied the food and Bertha did the cooking for him. Then she decided to hell with that, she was going to leave Flat. Then she and Johnny got married. Johnny was not going to pass up a good bet, a good cook.... so they got married in April of 1955. They lived in that little house (IDT-168) for a couple of years.

- 393 In the spring of 1957, they moved up to the Matheson House (IDT-102). Stevens bought the house about that time, and they moved up there. And Bertha griped about those houses. She said her little house (IDT-168) was easy to heat, it was a small little place. The Matheson place, Alvin said, was just like a "hay rack." It did not have any cook stove in the kitchen. It only had a Coleman gas range in the kitchen. And Bertha hated that thing because it was too complicated for her. Alvin remembered being up there one time when she blew her stack at Johnny. She told him: "You either put that stove in before it starts getting cold or I'm moving out of here. You can stay if you want." She threatened to go back over to her little house. So Johnny Stevens.... put a wood stove in, and Bertha practically lived by that wood stove in the winter time. She had a three step metal step ladder. She would sit at the top of that ladder and put a stick of wood in the stove while she was knitting or sewing. And Johnny would be over by the table reading. That was how they spent their winter nights....
- 420 The building next to Bertha's old house is a tin shed (IDT-167) and it is all covered with galvanized tin. That is where Darrell Olsen used to keep all of his stuff. He used to have gas cans and what not....
- 427 Darrell Olsen put the addition on the back end of Bertha's House (IDT-168) and just ruined it....
- 430 Before Darrell Olsen had the tin shed (IDT-167)... Bob Floyd moved the building over there. That used to be one of [George] Turner's sheds. Bob Floyd got that shed from Turner. It was up by the shop (IDT-120) that Alvin bought from Turner. It was sitting across (south) of the shop. Bob Floyd had a cabin (IDT-152) right in back of Mrs. Parker's place (IDT-154). Glenn Johnson owns the Parker House now. Bob Floyd moved the shed over to his place (IDT-152) and used it for a wood shed ... about 1947. After Floyd died, Freddie Demientieff tore Floyd's cabin down. And Johnny [Stevens] moved the shed up near to Bertha's place (IDT-168) and used it for a wood shed.... Stevens moved that shed for Bertha before they were married, about 1953 or 1954....
- 465 Dan Crammer's House (IDT-166) is just a little place. A frame building with an arctic entry. Stella Parker used to have the Kepler Guest House (IDT-127) just up from the Crammer House. Alfred Miller moved it (IDT-127) out of there in the spring of 1981. A Finlander by the name of Art Nevella, lived in the Crammer House in the 1930s. Nevella was the nephew of the carpenter that built Alvin's House (IDT-122) and Fullerton's House (IDT-075). He was John Hill's nephew, and his name was Nevella. He lived in Flat in the late 1930s. He left Flat during World War II and never came back. Rolfe asked Alvin if Nevella built the house, and Alvin responded "I imagine he did." Alvin thought it was an awfully small place. One could heat it with a "newspaper in the stove." It was there in 1935. The floor was rotted out and Crammer put in a new floor.... It was just right for one man....

- 497 The next building over [to the west] is a meat house (IDT-165). Joe Parker built that meat house just before he died [in the 1950s]. Crammer and the Flemings boys made it bigger. They had moose meat hanging in there. They added on to it. Parker was building with lumber, and Crammer and the Flemings boys finished it up with tin. Parker died in the spring of 1955. He built the meat shed about 1952 or 1953, and the other fellas added on to it in the late 1970s.
- 526 This is the cabin (IDT-164) that Glenn Johnson traded to the Flemings boys. It is next to Crammer's place.... He had a back door on the place.... Don Dukich built that way back, because Alvin could not remember that building not ever being there. Dukich was an old Yugoslavian. He was the living image of Little Abner, Al Caps' cartoon character. Dukich was a heck of a nice guy.... Dukich lived in that cabin probably twenty some years. He left Flat in 1959. The additions on the building were built later. Dukich had a smaller entry on the front of the house....
- 566 The log cabin (IDT-161) is the one that Johnny Stevens and Jule Stuver rebuilt, after Louis Miller moved out and moved up to Flat Creek Road across from Milo Caughrean. Louis Miller lived in that little cabin....
- 570 Jimmy Flemings garage (IDT-163) is next, and below, a little farther down, he built a house (IDT-162). There is a little meat shed behind the garage. The garage [front part] was built there by Jimmy Flemings. But the back part was a shop, and it was always there. They [the Flemings brothers] worked the front end over. The back was Joe Parker's old shop. Down this way from it [to the west] is a cabin that Jimmy Flemings built (IDT-162).... Joe Parker's shop was always there. Tony Jensen or one of the Jensen boys built that shop. Alvin remembered when they were using that for a shed. They could drive an old Model A truck, the one that is up along side Otter Creek, in the shop. "Jensen Transfer Company" is written on the door [of the truck].... The Jensens used the shed for a garage, then Joe Parker used it in later years. Parker got it when he got his new truck. Alvin has the truck now, it is an old 1947 Chevy. When Joe got that truck.... he parked it in there when he went out to die.... It was still in there when Alvin bought the truck. "There was garage [for] about this far," Alvin motioned with his arms, "and the back part was all junk." Parker got the building in the late 1940s, because he bought that truck in 1948....
- 613 The next house to the west (IDT-162) is the one that Shawn Flemings built.... The old log cabin (IDT-161) next to it "is falling to wreck and ruin"..... Shawn Flemings built IDT-162 out of the lumber that he got out the old Adams Hotel (IDT-089).... There was kind of shed originally on the front part. Jule Stuver used that. Joe and Jule Stuver lived in the little log cabin (IDT-161), and the shed (front part of IDT-162) was just up the road from the log cabin. Stuver used the shed as his carpentry shop. Flemings added on to it so much that Alvin did not recognize the place anymore. Alvin was there

when Flemings' parents were living in there, before they left for Ketchikan. Flemings added on to it so one could barely recognize the old shed. Joe Stuver's carpentry shop was the middle part. Shawn Flemings added the two ends on the building [in the 1970s]. The main part [Stuver's carpentry shop] was there in the 1930s....

