

## Ray Tremblay

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Oral History Interview  
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Interviewed by: Jim King

Jim: I'm sitting here in Ray's front room looking out at the glorious fog bank over the City of Anchorage. Ray and I have been trying to avoid getting too tied up in stories over lunch so that we could get them on this tape. We both started working for the Fish and Wildlife Service about the same time in the early 1950's. We have shared a lot of experiences together. We have a lot of good memories. I was wondering, Ray, if you had some thoughts about Clarence Rhode. We really had strong feelings and admiration for Rhode. He was one of the reasons why we stayed with Fish and Wildlife.

Ray: Yes, I agree. I had a lot of admiration for Clarence. I think if you start somewhere – we both worked for Ray Woolford, who to me, was the greatest boss I ever had anywhere, anytime and in any job. Ray was a product of Clarence Rhode. Clarence hired him during the War years, so through Woolford we probably got to know Clarence a little bit better than maybe some of the other people in the Fish and Wildlife Service.

When Clarence came to Fairbanks, he would always spend most of his time with Ray and the enforcement guys. Clarence was an enforcement agent. That is how he got started and consequently, I think he kind of had an affinity for the enforcement guys. He worked with us better and he seemed to take more interest in what we were doing in the enforcement division. I can remember how frustrated some of these biologists used to get down in Juneau when we would have our meetings before the Game Commission Meeting. All the biologists would come in with the work they had done over the year and they would present their papers, present their findings and then of course, Clarence would take that

to the Commission and that is what they would use to promulgate the next year's regulations. After they were finished making their presentations, Clarence would turn to the enforcement agents and asked what we thought; did we agree or disagree. I remember Sig Olson got so frustrated one year he just threw his papers up in the air and walked out of the room and wondered why in the world he was doing this.

Clarence was also really the founder of the Fish and Wildlife Service aircraft section. He hired Theron Smith and they started with absolutely nothing. They obtained government equipment, government airplanes and started the Fish and Wildlife Aircraft Division. This, I'm sure, is because of Clarence's love of flying. He could see where an airplane was the future for the Fish and Wildlife Service. That was the only way we were going to get our jobs done. Consequently, I have a lot of memories of flying with Clarence.

One time he came to McGrath and he had the Twin Beach. He loved that airplane. He had brought something to McGrath when I was stationed there. I went back with him to Anchorage to pick up the airplane I was flying for the service at that time. It was kind of a murky day flying over the Alaska Range and we went on instruments. He didn't file a flight plan. He did this occasionally. One time he was ferrying an airplane from Canada and he went up on top and they called him down and they were going to arrest him. They were going to take his airplane away from him because he hadn't filed a flight plan. Back then, there wasn't that much traffic and he hadn't filed a flight plan. He looked over at me and he said, "you know, if I ever catch you doing this, I'm going to take your airplane away from you."

Clarence loved to fly. I guess I got to know him better in McGrath. He used to come in and out of there. We used to monitor his flights with the radio in the office. We kept the radio on all night and whenever he was flitting around the country, he would call in his RON's and where he was to McGrath.

We used to get a moose while we were on duty. We were putting in about 80-90 hours a week. We were bachelors and we were working all the time. Then there were the family guys and with the salaries we were getting in those days, Clarence just expected us to stop once in awhile, during the season, and pick up an animal that we could use to help us through the winter. He promoted that and in fact he helped us move the moose once in awhile. He was the kind of guy you liked to work for. You had respect for him. He was a leader and when he told you to do something or whenever he wanted something done, you did it and never really thought too much about it because you trusted his judgement.

Jim: Yes, some of the things that I remember about him was one time we were out having dinner with him in Fairbanks. It seemed like whenever he flew in, a whole bunch of us would join him in the restaurant. I remember him commenting about how many people he knew in Fairbanks but he never had time to go and visit them. He did seem to have time spend with his employees. We would get acquainted with him that way. Then he had this uncanny knowledge of the country and the people. I think he read all the case reports as they came to Juneau. When we would see him, he would always talk about the cases that we had been making and the people that we had been in contact with which was really remarkable for a Regional Director to do. I don't think they have that same kind of contact now with the troops.

Ray: He had a fantastic memory. We would be standing around the office in Fairbanks and he would say he had to call somebody in Washington and he would pick up the phone and would just dial the number. Then there would be someone else he needed to call and he, again, would just pick up the phone and do it. He never looked at his notebook. He always had these telephone numbers right on the top of his head. It just never ceased to amaze me on how he could remember those things.

He loved flying so much, that he used to take leave in the summertime and would fly a Grumman Goose for Alaska Coastal Airways. He would take two weeks off and serve as the Captain for them.

