Cal Lensink

Oral History Interview
August 15, 1999
Cal Lensink
Interviewed by Jim King

--Please note: the recorder skipped a lot of words, especially at the beginning of sentences when Cal would speak--I had to guess what he was saying in several areas—The recorder seemed to work better toward mid-end of interview.

Jim: We are at the home of Cal Lensink in Anchorage and having an afternoon visit. Bruce Conant is here also. We are going to visit a bit about the good old days with the Fish and Wildlife Service. Gosh, where should we begin? I think I first met you when you came to Fairbanks as a graduate student and we went for a ride up the Steese Highway. I was driving the government truck and we ran off the road and walked 12 miles back to Don Draper's cabin. That was a really nice night with Don. He was a trapper that lived along the road there. Having survived that, you went on to get your degree. What was your project?

Cal: I was working on basically life history and food habits of martin in Interior Alaska.

Jim: Yes, you were getting carcasses from Lyle Blackburn and working with him some.

Cal: Blackburn, Fabian Carey, Al Eisher, and several other old time trappers. I started in 1951 and the following summer I was in the field working on martin. In 1951, I had a temporary job working on waterfowl and the next two summers I was working on martin. The first year I worked on waterfowl on the Innoko and the following summer I was at Castle Lake, working on marten on Ray Tremblay's trapline. The next two summers I worked on the Yukon Flats, then the following summer in the Aleutian Islands.

Jim: That is when you had gone back to Indiana or somewhere?

Cal: I didn't actually go back to Purdue until 1956. I was working for Bob Jones as a temporary in the spring and summer then to Purdue in 1956. I worked in the Aleutians the following two years. I got a job with the Department of Fish and Game doing predator investigations and patrols. I finished my degree and was transferred to the Fish and Wildlife Service at the Patuxent Research Center at the Migratory Bird Station.

Jim: When you first came to the University, was that when John Buckley was Unit Leader there?

Cal: The person that interviewed me was Neal Hosley(??) who had been Unit Leader but by the time I got to the University, he had become Dean of the University and John Buckley was the leader. I finished my master's degree under Buckley. When I went to Patuxent I wasn't working for him but he had transferred to the Patuxent Research Center.

Jim: Have you heard from John in recent years?

Cal: Last Christmas. We correspond at Christmas. He corresponds with a card; I correspond with a telephone call.

Jim: He is in Sanibel, Florida.

Cal: The past couple of summers he apparently has gone back to New York where it is a little cooler, though this summer there might be doubtful. He found Florida to just be too hot and muggy in the summers. There was an excellent group altogether at the University when I was there; students, as well as some very bright undergraduates.

Jim: It is really interesting what a small place the University in Fairbanks was at that time, probably not over 500 students.

Cal: I think there were only 167 full time students at the University when I started there. I knew most people on campus. If you didn't know their name you could at least recognize who they were. They were either in agriculture, engineering, or something like that.

When I first came to Alaska I had about two weeks before I started my job on the Innoko so I worked for Buildings and Grounds. It was a funny deal. The first thing I did, it was between spring break up and water was running off the campus and creating a gully along side one of the roads. They started me out with a shovel trying to dam. It was pretty obvious that was not going to work. After they worked a day, they got a dozer in to finish the job. Then they started me digging a hole for a new flag pole and I got the hole about done when somebody came out with a transient and started checking the location and they decided the hole was in the wrong place so I had to move it over six feet. It had to be right for the plans of Buildings and Grounds. I am sure it is long gone now.

The next job I was in they were going to have a graduation exercise and they wanted to beautify the campus a little. We went and chopped down a bunch of birch trees that still hadn't leafed out. They were in bud and we put them in the ground to simulate to make people think we had trees. After the graduation, we pulled them up and hauled them away. We had a large crowd at the ceremonies and we had to get chairs from all over the campus, bring them to the gym and then after the ceremonies, we had to haul them all back again. For about two weeks, everything I did had to be undone!

Jim: It was different then. They were all old wooden buildings. Are any of them there anymore?

Cal: I don't know. _____ and the Eielson Building were the only two buildings that might still be there. Everything else has totally changed. Part of the old gym is now Administration. Originally it was just a gym on the bottom and library on top and then eventually it became a museum on top.

Jim: They gave it the "Gay 90's" décor and turned it into Administrative.

Cal: There was a water tower enclosed in wood right next to it. It was a mountain climber's practice by repelling down the side of the tower.

Jim: That was an interesting place in those days. At that point you weren't sure if you were going to specialize in waterfowl or furbearers or sea mammals or big game.

Cal: Actually, I wanted to work on mammals but I ended up usually getting jobs on waterfowl. My Ph.D. was on otters. Through the years, I have worked on musk ox. I have publications on musk ox, publications on censusing of caribou, publications on harvest of sea lions; but basically most of my work has been done on ducks and geese.

Jim: When you were doing your sea otter work, you were out there at Amchitka?

Cal: I don't recall just how many summers. I think only once did I stay out for the full summer. I was there usually in early spring. Karl Kenyon was there when I first got there and two Aleut kids, Tony and Fred worked with us. Kenyon left and Tony and Fred stayed and worked with me during the summer.

What really got me to Purdue were two professors, Don _____ and Kirk_____ That winter following, I sent Kirk a Christmas card and commented that I was thinking of going back to school and I intended to apply at both Berkeley and University of British Columbia. He told me if I would apply to Purdue, they would give me a scholarship. It was pretty obvious where I was going to go to school because I knew I would never have qualified for one at Berkeley or at the University of British Columbia. Besides, I probably couldn't have made the grades at the two stronger universities.

Jim: When you were working with the otters, what was it you were doing on the Island?

Cal: I was trying to basically learn as much as I could about the current sizes and populations; learning what I could on the life history and natural history. I also was looking at the history of their exploitation so my theses was actually called "The History and Status of Sea Otters in Alaska." That was going into the history of sea otters and then write(??) or Russian(??) literature on collection of "Alaskana." I started out with a hobby of collecting books.

Jim: You had a roommate at the University that was a book collector. What was his name?

Cal: George _____ and that's where a good share of my books came from. I was able to skim the cream off of his collection one time when he was short of money. I had gotten him started in a very big way with some of the better books. He was at the University and I had gotten to know him there but then he stayed with me for a year so while he was on the city police force.

Jim: He was a deputy marshal in Bethel for awhile.

Cal: A lot of my books went from Bethel to Juneau, to Patuxent, and back to Bethel. They have been well traveled. Now I am in the process of making arrangements to keep them in Anchorage by donating them. Anchorage has a very fine library now.