650 The log cabin next door (IDT-161) was there as far back as Alvin could remember. It was too bad the log cabin went to hell, Alvin said, as it is leaking real bad.... This cabin was fixed up and they built out toward the back. It was just an old tent frame, built with round poles for a frame and then tent [canvas stretched] over it. The main part was logs. They put the front entry way on it. That was not on there before. Louis Miller lived in there for a couple of years... four years. It was not much of a place before Stuver fixed it up.... Miller might have brought it over from Iditarod, but Alvin did not know that for sure. He remembered when the Millers lived in there. Dolly Miller, who is about 65 now, was just a little girl when they moved out of there. Alvin did not know how they managed all those kids in that small house....

684 [End of Side B, Tape 3]

Tape 4, Side A:

001 Introductory comments by Rolfe Buzzell....

003 Old [Chuck] Weiser lived in that cabin (IDT-161) in later years, but he did not own it. Joe Stuver and John Stevens had quite an argument over that cabin. They were partners and they owned the house half and half. Joe Stuver told Weiser to go ahead and take the cabin. Johnny jumped Weiser and said he had some say in that cabin too. So Weiser paid Johnny for half the cabin, the other half he got for nothing. Johnny made him pay for half. Weiser came to Flat in 1957.... Stuver lived in the cabin off and on before that. He used to stay there in the spring when he would come to Flat and he would stay there in the fall. The winter that Stuver and John Stevens worked on it, they were trapping. That was during the war, in 1944. They were not trapping at the time, and Stevens and Stuver spent the whole winter fixing the cabin up. When Weiser moved in, Stuver was not staying there anymore....

020 Rolfe asked Alvin about Site IDT-160. Alvin said that one could just about jump right off the truck and go up the steps to that house. It was right by the road... It had big old fashioned windows. There was a little stair case on one end. The building had three gables, and it did not leak between the gables.... The Flemings tore the building down for the lumber. There was a lot of good lumber in the walls. In most all of those old buildings the walls were still pretty good.... When Alvin started remembering [1935] Billie Harding lived there with another girl, who is up in Cottonwood [Cemetery, IDT-

247]--she has the big cross--Jean Downey. They were prostitutes. Jean was from Ophir. She was young, only 36 when she died. Alvin did not know where Billie Harding came from. She was around Flat for several years. Flossie was not in Flat anymore at the time Alvin started remembering. She was gone. Flossie used to come back every once in a while. Alvin saw her and knew who she was.

- 046 Violet Wadsworth had a big house (IDT-150) down by there, straight across from the log cabin (IDT-159) Ray Stock has. Violet Wadsworth was the last prostitute to leave Flat. She left in the fall of 1942 and never came back.
- 051 The place with the three gables (IDT-160), Billie Harding and Jean Downey lived there. Billie Harding was the last one there. Jean died in 1941, and Billie left around late 1941 or early 1942. Billie Harding won the ice pool after she left Flat.... Billie Harding and her boy friend, Tom Ringand. They were drinking at the time and they thought it would be a late spring, so they guessed the date of May 16th. Nobody else picked that date. That was in the spring of 1945.... Alvin does not know if Billie Harding is still living.... She was not all that old. When Violet left, it was in the middle of the winter of 1942.... Violet lived in the big place (IDT-150) across from Ray Stock's place (IDT-159). Flossie had a little place of her own, right on the end (IDT-151). Tootsie had a tavern right over there on the river (IDT-151).... There used to be a swinging bridge across the river there.... Flossie had a little false front house that connected to Tootsie's place (IDT-151). Tootsie's place burned down in 1949 and Flossie's place went with it. The two houses were right next to each other. Dr. LaRue had his dentist chair set up in Flossie's House in the summer of 1946. Alvin once had him pull a tooth. That was the only time that Alvin was in that house. The piano was in there at the time. They took the piano out of Flossie's house and took it up to the Moose Hall a short time before Tootsie's place caught fire in 1949. Otherwise the piano would have gone up in flames with it. It is a player piano. Put a record in it, peddle the thing, and it plays.
- 083 Billie Harding's place (IDT-160), Violet's Place (IDT-150) and Flossie's Place (IDT-151) were all there as far back as Alvin could remember.
- 086 Ray Stock's cabin (IDT-159) is one of the older cabins in Flat. Joe Cummings lived there. He was an old guy, looked like he was just off the label of a Fuller Paint can.... He was kind of a mystery man. He had a lot of money and he came originally from Idaho. He was a market [meat] hunter in Alaska. He would never reveal his past. He had a lot of money, legal money, all in government bonds. He told Harry Lawrence--Lawrence used to like to pump those old-timers that would hide their identity. He would get them talking, giving them free drink after free drink until he got them to going. Lawrence found out the past of a couple of them, but Cummings would never give him anything. The only thing Lawrence said Cummings ever told him was that his name was not Cummings and he came to Alaska in 1890.... Rumor had it that Cummings was a

frustrated college professor that came to Alaska to live out his twilight years. The man could not count to ten on his fingers, but nobody knew that until he lost his hearing. "You couldn't write out anything for him because he would look at it upside down. You had to holler at him." Alvin thought Cummings might have been a murderer who knocked off one of his partners while market hunting out of Nome or Fairbanks. He probably knocked off a partner whose name was Cummings. "The guy [Cummings] was so treacherous. Toward the end, I got to know him. Before that, I thought he was a pretty nice old guy, but he had a detestable streak in him...." Cummings had a big team of dogs and he used to get bargain fish from down river for his dogs from Jim Walker Walker would bring the fish up in his river boat, and the Agoff's would buy the extra.... It was cheaper than buying dog fish from Donnelley and Sheppard.... One time Cummings told Alvin that Walker did not have any extra fish, and Alvin later found out that Cummings had lied to him about that....