Jim: I remember the time we were sent up to close all the fish wheels on the Yukon with a week end closure that was mandatory under the new commercial regulations. We stopped every fish wheel in the villages. Clarence got a real cranky letter about us. I think it was from Father Beau(Baud??DGC revisions 2001) in Nulato. He never called but he sent a copy of the letter that he wrote to this priest defending us. He was so supportive of us, how could you ever let someone like that down!

Ray: Yes, closing those fish wheels was a bad one. That is when nobody knew really what happened to the fish going up the Yukon River except that everybody fished them. Then the commercial fisheries decided they had to do something to save the run. They decided to close all the fishing on the entire Yukon River from the mouth to the Canadian Border from 6:00 Saturday evening until 6:00 Monday morning. You and I had to go up and down the River and talk to all these Village folks and tell them that they were going to have to shut their fish wheels down and take nets out of the water. We were really popular!!!

The other day at the pilot's meeting I mentioned that one of the things I remember very vividly was that we had blasters and pushers. The blasters were the guys that were the pilots and the pushers were the ones that had to get out and push the tail around when we had trouble steering while taxiing in the snow and on the ice.

Clarence was a great "uniform" guy. He put us all in uniforms. We had the Filson-type jacket with the Fish and Wildlife Service patch on it. At that time Clarence was so aircraft oriented that he wanted all his pilots to have a set of wings on our lapel to identify us as pilots. Then Sig Olson decided, since he had been pushing us around for quite a while, that he wanted a pair of crossed

snowshoes on the sleeves of the pushers. Then in addition to that, he wanted a hash mark for every time they got run over by the tail. We never did get the wings, as I recall.

I know that when Clarence was lost, all of us that were on that search for such a long period of time felt a real concern that we couldn't find him. It was one thing to know that he, his son and Stan Fredrickson had perished and we hoped they ended their life suddenly. The fear I had was finding where they had been crippled and they had left and we would find them where they had suffered. That really gnawed on me the whole time we were on that search. It was a very personal search as well as a search looking for the Regional Director.

Jim: It was a traumatic event in all of our lives.

Ray: I think I was the first one to go up because I was familiar with the country. That happened to be a period of time when there was something going on, sunspots or something, and our good radio network wasn't working. There hadn't been any radio contact with them for several days. When he didn't show up on the night that he was supposed to, they felt that he was just weathered in somewhere. They asked me to fly up there and retrace his route starting at Porcupine Lake. That was the beginning and the thing just went on and on all through that fall and clear into the next summer. The aircraft was found 20 years later.

Jim: Clarence had this dream of everybody flying and being able to jump in and out of whatever airplanes that were around and it was really Smitty that pretty much made it work.

Ray: Oh, yes, Smitty was born in Alaska and raised in the Palmer area and eventually learned to fly. He went into the Service, became a B-17 pilot, was stationed in England and flew several missions from there. After returning to Alaska he came back and decided to go into the flying business. I believe, he bought a

twin Cessna, one of those old bamboo bombers and then got hired by Ray Peterson. He flew for Ray Peterson out of Bethel; a flying service which became Northern Consolidated. He and his wife Maran lived in Bethel. He was the station manager and the only pilot. That was the "Northern Consolidated" in Bethel at that time. That would have been in the late 1940's. Clarence knew Theron, somehow, not sure the connection but he asked Theron if he would start up this aircraft division that he had envisioned. He had this idea of what he wanted and what he needed was somebody to make it work. He picked Theron Smith and he couldn't have picked a better guy. Theron grabbed hold of that and if you talk to Theron about the early days, they had nothing, just a bunch of old airplanes, a Mono Coupe, etc.

The Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, had been given that little plot of land on Lake Hood and there was nothing there. All the radios, equipment and everything they accumulated was through the conniving of Clarence with the government. That is one thing he did well. He knew how to work the government and get all the stuff but Smitty was the guy that made it happen. Smith was "Mr. Fish and Wildlife Service Aircraft Section." He was the one that put that whole thing together; built that first hangar and really, if you talk to Theron, they did it with practically nothing. You couldn't do today some of the things they did then for many reasons. Back in those days, they didn't have the restrictions that are in place today. All they needed was just fortitude and hard work which is how they built the aircraft section.