Jim: George _____ was an interesting guy. He had this marvelous collection of Alaska history.

Cal: Alaska books and very diverse from general chronicles like _____ in Denali. When I bought the collection from him, I didn't have to buy some of them back since I had already paid for some of them when I gave them to him. I was primarily interested in exploration and natural history. He still had lots of books that eventually went to the University of Alaska.

Jim: It seems interesting that he would have that sort of a book collection by him, making his living as a police officer.

Cal: He is very smart. He graduated from the University of Alaska and I think he majored in anthropology. Jobs weren't available and after graduation, he landed a job as a policeman. He had started out as a deputy marshal in Fairbanks and then became the deputy in Bethel and then he went there to the police force. He could always get a job in law enforcement but with only a bachelor's degree, a job in anthropology wasn't worth much.

Jim: So that started you on your collection of sea otter books?

Cal: When I started my oral exam at Purdue University, one of the professors asked me if I had seen some of the books that I had cited or was I just quoting from someplace I had seen. I didn't even get a chance to answer the question and _____ Patrick(??) piped up and he said, "yes, he not only has seen those books, he owns them!" I kept myself pretty well broke for awhile getting hold of books. In recent years, I haven't kept up.

Jim: There are too many!

Cal: There are too many collectors and too many books coming out. I sort of made a point that I would buy a few modern books but basically the books I buy are published before 1950. You just can't keep up with every new book that comes out. Now I buy something if it is directly related to the work that I am doing.

Jim: There are a lot of interesting translations from work in the past that are just now being put in English. I keep watching the bookstores. I am always tempted to buy but it is too overwhelming. We don't have a very good library in Juneau any more. They cut back funding for the State historic library. It is part of the Department of Education now

and that is an easy place to cut and they are not buying books anymore. The City library and the University library both are picking up stuff but they just don't have enough money to keep up with all the relevant material that is coming out.

Cal: When I started thinking of disposing of my library, I was in a quandary as to where to put them. I didn't want them to go on the open market. I have an interest in the University of Alaska but their collection is very large and very old and probably a better collection than any other already. I thought it would be more useful in Anchorage which also has a nice collection.

I first met Bob Jones in 1954 when trying to learn how best to hold sea otters in captivity and notably _____ skeletons and skulls and probably overall several hundred skeletons. I think sea otters were already exceeding their carrying capacity of the near shore environment. Then during periods of winter storms when they had more difficulty feeding, you would always end up with animals on the beach dead. Storms in the winter turned out to be pretty awful there for a sea otter. Winter was a primary time of mortality. _____Gulf of Alaska now and I suspect that was not any genetic difference but probably a food difference. _____ sea urchins or something like that that otters, to a large extent, depended on. You could hardly find them except in crevasses and rocks where the sea otters couldn't get them. The bottom of the bay was literally paved with sea urchins.

Jim: There were still foxes on Amchitka when you were doing that. Were they feeding on the otter carcasses?

Cal: They fed on otter carcasses but I think eagles were primarily the predators or scavengers of otter carcasses rather than foxes. Foxes, I think, caught rats along the beach and were feeding on the urchins that were on the kelp that had washed up on shore. Nearly all foxes on the Island were along the beach and that is why eventual control was a possibility. That was the first island that we were able to control foxes. Jones had done that one year and the next year we followed up by cutting bait(??) and just walking

shorelines and fishing them out. Every few steps we would pitch another bait so that the _____ that I know of on the island was shot. We finished that in 1956 and 10 years after the last foxes were gone, _____the beaches. There is waterfowl in the lakes and the ponds on the island have vastly increased in _____. You rarely saw them when the foxes were there.

Jim: John Martin says that when he retires in 3-4 years, he is going to have the Aleutians relatively clean.

Cal: More power to him! With all the people that have been working on it, I think that's probably the best single project for restoration of wildlife there has ever been. The focus on cleaning of the Island was restoring the Aleutian Canada geese which has just been taken off the endangered species list and has implications for nearly all birds that use the Aleutians.

Jim: Do the golden plovers come back through that area in the spring? I remember those winters when that was going on. Joe Meiner and Frank Glacer in Fairbanks, had spent _____ that went to Amchitka. There were a lot of people involved in that.

Cal: They used sort of a tallow(?) base. They had a regular thing to mold them just like molding bullets and then in addition to that, something that you can't do now, we shot seals. We would then cut the blubber into about 1-inch squares and poke a hole in it and put a poison pill inside of that – strychnine. They may have used 1080 from the air.

Jim: That was a pretty dramatic thing. I keep thinking it was inhumane(?) effort to get rid of those foxes which were getting kind of debilitated from breeding and lack of sustenance. I know you have some good stories about that summer you spent on the Innoko.

Cal: That was my first summer in Alaska and I was about as green as _____, told me about the Alaska mosquitoes and the tents in those days didn't have mosquito fly's in them and you had to have bed nets except I didn't know that! Repellants were no good, 6-12 was almost useless. The fellow working with me had a bed net and he cut his net in half and placed the net over the head of our sleeping bags.

_____ was from a long list of top-flight temporary that I was able to hire, I was very lucky at getting exceedingly good temporary employees to Native groups_____. I had flown waterfowl surveys that folks are involved in now in the spring. _____ Scott from the _____ to the Selawik in the Stinson station wagon and then when we finished up, he dropped me off at Holy Cross and checked with the Mission. The Mission was taking care of the boat and motor and would tell me who would be good to hire and then he took off. They said there was only one person in town that still needed a job because all the others were either gone or out fishing. The one that was available wasn't worth much. I suspect that that was a judgement based on the fact that he was probably too aggressive to in-town life and might have drank a little bit but out in the field, he didn't. He was a very competitive person. If I caught six geese, he had to catch seven. I couldn't have asked for a better employee.

On the Yukon Flats, I had Arthur James working for me and an Indian from Fort Yukon (?) that was very good. Then I had _____. I had a string of very good temporaries that were very helpful. I was temporary at the same time.

Jim: What year was that?

Cal: 1953.

Jim: Scott was still experimenting at that time with transect counts and new areas.

Cal: Frankly, I was lost. Our maps weren't very good and he was using flight charts where he had laid out transects. I know we flew some transects in the Innoko Flats and I

know we flew some in the Yukon Flats, how many, I have no idea. We flew some lines across the Innoko area and then the Selawik area. I was pretty must lost most of time. I didn't have a real picture of Alaska at the time. I wasn't the one holding the map and I could still remember the map for the Innoko area, in particular, because that is the one I had for the remainder of the summer. It was a flight chart but much of the flight chart was in yellow and across the yellow area, would be _____ didn't know what was there! The field map, I had some tracings off the flight which just merely showed the main stem Innoko and main stem Iditarod(?)