- 133 Cummings came to Flat in 1912. They took him off to the old folks home [Pioneer Home] in 1957. Rich Fullerton and Andrew Miscovich escorted him to Sitka.... Cummings lived in the same cabin all that time. It was originally located over on the tundra. The hand well of the original site is still there where the cabin used to be. It was a little spring well. The cabin was originally located way back of Dave Wintz' cabin (IDT-121). When the dredge was coming that way, Cummings moved the cabin (IDT-159) to where it is now.... He moved it about 1946, when the dredge was coming down through there. Old John Popavich, a Serbian, also had a cabin over there. But Popavich tore his cabin down, as he did not want to go to the trouble of moving it....
- 154 The Parker House (IDT-154) is one of the older houses [on the north side of Otter Creek] and has been in that location for as long as Alvin could remember.... The Parker House has a big oval window in the [front] door.... Where the kitchen door comes out, there is a patch of four leaf clovers....
- 168 The Emil Jensen House (IDT-153) was located to the west of the Parker House. Upon going into the entry way, one turned right to go into the living room.... That building has been gone [torn down] for years. That building was there when Alvin was little. It was a pretty nice house. The Jensen's had it fixed up pretty nice inside.... It predated 1935....
- 178 The next site over [to the west] (IDT-152) ... might have been Bob Floyd's place. Bob Floyd had a cabin there, and that is where that tin shed (IDT-167) was located that John Stevens moved over for Bertha to store her fire wood in Floyd's place was a log cabin and Freddie Demientieff tore it down for wood.... Floyd lived in there from 1946 to 1948. He was in the cabin two years, and he darn near died in that cabin one time. He had a hernia. He sneezed one day and it ruptured. Fritz Awe poked Floyd's innards

back in him and got his truss on him.... Floyd had had the hernia a long time.... He was coughing, and then sneezed.... They put him on a plane and sent him out. He never came back after that.... The house was never occupied after that.

- 200 An old Irishman named Jerry Baker lived in that cabin (IDT-152) before Floyd. Jerry Baker left Flat for the Pioneer Home in the early 1940s. He was ninety some years old when he left. Alvin saw old Baker a couple of times. He was 91 or 92, and he left before 1940.... That cabin was always there as long as Alvin could recall.... Freddie Demientieff tore it down
- 223 Joe Cummings had a little dog barn (Feature 2, IDT-159) that he used to put his dogs in, right next [west] of his cabin.
- 227 There was another building (IDT-157) right next to the bridge that was Ernest Norman's cabin.... Big Foot, as he was called, used it as a place to put his Ski-doo in there. He made a ramp. It was originally Joe Loranger's place, the old Frenchman. It was his old cabin up until about the mid-1960s. Loranger moved out of there in the 1962 or 1963 and moved to Cummings' old cabin (IDT-159). He sold his cabin (IDT-157) to Ernest Norman, old "Big Foot," who had a Ski-doo, one of the first Ski-doods in camp. Norman made a wider door on the building so he could drive the Ski-doo into the building. He built a ramp on the lower side. Alvin stated that he did not know that Ray Stock had moved the building [to IDT-158]. Alvin has not been over on that side of the river for a long time.... The last time he was over there was to see Glenn Johnson....
- 265 Alvin's brother had one of the oldest cabins in Flat. That is over on the hill, north of Otter Creek. It has a shabby tin roof.... It is way over against the hill side. According to John Ogriz, that old house (IDT-246) was built in 1914.... That house is across the river from the Flat airstrip.... There is a gulch that comes out of the hillside, called Reindeer Gulch, and the cabin is near there. The Agoffs moved the cabin over a rough road on the north side of Otter Creek [north and west of IDT-169] ... in the spring of 1963....
- 316 The cabin was in a jumble of buildings right next to the Wireless Station.... Rolfe and Alvin looked at a series of aerial photographs, but the building (IDT-246) did not show up on the aerial photos. It is north of the area depicted on those photographs....
- 331 The oldest standing building in Flat is the Mike Demientieff log cabin (IDT-092). John Ogriz told Alvin that the Demientieff House and the house (IDT-246) that Alvin's brother had [near Reindeer Gulch] are the two oldest in Flat. Ogriz said the house Alvin's brother had was built in 1914. The other one was built in 1912....
- 341 Rolfe asked Alvin to sign a release form for this interview. The form gives the Office of History and Archaeology and the Bureau of Land Management permission to use the

information in the interview in the Flat Historic Building Survey report and the Flat and Iditarod Oral History volume.... Alvin signed the form....

355 [Tape recorder turned off for a short time]

356 Alvin told Rolfe a story about buying apples in Flat. Harry Donnelley had bum apples that would turn black when they were cooked. George Turner had new, good apples at his store. Ina Uotila was cooking up at Slate Creek for Uotila and Ogriz, and they invited the Donnelleys up for supper. It did not dawn on Mrs. Uotila that she was cooking apples purchased from Turner. Mrs. Donnelley asked Ina how she kept her apples from turning black, as Mrs. Donnelley said when ever she cooked apples they turned black. Ina did not know what to say. She told Mrs. Donnelley she though she was just lucky. She did not want to tell Mrs. Donnelley that she bought the apples from Turner's store.... "It was a case of deal with me or you are on my shit list," Alvin said [referring to how people in Flat were often caught in the commercial rivalry between Turner and Donnelley]....