I flew a lot with Theron and I got to know a lot about his stories - this has nothing to do with Fish and Wildlife – but it kind of tells about the early days of flying in Alaska. He was flying out of Bethel and there was a lot of competition. There were a lot of guys who had their own aircraft and back then, right after the War, flying was just kind of beginning to become an important link in transportation. Before that, everybody walked. All of a sudden this airplane thing is something new and it got them to their destination in a day where before it would take them weeks. Theron said, "you know, we would get these guys that would want to go

to Anchorage, say from Bethel, and what we would do is get as many as we could and fly them about half way, land on a lake and tell them that they had to spend some time there since he would have to go back and get more gas or something.” He said, “you would gather as many as you could and hide them on different lakes so the other competitors wouldn’t find them. If they did, then they would pick them up and take them the rest of the way and collect the money.” He said, “you know, the people in those days, never thought anything about being left on a lake. They lived in the woods and for them to set up a camp and wait for 2-3 days meant nothing. In this day and age, you could never do that. Nobody ever knew where these people were except you. You were the pilot, you dropped them off and then when you had time, you would go and pick them up and ferry them the rest of the way and they would pay you off.” He said that was just the way they operated.

Theron had this great knowledge of Alaska and also a tremendous ability as a pilot and that attitude that there just wasn’t anything that couldn’t be done. There was never a “we can’t, we don’t have the money,” it was “we are going to do it somehow.” So Clarence was the one that kept coming up with a few dollars here and there. He would take dollars out of some other programs. That is another reason some of the other biologists would get so upset because he would snipe some of that money out of their budget and put it into his aircraft section to keep it going.

If you recall, Theron was the greatest conniver for getting money. He was always coming up and asking for money. He had no money to run his program. He was dependent on everybody else. That’s where Clarence would come to his rescue and what Clarence came up with, is what Theron used to run the division. That was probably one of the best-organized flight organizations in Alaska. The other thing, Theron knew many of the operators of the other airlines like Northern Consolidated, and Wein.Airlines. He had contacts and would take advantage of that. We could go to one of the operators in outlying areas if we needed a part.

They would give us the part or they would maybe fix the airplane for us if we had a small mechanical problem that needed attention.

The other thing that I remember about Theron is the patience that he had. He would work and work. He and I went to Tok in a Pacer. It had a mag problem. We flew to Glenallen in one of the other aircraft and when we got there, it was 40 degrees below zero! We took that whole cowling off, all those screws, took the mag off, put this mag on, got it all set up, put the cowling back on again, started it and it didn't work. We repeated this process three times at 40 below zero weather! I'm of the old school, if it doesn't work the first time, the hell with it! Theron wasn't that way. He had the patience of Job. He worked and worked on that until he made it go. That's how he made that whole organization work. He just didn't know the words "it can't be done." If he didn't have the part, he could make the part. He had such good rapport with other folks and we reaped the harvest of that. These people were very willing to help us. Sometimes they didn't like us very well for what we were doing but we could always get our airplanes fixed or get a part that we needed.

Jim: That was really neat; the respect that Smith's operation had. I think as a person learning to fly really under Smitty's direction, that was another area where he was really both patient and superlative. I had, like everybody, various instructors over the years that I got flight training but Smitty was head and shoulders above any of them. He had none of this trying to trip people up and get them confused. He didn't need to do that. He could tell what the attitude and the ability of his pilots were without badgering them.

Ray: As you recall, we used to have to take a check ride once a year. Usually, we would have to have our check ride from Theron. Some of the time, it would be Tom Wardleigh but most of the time it was from Theron. We all liked taking a check ride from him because you would learn so much. His lack of promptness would drive you nuts because you would have an appointment set up for 8:00 a.m., and you might not get out flying until about 11:00, 12:00, or 1:00 o'clock in



the afternoon. He was the type of a guy that when he was working on a project, that took priority over everything else. Everyone else had to wait until he was finished. You would wait and wait and wait and finally go out flying. The beautiful part of it was once you got him out there, he was all yours. He dedicated everything to your check ride and picking up on things that would help you. He was a great instructor. You just had to wait for him. He was so dedicated as an instructor, once you had him he devoted every minute to making sure that he could enhance your flying ability.

When we flew sea otter counts and the walrus counts with the DC-3, he really tried my patience. Theron was a night person. He was not a morning person. He used to absolutely drive me nuts getting started in the mornings by 8:00. We would have about 12 hours of transects to fly. I used to bunk with him and in the mornings, I just would spend all my time trying to get him up and awake. I even went to the point of actually picking him up and sitting him on the side of the bed and say, "now Theron, are you awake." He would say, "yes, yes, Ray I'm awake." I would turn around to go do something else and he would be right back in the sack again. Once he got going, then watch out, it didn't matter what time you quit at night. It could be midnight or later. It didn't matter. He would fly forever, but getting him going in the morning was another matter.