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Jim: It was interesting what Scott was doing. Did you do the rivers on the Seward Peninsula with him?

Cal: I don't remember that. I don't think so. I know we got up to Old Crow and stayed overnight in the Mounty. We flew over as far as the Klavik(??) that would include surveys on the Yukon Flats. I think that on one of the legs, we decided to go as far as the Klavik(??) and we turned around and came back. That was a long tour for a Stinson station wagon. It was a dog, particularly on floats.

Stores weren't very good in those days, you couldn't buy much, particularly in the Bush in the spring when they had run out of everything. To get the supplies for the summer, when we found nothing available in Holy Cross, we flew to Aniak and picked up a slab of bacon and a sack of spuds to get me started. We couldn't get off the river at Aniak with that much of a load in the airplane so I left the sack of spuds on the bank and told the Indians there they could have them. I started out the summer with a slab of bacon. In Holy Cross, we could buy a few vegetables. I think we could get canned corn and canned tomatoes, rice but no meat or potatoes or things like that. We were sort of on our own in the summertime. We lived off a lot of fish, and an occasional goose. We shot a black bear. We only saw a couple of black bear all summer long. I think on the Innoko at that

time, in the whole summer long, I didn't see more three or four moose and now they are very abundant there.

The whole thing has changed a lot. The Fish and Wildlife Service paperwork has changed over the years. Now I think it is way too excessive but at that time, it probably wasn't enough. Bob Scott was fairly new to his job. I think he came up in 1949 and he hired me but we didn't fill out any of the normal paperwork. He just hired me and I was on the payroll, I thought. I didn't get paid all summer long. I had bought most of my groceries at Holikachuk. That was the closest place when we were at Iditarod. I just ran up a charge account and I got as far as the end of the summer and all the groceries for the two of us and I still didn't have a check. The traders were a little bit more trustful than people are today. At any rate, the trader at Holikachuk, Frank Locker was his name, gave me all the sales slips and charges and told me to take them to Turner in Holy Cross and in turn, Turner would pay him. I guess he was a subsidiary. Then I got to Holy Cross and still no check so Turner said, "write me a check." I said, "I don't even have a bank account." He said, "that's alright, send me a post card when you get one." I wrote him a check on an account that I didn't have. I had to use one of his check blanks and I got $50.00 extra. It wasn't until I got back to Fairbanks that I found out they hadn't had me on the payroll at all. I think it was November before I got all the summer's money in one swoop and I then paid my bills.

That was fairly a impressive way to run up an account. That was Alaska in the old days. In fact, if you wanted to cash a check, you rarely went to the bank. We were more likely to go to the NC Company store, which was the main grocery and dry-goods store in Fairbanks at the time.

Jim: There were lots of stories in those days about people working for the Fish and Wildlife Service getting plunked out in some place with an assignment without any guidance. I think that was fairly typical and probably because the supervisors didn't know how to give any advice or guidance.

Cal: Basically, my instructions on the Innoko were "band as many ducks and geese as you can and learn what you can about nesting." That was it. I was on my own, poorly equipped but I had a great summer. I think I banded over 1,000 and I thought I learned quite a bit. The interesting thing was that when the Native Claims Act was passed and we had to start selecting lands for the new refuges in Alaska, I was the only one left in the Fish and Wildlife Service that had ever been on the ground on the Innoko. That was in the 1970's and I had been there in 1953 and so I had the groundwork and you and Hank Hansen had the aerial survey work which was a much better set of data, actually. That was it for the Innoko and not much better for other areas. We had the Selawik aerial surveys, and Pete Shepherd's studies, mostly from when he was working as a temporary.

Jim: Yes that's right. The aerial stuff really paid off for the National Interest Lands Act for waterfowl.

Cal: They were clearly the most important set of data that any one of the agencies had. We had a long stretch of pretty good information. At that time, there was a tendency to count everything you saw, whether it was a moose or a bear or birds.

Jim: It has evolved a little bit. Patuxent wanted ducks, period.

Cal: Yes. Like Hank Hansen started out counting other things, and while he might not report the other things to Patuxent, they were still available on the forms at the Juneau office. Actually, I don't know when the formal reporting at Patuxent started out. It must have started out in the early 1950's with Hank. I don't know whether or not Scott reported his transact data to Patuxent or not.

Jim: I think so, starting in about 1950-51. In 1949, Dave Spencer did some aerial surveys and that was the first look at birds from the air in Alaska on the Yukon Delta.

Cal: Is there any current record of that data?

Jim: Yes, there is a report of Dave's. He did some interesting things. He started out in a variety of patterns doing parallel transects. He had them east-west and north-south and ultimately, I think it became apparent that you needed to have a transect that covered as many varieties, like you would fly across river drainage's rather than parallel to them and that gave you a better sample. Pete Nelson put together a report that went to Patuxent in those years until Hank started doing it. It was a conglomerate thing.

Cal: I think I have seen some of the early reports. They weren't where you could analyze the transect data and compare it with what you got now. It wasn't laid out on a map where you could use it, even if you could take some of that early work and look at it for eider and some of the goose populations in the 1940's. Even by the time I got to the Yukon Delta in the 1960's, the changes might have been impressive.

Jim: Then Hank came and he started flying some of these things that Scott and other people had laid out. Dave Spencer had laid out some of them on the Alaska Peninsula and perhaps the Delta. Hank flew those for a few years and then in 1964, you went over all Hank's transects with him. You added some and dropped some for oversampling and under sampling.

Cal: Some of the areas, there would be as many transects on the Tetlin as there were on the Yukon Flats. You would grossly over and under sample areas.

Jim: You straightened that out?

Cal: Oh yes, I still remember being on the floor because we didn't have a decent table to do the work on. By the time that Hank flew, he had those belt recorders which he used. When I flew with Scott, we flew with a tablet on your lap and I was recording for both Scott and myself. I'm not sure how good our data was. You had to learn how to identify. Even when I got experience as an observer, the first day or two of flying, I would do a lot of flying off transects every year to get in the habit again of doing it.

In the early 1950's, 1952-53, we flew some transects on the Yukon Flats, mostly over my study areas. We attempted to compare my ground plot data with aerial survey data. I would do the ground surveys and get an idea of populations from the ground and then Scott and I would fly. We would fly both directions over the same transects.