376 Sam Applebaum, who was running Donnelley's Store at that time [1930s], had no flash light batteries, as they did not come in with the supplies for Donnelley's Store. George Turner had an excess of flash light batteries and agreed to split his flash light batteries with Donnelley. So Sam Applebaum got a whole slug of flash light batteries from Turner, and then he sold them two bits apiece cheaper than Turner. Turner found out and he stormed up to the Donnelley Store and gave Applebaum hell. But Applebaum said: "Business is business, George"

390 Before that, Applebaum had a store in Iditarod (IDT-181). The last calendar on the wall in that store was for August 1925. In 1954, Alvin was tearing the building down [to salvage the lumber] and he found a can of cabbage in the store. The can was all puffed out.... Alvin jammed it with a wrecking bar and propane gas came out of it. Alvin threw it out the window and it smoked away in the snow for a while.... The cabbage had just turned to gas.... That was in 1954.... about 30 years after the store closed.... There were no solids left in the can....

424 [End of interview]

During a follow up telephone conversation with Rolfe Buzzell on March 6, 1995, Alvin added the following information:

The last time that Alex Matheson freighted fuel from the Kuskokwim River was in 1956, not in 1950. Sam Parent had a large cache of fuel in drums at Crooked Creek. And that is where Matheson got his fuel. Alvin remembered the date because Parent had 70 extra barrels left over and he wanted to get rid of them. Matheson did not feel it was enough fuel to justify

going back to Crooked Creek a second time that year. So Alvin went with his tractor and a sled to Crooked Creek and hauled the 70 barrels to Prince Creek. That was during the winter of 1956.

In another follow up telephone call on March 8, 1995, Alvin stated that his wife was working at the Public Health Hospital in Tanana in 1966. That was the summer that she came to visit Flat and the two of them met.

Alvin stated that the Cold Storage Building (IDT-078) in John Miscovich's 1933 photograph was moved to its present location in 1936 or 1937. Prior to that time, the building was located across the road near the Andrew Miscovich Bar (IDT-071).

In a telephone conversation with Rolfe Buzzell on March 10, 1995, Alvin stated that Bob Wolf's cabin (IDT-245) burned down in November of 1976. Wolf worked in Fairbanks and spent winters in Flat. John Stevens sold the cabin to Wolf in 1976. Wolf and Emory Friend had just put a new floor in the cabin a couple of weeks before the fire. The cabin was old and it had a big front window with diamond lights. Art Lapp fixed the cabin up about 1940 or 1941. The house was always in that location as far back as Alvin could recall. It was abandoned in 1936 or 1937. Wolf and his wife had a dog with several pups. The pups died in the fire that destroyed the cabin.

Alvin stated that his brother Sergie's house on the hill (IDT-246) was one of the oldest buildings in Flat. It belonged to Harry Steen and it was located in the Matheson complex in the southern part of Flat. Alvin recalled that the house was sitting on tailings, so it probably had been moved before. When Steen died in 1953, Steen's wife sold it to Stanley Van Lumin. Van Lumin sold it to Sergie about 1958. Sergie and Alvin hauled it up the hillside to its present location in 1963. The Steen House (IDT-246) is a rectangular, one story, wood frame building. It measures about 16 feet x 20 feet and the foundation is wood blocks. The basement is lined with sheet metal. The gable roof is covered with corrugated sheet iron. There is an entryway on the east side which used to be the main entry. The main entry now is through a wood shed attached to the west side of the building.

Alvin stated that Cottonwood Cemetery (IDT-247) is located on a bench overlooking Otter Creek and the town of Flat. The cemetery is east of Cottonwood Creek and about 100 yards east of the old tram line. There are about 50 people buried in the cemetery. Many of the graves are not marked. Some graves have wooden headboards. A few have granite or cement markers. The first person buried in the cemetery was Jim Blodget, who died in 1926. Blodget was sweet on Tootsie, the prostitute. Blodget is buried north of Jean Downey's cross. Dan Geru died in 1928 and he is also buried in Cottonwood Cemetery. Some people who are buried in unmarked graves at the cemetery include Bob Camel (died December 1950), Fred Lusher (died 1948), and Paul Willenberg (died 1949).

Prior to 1926, Alvin said, people who died in Flat were buried in the cemetery at Iditarod. That cemetery is located north and east of Iditarod. Some residents of Flat who died after 1926 were buried in Iditarod, not in the Cottonwood Cemetery. Alvin recalled one old timer telling him about burying his wife at the Iditarod cemetery, where the ground was

permafrost. As they lowered the woman's casket into the ground, water from the wet ground welled up around the casket. The guy later told Alvin that he regretted burying his wife in wet ground. He wished he had buried her in dry ground near Flat.

In a follow up telephone call with Rolfe Buzzell on March 14, 1995, Alvin stated that it was common practice in the old days for people to throw garbage into Otter Creek. During the winter and spring, residents in Flat would place large quantities of empty alcohol bottles on the ice and then speculate when the ice would break up and the creek flush the bottles downstream. Unlike now days, Alvin said, everybody used to dispose of garbage in that manner.

Alvin's mother came down the Tanana and Yukon rivers in 1928 on the stern-wheeler *Alice* to Holy Cross. Then she took the stern-wheeler *Seawolf* from Holy Cross to Flat on the Iditarod River. George Turner and Willie Newman were operating the *Seawolf* at that time. The *Seawolf* is dry docked now in Fairbanks. Nick Demientieff operated the *Seawolf* later and dry docked it in Fairbanks. The last time Nick brought that boat up the Iditarod River was in 1955.