Jim: I know Chuck Evans came on the scene.

Cal: Chuck Evans came on for the Rampart project and flew all the transects on that. We flew very tight transects. They were about every 10 miles apart. We flew a lot more. We put tape on the wing struts so you could know how far you were supposed to set.

Jim: Chuck Evans had been a proponent of using a 16^{th} of a mile rather than an 8^{th} because you get better identification.

Cal: I'm sure you do and going out an 8^{th} of a mile, you are going to miss a lot of birds on the outer edge of your transects. We used basically 4 mile transects divided up into 2 and 4 mile legs so you could locate where the birds were a little bit more handily. The old transects, every 16 miles you had a center on it. We ended up being able to put some reasonable contour lines around concentration areas when you had that close of transects in that short of transect route.

Jim: I think you are still using the stratification that was designed on the boundary, aren't you.

Cal: I stratified the Yukon Flats into two areas largely because the lakes in the low stratum based on the number of lakes you saw. I couldn't sample the low-density stratus ground well enough to get any reasonable samples. What we did was stratify it and I did all my groundwork in the high-density area and developed an air/ground comparison that we could expand to the lower density area. The airplane actually flew over the whole Flats. That was an interesting project and I still have the project outline for that, which amounted to about two pages and a budget of $10,000. I suspect that if you would run

that same project now you would have to look at $400,000-$500,000. I would have 4-5 people working for me all summer long and hours and hours of airplane time, both Fish and Wildlife Service and airplane charter time. Every day we would go out with a charter. That would really be an expensive project now. Then it was relatively cheap.

Jim: It was a landmark thing, all right. I think both the format of that kind of analysis of habitat relates to why the survey program is still in the distribution of transects.

Cal: The results from the Yukon Flats were never published. I got a report about 3/4th done. When I moved off that project, I moved onto the Refuge and I was totally busy so in my spare time I got it part done.

Jim: When are you going to finish it?

Cal: Probably never. All the tabular data is there and the plots, etc. You could recap any data and everything that I did. I suspect through the years, 100-200 copies of that has been copied and used as a point for other studies.

Jim: Those kind of things that you were involved in, a lot of them had repercussions that are continuing. There are echoes that go on today and will in the future. There were a lot of neat things that you were involved in.

Cal: You sort of wonder about the refuge system today, how well we did with the National Interest Lands when we picked up 52 million acres. Mostly those refuges were selected on the basis of the very limited ground studies, most extensively probably on the Yukon Flats. Our aerial survey data was from all the waterfowl habitats. We could really draw some pretty good lines of what would make the refuge. Togiak Refuge and Cape Newenham Refuge was based on a few flights you made down there. It was pretty good justification for selecting all the areas we had. It didn't take a whole lot to get some pretty good data.

Jim: We had these ground projects under the aerial data that even though, as you say, they didn't get published.

Cal: Pete was working Selawik. He had Sig Olson on the Yukon Delta. The early work there is still important. Pete's swan work on the Copper Delta did get published with Hank Hansen. That was very good. Ave Thayer also worked in the Selawik area in 1951. By hiring one college student and then hiring one local Native as an assistant who knew the country because the maps weren't good enough, we covered lots of territory. We got a lot of good information fairly inexpensively. We hit most parts of the state. The Yukon Flats, Minto, Yukon Delta were covered that way.

Jim: It was really important to have a baseline under the aerial stuff. It was hard work, lots of mosquitoes. The new tents and the new repellents are just a couple of the advantages nowadays, to say nothing of the new airplanes and the new boats and motors. The inflatable boats really brought a change in the dimension of things.

Cal: I have the pictures of the banding on the Yukon Flats that Chuck Yokum took. I just got them the other day.

Jim: The Rampart project was wonderful.

Cal: That was really the first major waterfowl study in Alaska where they had more manpower on it. We could really coordinate air and ground and had enough crew on the ground to do it. As part of that study, through the years, we had 20 plots of 4 square miles each; a total of 80 square miles. We censused every lake in that area and then hit a lot of adjacent lakes which didn't go into the main database but I have data on it. I think altogether, there were something like 800 lakes and ponds that we did three times a summer. That was a lot of ground to cover. It also led me astray when I got to the Yukon Delta. That sampling system was so successful on the Yukon Flats that when I got to the Yukon Delta and before I had seen anything on the ground, I laid out a bunch of study area on the map; 4 square mile study areas. The first one we did was inland,

from the mouth of Ox Slough. We started out working on it and it was pretty obvious very quickly that was biting off more than you could chew on the Yukon Delta. It would take all summer to do one plot. We actually did one square mile sample there but before I finished a plot size, we would be down to 80 acres. That worked out fairly well.

Everybody that ran into Garvin had stories. Probably the best one on the Yukon Flats – we were just getting started in canoes and the first few days the people going out with me were doing transects. This one lake that we were on, there was a lot of grass around the edges and you had to force your canoe into it hard enough where you could get out of the canoe because the grass was growing in almost five feet of water. I got to shore and Garvin was following me, just about a canoe length behind. When I got out, I was in ankle deep water. He assumed he was in shallow water too, so he stepped out and he ended up to his neck!

In that same short period, we went to one of the areas south of Stevens Village, an area we always called the loony-beaver lake. This is a big lake all full of loons and beaver but now many waterfowl. It was sort of a tough plot to do, so since Garvin was fairly green, I let him do about a third of the plot that was fairly easy to do and I did all the rest. I told him that I wouldn't be back until about 9:00 o'clock at night and he should be finished by mid-afternoon. I got back at 9:00 o'clock and Garvin wasn't there and obviously hadn't been in camp. I waited around for half-hour and finally decided that I had better hunt for him. I started out and I could see where he had taken his canoe in and out of the water so I was tracking him down. It got too dark and I had to quit. As soon as it got daylight, I started out again and I finally found him at

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about 5:00 o'clock in the morning. He had figured out where he was and he was actually on his way back to camp. He had been up all night and was tired so he got behind me

quite a ways. The portage on the last lake where we were camped was fairly long but it was open country so you could see each other. About half way across, there was a nice patch of blueberries. When I went by, I scooped up a few blueberries to munch on and Garvin had seen that so when he got that far, he stopped and picked some berries and hollered at me and said, "these would be real good in pancakes!" I thought, "what the hell, somebody that has been up all night and wants to pick blueberries to put in his pancakes, I would go back and help him." We picked blueberries for awhile, enough for our pancakes.

The next year, I had Larry Bidley working for me on the same plot. He was a student from one of the colleges in Canada. If you were hunting for a lake, the thing to do was climb a tree. I think I climbed more trees in hip boots than just about anyone that I know. Larry was climbing a tree hunting for a lake and he had climbed this tree and coming down, he found a watch hanging in the tree. This was about 30 miles from the nearest town. The watch was still running. He brought it in and showed it to me and I said I knew just who it belonged to! It was Garvin's watch! You couldn't imagine finding a watch hanging in a tree in the middle of the Yukon Flats.

One other time, Garvin and Chuck Evans were on another plot north of Canvasback Lake. You had to walk in to get to the edge of the plot. It was a couple of miles to walk. It was a fairly good lake on the edge side and was an easy place to find. Once you got there, you didn't have so far to go to the plot so you didn't get lost too easily, I thought. I had Chuck Evans and Garvin do half the plot and I took the other half. I had finished my half and was sitting eating my lunch before I headed back to the airplane. I heard somebody shout in the woods. I couldn't imagine why anybody was shouting in the woods. There wasn't supposed to be anybody there. I finally thought that just possibly it could be Chuck and Garvin. I had my revolver along and I shot that a few times and pretty soon they just stumbled out of the woods.

What I had heard was Garvin up a tree trying to tell Chuck where they were or where they thought they were and then they heard me shooting so they came over to see me. They had never gotten out of their side of the plot at all so I sent them back toward the

airplane to wait there for me. I went to finish their side of the plot then went back to the plane and they weren't there.

There was bunch of ground squirrels on the ground so I used them to fire my revolver a few more times. They eventually stumbled out of the woods. They had been lost again! We still had about 1-1/2 miles to walk to the plane. One of them thought I was going too far left and one of them thought I was going too far right. Before they got there, I had taken a compass shot on the sun and I knew just where the sun was in relationship to the way we traveled so I just took off through the woods. There was no trail or anything, and they were both certain that I was going wrong. All I wanted to do was hit the north shore of the lake which was about a mile wide or longer. I had a pretty big target. I wasn't much concerned. When I finally came out of the woods on Canvasback Lake, I was within 20 yards of the airplane. I didn't let on that that was a matter of luck!

Jim: For the recorder, you should explain that these all night adventures were going on under the mid-night sun.

Cal: Yes, in fact, often if it got too hot during the day, we would end up shifting hours and work at night instead. The nights were full of light. The birds seem to be more active during the night than during the day. When we worked out in the Village of Fort Yukon, the Indian population was basically muskrat hunters. In the spring the muskrats were out during the night so they would hunt all night long and then finally go bed and not be up until noon. The whole Village would shift in the summertime. You hardly saw any activity in Fort Yukon before noon.

One year on July 3rd, we decided we needed a 4th of July celebration and there had been nothing planned. We were sitting in the cabin with a bunch of local people at mid-night when we decided we needed a party with sack races, wheelbarrow races, grease pulls and all that. We started passing the word through town that anybody with something to donate for a prize we would be starting at 1:00 o'clock the next day. It was a good time had by all.

One of the interesting things – I had pretty well cleaned out the Fish and Wildlife warehouses of stuff we would never use again. There was a Baptist Church there at the time and they had cloths they were giving to people except people didn't want to get them free. We started out with an auction, trying to get enough money for some prizes. One of the old Indian ladies scrounged through the box of cloths and decided that was a gold mine for her grandchildren and bought the box for a decent cheap price. Since the Church was just giving them away, she went up and got a bunch more boxes and sold them. She was distributing the cloths – they weren't ready to take charity but they were ready to buy them – for a bargain. They had enough pride that they didn't want to accept them as charity.

Jim: It sounds really fun, rambling around in the woods and climbing trees, 4th of July in Fort Yukon, etc., but there were some really good reports and publications that came out of what you were doing there. I know you started out going back to Patuxent and using an adding machine and a yellow pad, but the equipment for analyzing data has changed quite a bit.

Cal: At Patuxent, we had probably at that time, the state of the art, calculator in our shop. We also had a couple of Freedons(?) and you could do some pretty good statistics on those, far better than a slide rule or with a pencil and paper. I got used to using those at Patuxent and then when I moved from Patuxent to the Yukon Delta, we didn't have an adding machine or anything anymore.

After a couple of years of telling the Regional Office that I needed something better than paper and pencil and a slide rule, they finally sent me an old broken down Marchan(?) – one of the first ones that I think was ever made and I worked on that for several days and wrote out an instruction manual as I gradually learned it. The secretary that we had, Joy _____, eventually got a job some other place in town where they had an old Marchan too but they had the instruction book. My instructions were better than the ones that came with the machine. We finally got a Freedon for the refuge and that was a pretty good machine. It was not nearly on par with the cheapest computer that you can get now.

Actually you can get a hand held calculator now for $20.00 that is more powerful than the Freedon or the Marchan.

Jim: That is quite a switch in technology for analyzing things.

Cal: On the Yukon Flats was the first time I really had availability of aerial photos to get around with. The first years there, I depended entirely on them. The maps were very, very poor. They didn't have the current quads and they had some preliminary quadrangle maps which weren't very good. What I really depended on was hiring an Indian that knew the country well enough so that he could get me around. In 1954, they had black and white photos published and I could find my way around with those photos as good as any Indian could. It was amazing the difference those photos made. I have a picture of Arthur James, the Indian who was working for me in 1953. He claimed that they were running patrols for the airplanes and surveying benchmark spots and they were using a _____ license on the Yukon Flats. They would have to build a tower about 100 feet tall by the different benchmarks. The Indian had climbed to the top of the tower to see the country.

The military had a ground support crew at Fort Yukon and they were using radar to track the airplanes with and to get precise locations of the airplanes. The sergeant in charge arranged the schedule so other people could do the work so he came out and worked with me for about 10 days. One time he was working with the Indian and I was working alone that day and I shot a bunch of ground squirrels with my pistol. I think I shot six of them, subsistence hunting. I got back to camp before they did so I skinned out three of them and fried them up real nice in batter and I cooked them just like an Indian man would cook them. Basically, I gutted them out up to the diaphragm – actually first you burned the hair off and scrapped it then you gutted them up to the diaphragm and then threw them into a pot, head, tail, feet and all, and boiled them. When they came back into camp I had dinner ready and I popped one each on their plate and Richard allowed that he wasn't very hungry. He said he wasn't feeling very good when he saw the ground squirrel on his plate. I let him "stew" awhile and I said "that was too bad because I shot a

couple of grouse too." Then I hauled out the ground squirrels that I had fixed nicely and his state of health greatly improved quickly. When he was about half done I told him that it was a strange grouse, all the meat was along the backbone. He realized that it was just a ground squirrel but they were very good eating, actually.