SITE LOCATION MAPS FROM THE 1993 FIELD SURVEY

The following maps show the location of buildings, structures and sites inventoried by the Office of History and Archaeology field crew during the 1993 survey of Flat, Iditarod, and selected mining camps surrounding Flat. The maps of Flat, Iditarod and the Riley/Otter Creek/Miscovich Camp were made from aerial photographs. The maps of the Discovery/Peter Miscovich, Golden Horn, and Fullerton mining camps are based on free hand sketches made in the field.

The Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS) numbers (*e.g.* IDT-171) are the permanent site numbers assigned to each building, structure or site in the state-wide inventory of historic and prehistoric sites. The maps were drawn by intern Darrell Lewis and edited by Rolfe Buzzell.

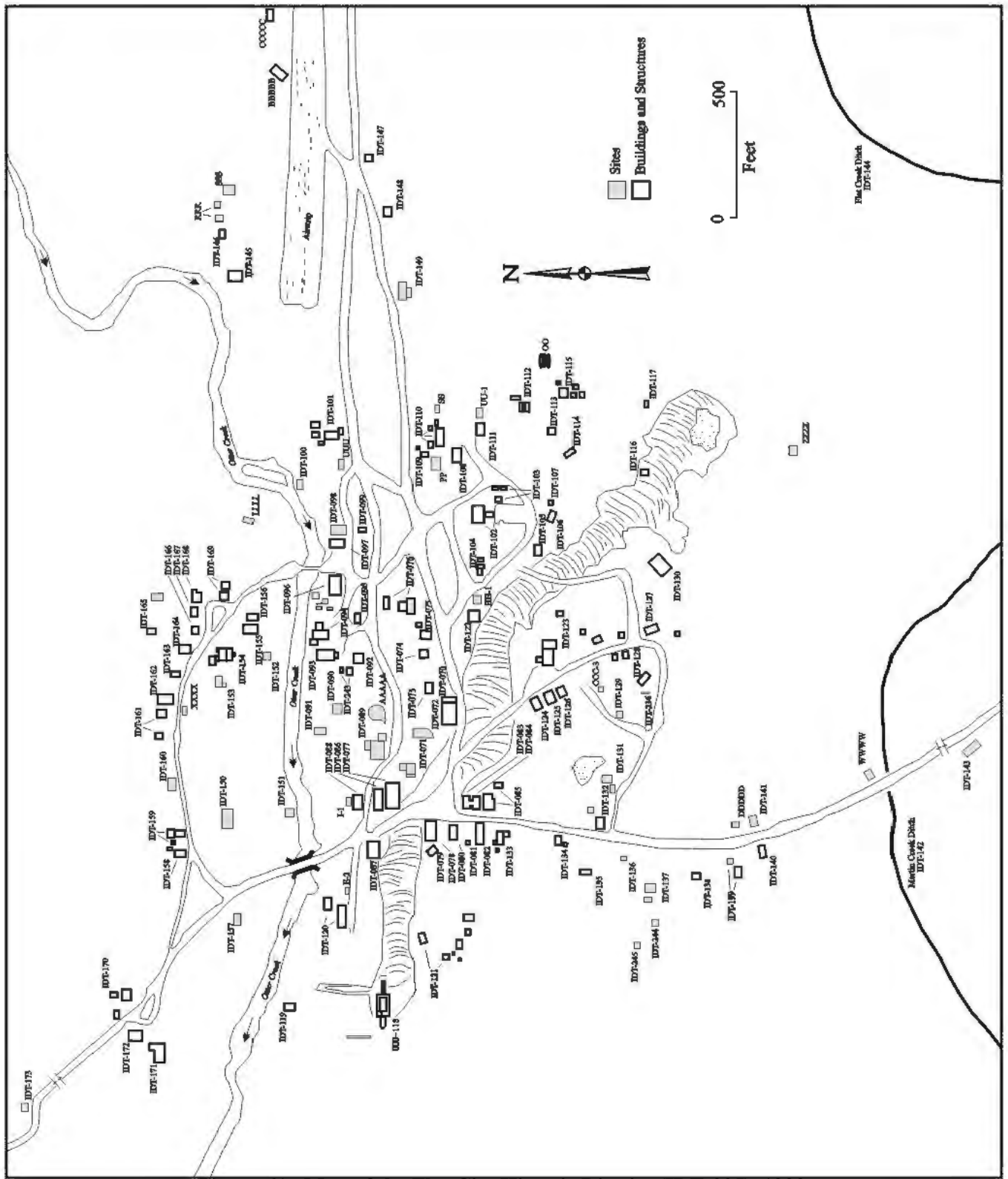


Figure 61. Map of the Flat City Historic District (IDT-005), 1993.