Jim: The Yukon Flats are really exciting Cal, but how about some Nunivak Island musk ox stories?

Cal: When I worked on the Yukon Flats, the Indians that I worked with tended to be, in a sense, on an equal par. If you asked them questions, they would tell you what to do or at least what they thought should be done. I found that when I got to Nunivak, most of the Eskimo's there were very reluctant to tell a white person what they should do.

An example of that was when we were out censusing musk ox and at that time they didn't have snow machines. They used something called a snow plane, which was a ski rig that used a pusher prop (an old airplane engine). It was starting to get dark and we had a long way to go to the place where we were going to camp and if we quit censusing and went to that we would have to come back the next day to where we had left off and we were going to run short of gas. I knew there was some alternative to that but didn't know enough about camping in the winter in the middle of the tundra. I tried to ask the Eskimo's that were working for me what we should do. They wouldn't say. Richard Davis was one of them. He ended up working for me later on a permanent basis. After haggling around for awhile, they just weren't about to tell me what we should do because that was telling a white man what to do. The white man was supposed to tell them what to do. That's the way the whole operation had been run with the reindeer for years. The Bureau of Indian Affairs had told the Indians what to do.

Finally I phrased my question to them, "if you were here alone, what would you do?" They were even reluctant to speak. I finally got under Richard's skin and he said, "if I was here alone, I would dig a hole in the snow and stay right here over night." I said, " we have a big tarp – is it big enough to dig a hole for the three of us?" He said, "yes."

Then I told them that's what we would do. That is the first time that I ever camped in a hole in the snow and it worked great. We did that many, many times later. It finally dawned on them that basically that when I hired them, I hired them for their "know-how" and that I respected their "know-how."

A few years later when we began the transplants, I thought I had really gone full circle and that they had picked up on what they were supposed to do because I made three of them "field bosses" of the musk ox catching crews. I told them what I was going to do and that basically I was going to ensure the safety of the animals and how many animals we needed and who should go where but when it came to catching a musk ox it was their baby. We had a Fish and Game biologist along and he started trying to give orders when they were in the field and they told him that I had told them they were the boss in the field and they sent him back to Mekoryuk. I thought that was the best thing that I had heard! That was major progress in the 3-4 years. Their whole attitude had changed. Now sometimes I think I changed it too far!

Jim: You had a nice story about when the Department of Interior folks came out to talk about Native reserves, etc.

Cal: That would have been the Land Use Planning Commission before the National Interest Lands Act. The Joint Federal/State Land Use Planning Commission was holding hearings all over the State to determine what local people thought should be in refuges or how the land should be protected. They were out at Nunivak and we met in Nunivak, Goodnews Bay, and Hooper Bay. Gordy Watson was at the meetings. He was the Regional Director at the time. Joe Josephson was head of the planning commission, Celia Hunter was on the commission.

At Nunivak, the meeting went on and on and on. Particularly in those days, even yet to a certain extent, they will bring all the gripes up that they have had for the last 40 years with no reference to the time scale. They were griping about putting reindeer on the Island and putting musk ox on the Island. I offered once to take them off knowing that

they wouldn't let me. This meeting was all going on tape for the Land Use Planning Commission. At intermission one of the mayors, George King, came up while I was talking to Josephson and Gordy and Celia and commented "that in front of all these people, don't pay any attention, this is for politics that it is going on to the tape recorder." Then another Eskimo came up and said, "I heard you are leaving Bethel." I said, "no." He said, "good, we couldn't get along without you!" They were, in a very sophisticated way, getting all their gripes on tape but protecting my butt by letting the Commission know what the situation was.

We then went to Goodnews Bay for a meeting. Cape Newenham had already been set up as a refuge, but we were talking about expanding it to the Togiak in a much larger area than the original Cape Newenham. The Goodnews people wanted to know why we wanted all this extra land around the refuge because it wasn't very good as compared to the bays and the areas where all the birds were. I responded to that with all the mining that had been along the Salmon River, which was completely polluted with the tailings, even though it was one of the better mining operations in the State, that basically the salmon run was gone. I asked them why Salmon River was called Salmon River and they said, "there used to be lots of salmon there before mining." I said, "that's why we want all the rivers going into the Bay so that they will never be screwed up again. Before we left there, there were some exploratory mining in Goodnews Bay at the time. They wanted to know if they could include Goodnews Bay in the refuge! That was the hot issue then. That was a major resource to them, that Bay there.

Jim: Well, that was a nice story. You really get the feeling when you get involved that way. I think the same thing happened last spring when we were back at Bethel that those people really want to work at solving problems and not at bickering.

Cal: Actually, I thought that the information technicians there and the survey technicians were a really good bunch. They have young guys, very smart, familiar with computers, analysis, and they have a really good grasp of the statistics they surveyed. They had some older men which would probably be classified as elders which

contributed in a totally different way. I thought the combination of people they have working for them was outstanding and all very dedicated to what they are doing.

Jim: It was an entirely different sort of gathering in that it was their meeting rather than like you described the Nunivak one where they were speaking to the recording. There they were working on problems and it was impressive.

Cal: I sat through the whole meeting and didn't go out at all, for a whole week.

Jim: This was in Bethel last spring when Cal and I went back to talk to Cynthia Wentworth's subsistence people. I haven't heard much repercussion from that but it seemed like we got along very nicely with them. They appreciated us being there and I wish I had more pictures from back then.

Cal: I think that if I go out there again, I will probably lay out more pictures, especially of the Yukon Flats for them to see. I have quite a few of banding work. The first summer I was basically alone with an Indian. I got to know Arthur James so I hired him in 1953. The spring before, Les _____ and I went out to see if we could collect some muskrats from hunters. They were interested primarily in getting sex and age ratios from the pelts and they also wanted to collect intestinal tracks for _____ classification. We had a square stern canoe that we rented from Ed Tucson(?). Les and I started exploring where we might find guys that were camped out. There was still ice flowing in the river. We went out to a place called "Six-Mile Lake" above Fort Yukon and then came down on the outside of the Island. We were going merrily along when we realized we were running up against an ice jam. We had to turn around and go back around the Island the other way.

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We got home quite safely that night and the next day we launched out down river. The river was at flood stage and it didn't look anything like it does at low water. Going down river, we went a lot further than we thought we were in very short order. We finally parked on a sand bar trying to figure out where in the world we were and we were quite lost. We couldn't figure out where we were. We heard a motor across the river on the top bank of the Yukon and finally saw a boat there, just stationary or going very slowly. We yelled at them and headed over to them as fast as we could.

We found this Indian fellow, who was Arthur James and his family camped out there hunting muskrats. He could figure out where we were with the map. We were about 30 miles down river and there was no way of getting back with the gas that we had. He was out checking the mouth of the slough that he was living on to see if the ice was going enough for him to get back to Fort Yukon. He decided there was still too much ice in the river for him. We stayed with them for a couple of days and got to know them quite well. We went back to Fort Yukon with them. He towed our canoe. He had a 33 foot riverboat and about a 10 horsepower motor. It was a very slow trip but he absolutely knew all the water, where it was slow going and where it was fast going and sometimes crossing the river where you could buck the current better. He was very good on the river and he got us back to Fort Yukon.

The next year I wanted to hire a Native to work for me and Arthur was the logical choice. He worked for me all summer. Fairly early in the summer he got peeved. I think we were working too hard and the food wasn't what he wanted. He said he was going to quit. We discussed his salary as it was probably better pay than any Native in Fort Yukon. I finally told him that he was quitting because he couldn't keep up with me. That made him mad. He wouldn't have quit for anything them. He was going to show that white guy! He kept me on a jog trot all the rest of the summer. We didn't have any decent maps so when he took off through the woods with a canoe on his back, I knew I had better keep up. We had a whale of a summer. We ended up really good friends.

Jim: When I started going through Fort Yukon every summer doing the bird surveys, he would come around quite often. He always wanted to know, "where's Cal."

Cal: I still have a pair of beaded moose skin moccasins that his wife made me. I have a pair of Fort Yukon dancing boots that his girl friend made him but he didn't dare keep them because his wife would object. He was having family problems at the time. I also have a very fine pair of Native made snowshoes that Jimmy made me that summer. He made them the following winter and I paid for them in the summer and I told other people that I had paid for them already before I got the snowshoes. They thought I was going to lose my $50 bucks. They are museum quality work. You couldn't buy them at any price anymore. I have two pair of them. I am trying to get in touch with Skip Braden to find out for sure which village they came from. They may be more valuable than I think. I am in the process of donating some of my collections either to the Anchorage Museum or the University of Alaska.

Jim: Cal, you had a lot of really good times working in the remote areas of Alaska and all your number of publications really testifies to the quality of the work that was going on but how did you get into all this. Is this something that you dreamed of as a kid, to come to Alaska and chase musk ox and ducks. What brought you here?

Cal: Actually, it was just a matter of luck, being at the right place at the right time. I like to hunt and trap which I did as a kid. Before then in the Army I was a medic in World War II, and then I started school at McAlister College. We had to write a theme on what our vocation was going to be. Our English prof told us about this vocational file in the library. I went over to the library to find out what a doctor would do and I found this deal on wildlife. That sounded a lot more fun than being a doctor so that is what I wrote my theme on. I'd never even known there was that profession before.

They mentioned the University of Minnesota as a school where they taught wildlife management. I went over and talked to the prof there, Bill Marshall, who was very good and got my bachelor's degree there. As students still do, if you can't get a job after your

bachelor's, you go back to school again. I had a part time job working for the State of Minnesota in the wintertime but it wasn't getting me anyplace. I was taking a few more classes at Minnesota then I decided that I either had to work or go back to school. I finally decided I should go back to school. I wrote Oregon and Utah. I wanted to go west.

The previous summer I had been at a biological station at the University and taking a few classes there. That put me at loose ends for the end of the summer. You couldn't get a job so John Carlson and I volunteered to spend the six weeks after the summer session up at Mud Lake Refuge, which is now Agassiz Refuge, working for the refuge. The refuge manager was Robely Hunt at that time. They provided a place to stay and vegetables out of the garden for us. That fall was the first year they ever had a deer hunt on Agassiz and the Fish and Wildlife Biologist Larry Krepping(?) stationed in St. Paul, was trying to study the deer taken in the hunt, getting food habits, weights, and measurements, etc. Some of them were mammoth white tails coming out of there. Since John and I had worked in the summertime for free they hired us for 10 days. We played hooky from school and went out and worked on that.

After that, I told Larry, the biologist, we were working for on that project, that I was thinking of going back to school and probably wanted to go west and that I had applied at Utah and Oregon. He said, "why don't you go to the University of Alaska?" I said, "I never heard of it." I was thinking of Alaska in the old time mining days yet. He said his good friend was Unit Leader there. That happened to be Neil Osley(?) He said he would write a letter for me. I met the Unit Leaders of all three of the schools at the North American Wildlife Conference in Milwaukee that year. I could get into any one of the schools but I had read enough Jack London and James Oliver Kerwood stories that I decided that Alaska was for me. I never regretted that decision.

Jim: Now you retired after a long career with the Fish and Wildlife Service but unlike many who head for the tropics after a career in Alaska, you are making your home here.

Would you like to comment about some of the activities you have done as a retiree. I know you have been active with the Wildlife Refuge Association.

Cal: That is partly why I stayed in Alaska. Wildlife is a profession and everything was given to me and it is the main thing that I have always been interested in. It has been both a hobby and a profession at the same time. Before I retired, I was thinking a little about moving out of the state where I have relatives but I thought that if I moved out, I would really be retired and I would have nothing really to keep me busy so I stayed up here. The first few years I did a lot of volunteer work for the Fish and Wildlife Service, the main difference was I just quit getting paid! I worked on the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. I probably put in as many hours that year as most people on the payroll did.

At the time I retired, partly because the National Wildlife Refuge Association wanted a representative up here and their former representative didn't want to stick around, I took on that job which I still have. It is an unpaid position, a volunteer. I have been in that position for over 10 years now. I got on the board of the Prince William Sound Science Center shortly after the spill. That was sort of the same condition. I think they had a budget of somewhere around $200,000 at that time for all the work they were trying to do. They really couldn't afford to pay someone's way to Cordova. That was sort of the condition when I went on the board that I would pay my way down there. I still pay my own way to the refuge association meetings. They have better uses for their money than I have. Between the volunteer work for the Service and the Refuge Association and working with the Prince William Sound Science Center, now I am trying to get some of my own notes and data put together. I keep pretty well occupied in the old profession.