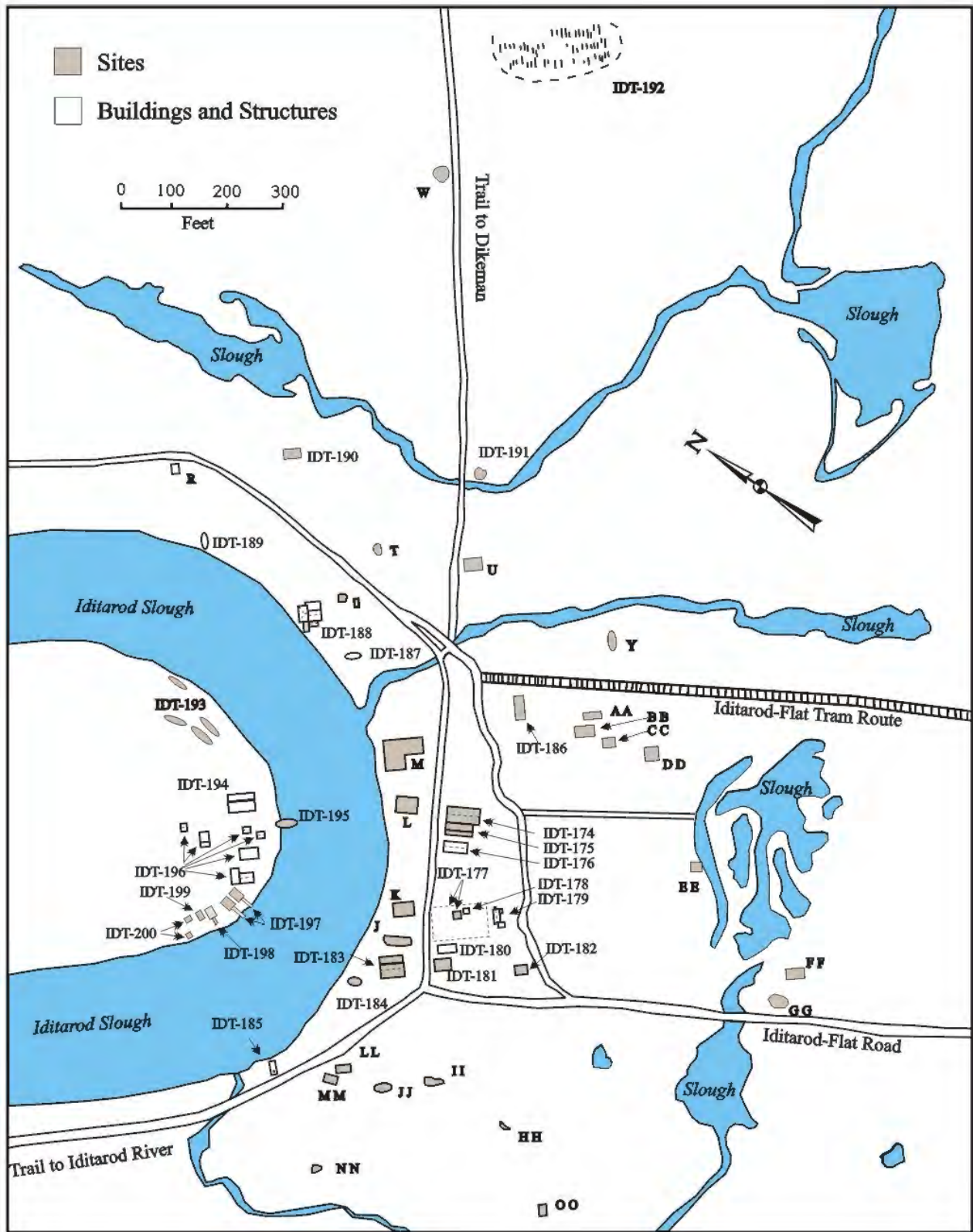


Figure 62. Map of the Iditarod historic district (IDT-001), 1993.

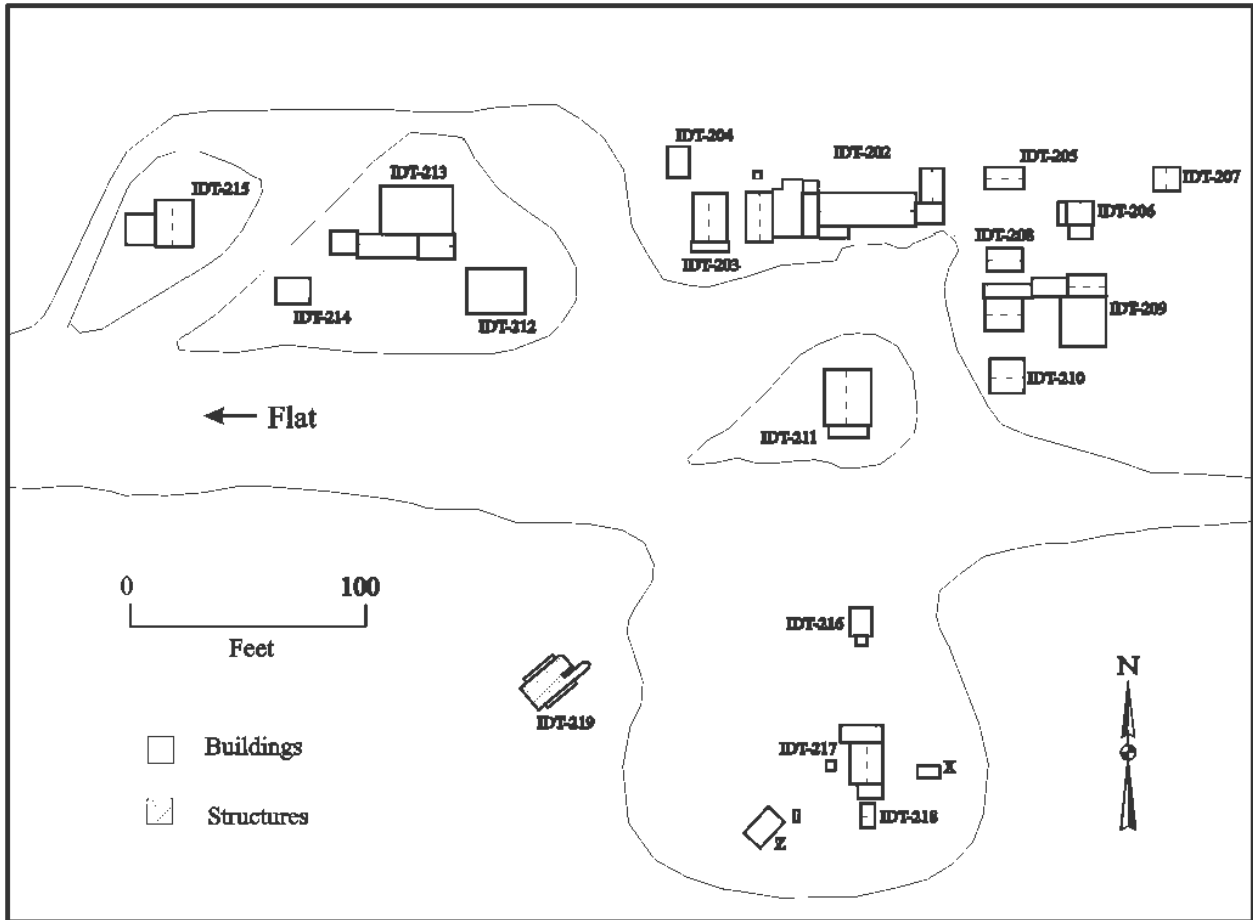


Figure 63. Map of the Riley/Otter Creek Dredging/Miscovich Camp (IDT-201), 1993.

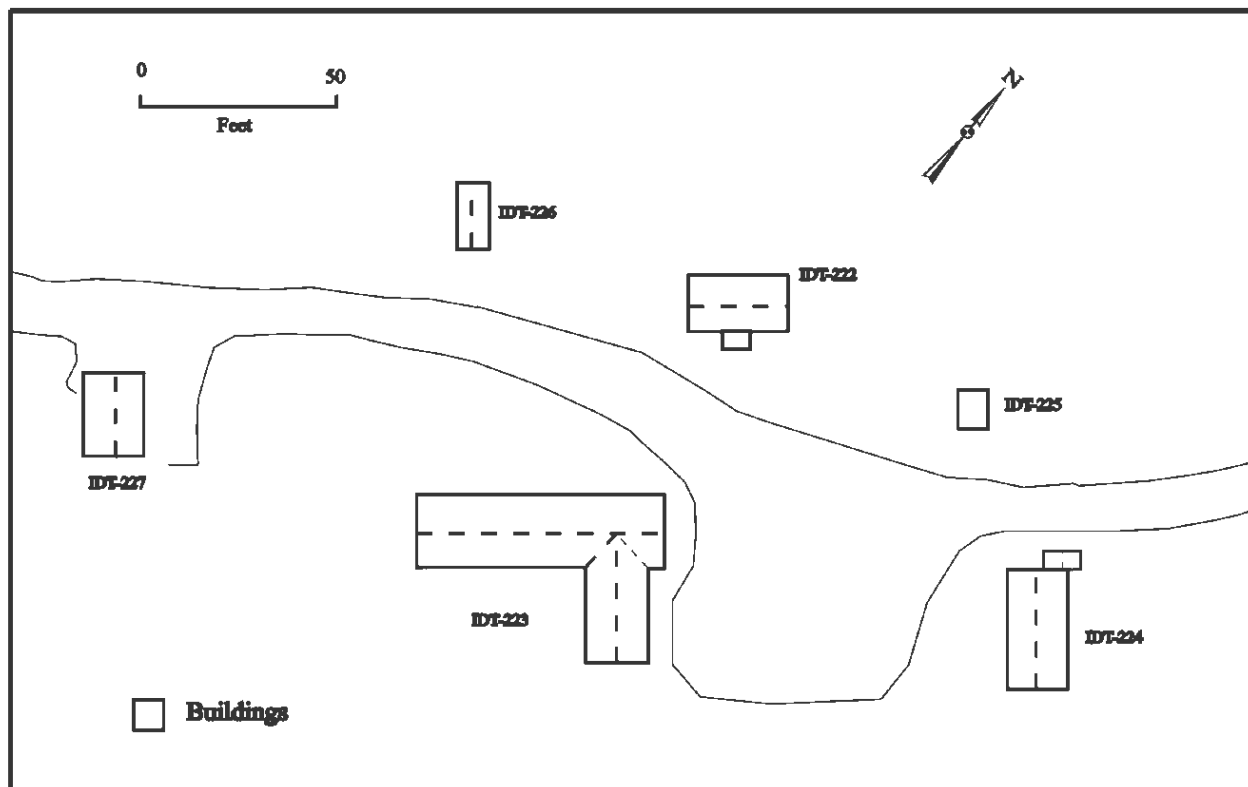


Figure 64. Map of the Discovery/Peter Miscovich Camp (IDT-221), 1993.