Jim: That is wonderful. I know that you had a very close association with some other people that were really important to wildlife in Alaska. I wonder if you would make a few comments about John Buxely(?) Dave Spencer, Hank Hansen, and others who somewhat influenced the direction you were going and you influenced the direction they were going.

Cal: I think I mentioned earlier that I was exceedingly lucky in having really good temporaries working for me like Arthur James, the Indian, Richard Davis from Nunivak and Jay Eisenhart who helped me on the Yukon Flats. Then again on the Yukon Delta I had a lot of people working for me but I was also lucky in having some top-flight bosses. When I was working on the Rampart project, it was Hank Hansen. Good bosses provide you support but not too many directions and that's about the way it was from Hank. He gave you a TR book and a purchase order book and told you what the end product should be and you were on your own. They depended on you to do the job. Other temporaries were treated pretty much the same as I was.

When I finished that project, that was on a split assignment between the Patuxent Research Center, my boss in Alaska, Walt Krissy at the Patuxent Migratory Bird Population Station was also was a first rate boss. I announced when I took the job of the split assignment of the job at Patuxent and Yukon Flats that when the Yukon Flats project was finished, I wasn't going to spend full time at Putuxent, I was going to come back to Alaska.

Fortuitously, I quit the job on the refuge and became the flyway biologist just at the right time. Hank quit as flyway biologist, you (Jim) took his job and I took your job on the Yukon Delta. Dave Spencer then became my boss whose primary mode of operation was to give pretty well free reign to the employees and all the support they needed.

It was just one after another of people that I worked for. They were all really great to work for and they all became friends. John Buckley at the University, Hosely(?) was the one that gave me the fellowship that I could come here but by that time, John Buckley was the Unit Leader. He became not only a prof but a good friend which I still correspond with and that's almost 50 years ago. We are still friends. It is nice when you have a career that you have both subordinates and superiors that you think highly of.

Jim: We haven't gotten into your flying career which you took on, as I recall, reluctantly and then shined on with regard to navigation on the Yukon Delta.

Cal: Actually I learned to "fly" when I was in Maryland. I was getting in about 10-20 hours a winter. It took me about 3 years and 80 hours before I had my private pilots license. Then I came to Alaska for a job on the Yukon Delta and I still only had about 80 hours of flight time. Smitty checked me out in the 180 which was much more of an airplane than I had ever flown before. He pointed out for the time being I was flying I was flying on him. I didn't have an O.K. from the Washington Office for flying. We would fly pretty cautiously. Floats are an awful forgiving kind of fear, I think. I did a lot of landings and take-offs on the Yukon Delta. I didn't end up with a whole lot of flight hours because a lot of my flights were going from one river to another which would take several hours by boat but you could do it in 5 minutes in an airplane.

I could almost tell what kind of work I was doing, by how long my flight would be. The airplane was so essential for that kind of work on the Delta. We were hauling freight and Jerry Haut learned to fly when he was there. That meant that he could fly the airplane but then I would be on the Delta with no airplane so I ended up buying my own airplane. I used that mostly on official business. I made a few landings on wheels and each one got progressively worse. I was never adequately checked out on wheels. Floats were so much easier.

Jim: I had a nice visit with Bill Overway this summer. He now flies jets for ARCO. He was talking about when he was working for the Fish and Wildlife Service and one of his jobs was to check out the Fish and Wildlife pilots. One of the people he had to check out was you, Cal, and there was some concern in OAS that you didn't have much experience flying around Anchorage and didn't like to. Bill heard these concerns from some of the people in OAS so he came out to Bethel to see how you were doing. He said he concluded after several days of flying around that it didn't make any difference if you didn't want to fly in Anchorage, you knew how to fly on the Yukon Delta and that was what you needed.

Cal: When I was with Overway, I hardly made a power landing. He also checked me out in a 185. I found the transition to a bigger airplane each time a little difficult because they are harder to fly than a light airplane. I was perfectly comfortable flying on the Delta but coming into Anchorage through the mountains when you didn't know exactly where you were was not so good. Our radios weren't that good. I came into Anchorage one time and I could receive on VHF, send on HF but that makes it very difficult. Both of them were sort of garbled. I was trying to tell FAA that my water rudders were shot and actually I was using a parachute cord instead of wires to keep them on and that I was going to have to stay on step until I got into the Fish and Wildlife cove.

After I started final, I started rolling in the antennae and I thought I'm never going to have time for this so I just quit and landed with my antennae out. I got into the Fish and Wildlife Service cove and went up to the tower and apologized for what I had done because I wasn't sure they understood what was going on. I was so mad that I didn't turn in the antenna that I wrapped it around the cowling so they would get the message the next day! In the morning, I got out there early because they were going to work on the airplane. They had to put it on a ramp and put it on a dolly and bring it into the shop. They wanted to know if I wanted to taxi it around the dolly and I said, "I don't want to taxi that thing around the dolly, one of you guys can do it." It took a long time to get that airplane back because it didn't have any rudders at all.

Jim: I thought it was fun to hear from Overway. Check pilots worry about the people. They either say they are O.K. or they are not. He was a little worried like OAS was about your flying around Anchorage but then when he saw how you were doing in Bethel and out on the Delta, he wasn't worried anymore. Here you are so I guess the competence was appropriate.

Cal: Herman was the one with the reputation. He was a very, very good pilot but went right by the books. A very precision pilot, more like an instrument pilot would be. He had started checking me out in the 185 and I wasn't really getting anyplace with him so Bill Overway took me out and in one day I knew I had it. Herman sat there shouting at

me all the time. I was sort of fed up with that noise. Then he came out to the Delta in the spring one time to check me out. I suggested that he sit there and we fly out to the coast and back and just check out to see how I did things and I would tell him what I was doing. If he approved fine, and if he didn't approve that was fine too but at least he would know how I was going to fly the airplane out there.

On the way out, since it was the first time I had been up for awhile, I did some s-curves but then headed out to Chevak and then spotted a swan nest. I did a procedural turn so I could come back over the nest and then let down and count the eggs. Herman didn't say anything on the whole trip except, "very good, very good." I thought that was a first! Herman was a good pilot. I flew some musk ox surveys with him one time. Pilots tend to put what they see on their side of the airplane. I know I did. Herman would scan ahead and I was looking down. He would spot a herd of musk ox ahead and they would be on my side when we crossed over them, every time. He was very helpful in that respect on surveys.

Jim: Our tape is running out. Maybe we should do more at some other time. It is really fun.

Tape transcription by:

Mary E. Smith
4120 Dorothy Drive
Anchorage, AK 99504
907/333-0092