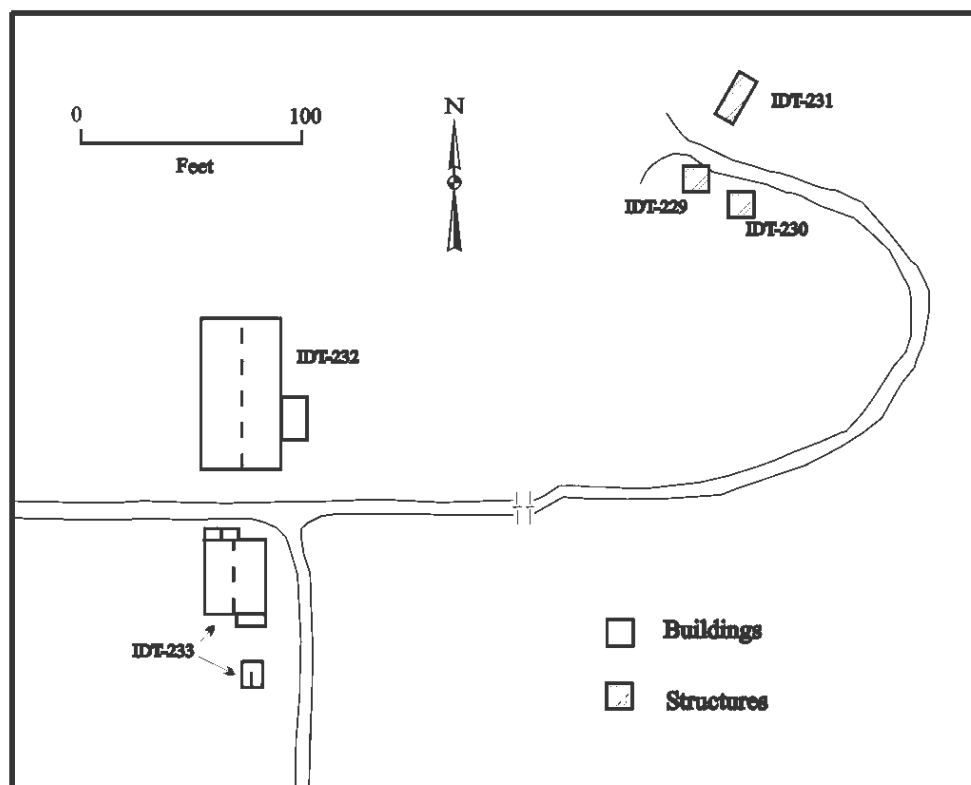


Figure 65. Map of the Golden Horn Mine historic district (IDT-228), 1993.

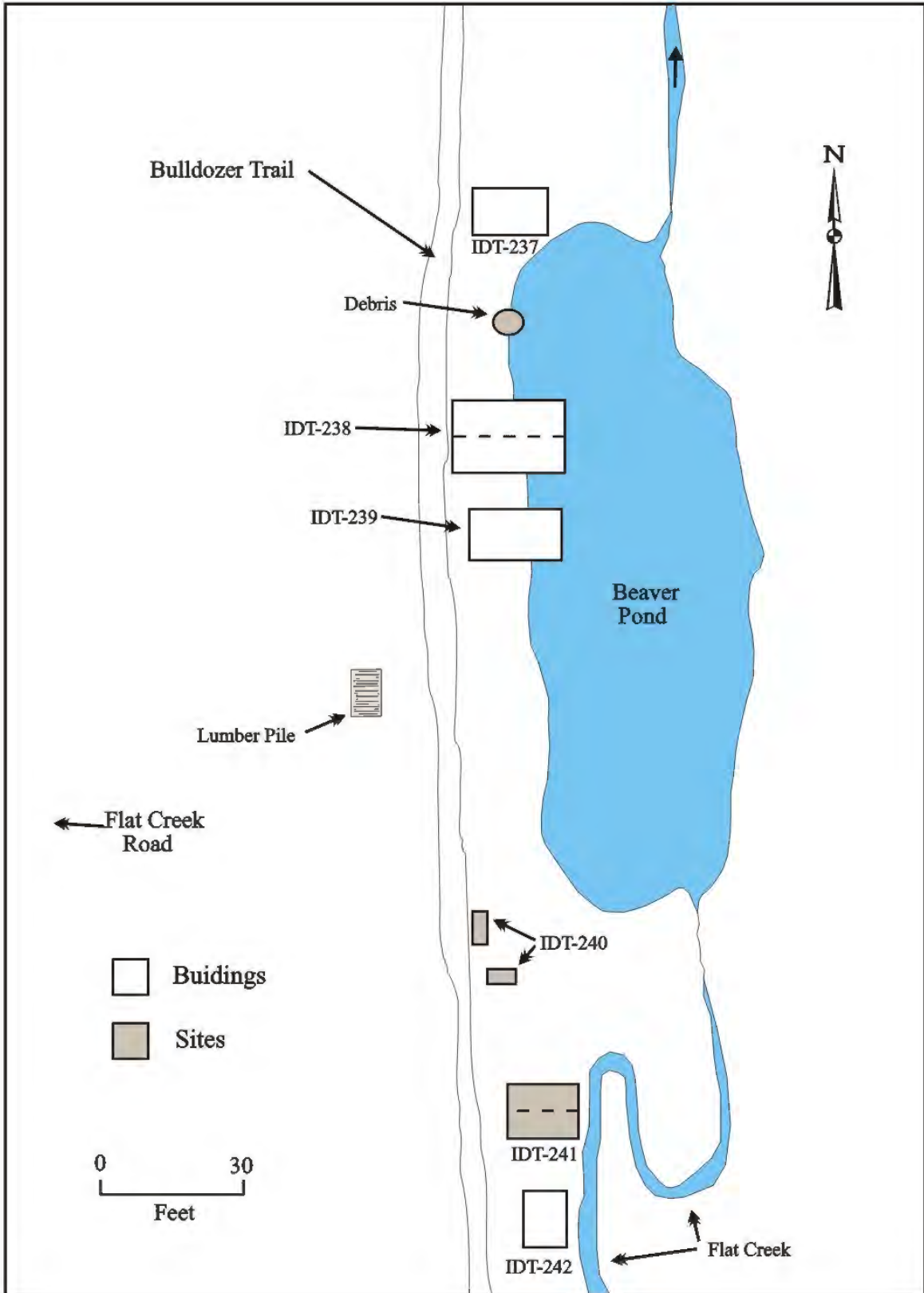


Figure 66. Map of the Fullerton mining camp on lower Flat Creek (IDT-234), 1993.

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