Jim: In the little briefings that he would give us – we would come in there to pick up an airplane and he would want to know where we were headed and what we were going to do. He would just quietly bring up a few things that he thought we ought to know, like field conditions, radio things or whatever it was. He always had time to do that even if it was after 5:00 in the evening or Saturday morning or whenever it was.

Ray: Whether he had the time or not, he always took the time. Terry, his son might be waiting for him or his wife might be waiting for him. He sure loved his pilots and he sure took care of us. If I go back and think of all the people that I flew with and the different instructors that I had, he was the epitome to me of

what an instructor should be and was. I probably learned more from Smith than I learned from anybody else I ever flew with and I flew with a lot of people.

After I left the Fish and Wildlife Service, I became aircraft supervisor for the Department of Public Safety. That was the State Troopers and Fish and Wildlife Protection Officers with the State. One of the things that I did was try to put together that aircraft section under the guidelines that Smith had for the Fish and Wildlife Service. He was my mentor. He was the guy that not only taught me a lot about flying but I also used his flight operation as a model for mine.

Jim: Tell a little more about the State aircraft section that you managed for awhile.

Ray: I decided that it was time to retire from the Fish and Wildlife Service and I kind of wanted to continue on with my flying so I went over to the State, Department of Public Safety. Buck Stuart was the aircraft supervisor there and I asked him if I could get a job flying as a temporary pilot in the summer time. I wanted to fly a Grumman Goose for him. He said, "no, I won't do that, but I'm going to retire, so why don't you take over my job." At that time, the job description for the aircraft supervisor required that you have an enforcement background, a pilot background, mechanical background, and also you had to have the qualifications to become a certified police officer for the State. Fortunately, I did have those credentials.

I retired on a Friday, and went to work for the State the following Monday. It was a whole new challenge for me but we had pilots from State Troopers, and Fish and Wildlife Protection Officers. Ron Skoog was the Commissioner for State Fish and Game. He was concerned because they had so many pilots flying their personal aircraft on state business without any kind of an aircraft program. So through some kind of a joint agreement, ended up with all the Fish and Game pilots too which meant that we would give check rides not only to all of our pilots

but Fish and Game pilots. That's when I got the authority to hire another chief pilot to help with the check rides.

I patterned that program pretty much from the Fish and Wildlife Service and it was a good program. We had a good flight department at that time. I spent five years there and enjoyed it tremendously. The State had Grumman's, Cessna's, Cubs, a Beaver, and other types of aircraft. We were flying a lot of prisoners. It was toward the end of the pipeline and we were ferrying prisoners to the Court system. We were involved in State Police work, especially responding to emergencies in the outlying areas. Sport fishing, Hunting Patrols as well as enforcement of the Commercial Fisheries. Dave Henley was my pilot out of Kodiak. That's when the State was enforcing all of the 3-mile limit and crab fisheries. We had a lot of things going on. It was a big department.

Jim: Were you bringing on younger pilots?

Ray: Yes, we were. We had a set of standards for State Troopers or Fish and Wildlife Protection Officers with 200 flight hours, and start training them. There was a schedule that would train them to an introductory level pilot. Our manual allowed them to land only on established runways. There were certain things they could and couldn't do. For instance, they couldn't fly low-level surveys. As they further developed their flying skills we would give them additional training, additional check rides and then keep working them up to where they could land off airports and eventually become what we called a full-fledged trooper pilot. They would usually have about 700-800 hours by that time.

We had a definite stepped-up program where they started with very limited skills and work them up to full-fledged pilot/officers. It took a lot of training but worked out quite well.

I had been working for the Federal government and as you recall, all the policies, and all the hurdles that we used to have to go through with the final decisions being made in Washington D.C. When I finally went to work for the State, I

thought this was going to be great! The administrative officer was right here in Anchorage, etc. I used to go before the Senate Finance Committee in Juneau and present my budget. Then I found out it was just the same old stuff that we had to put up with the Federal government. It was no different except they could just keep closer tabs on you and how you spent your money. But, it was a good five years.

I would like to go back to Theron again. We went through a period there where everybody had to have an instrument rating. Well, I had gotten my instrument rating before that. I remember I learned so much about instrument flying from Theron because he took it one step further. He said, "you don't just use the instrument charts. If you are going into a place that you are not familiar with, have a VFR chart as well as your IFR chart; look what the terrain is, look where the mountains are, if you have an emergency, which way are you going to turn because sometimes the turn that you are making is not the proper turn in accordance to where the mountains are." I learned from him so much about instrument flying as well as VFR flying.

In talking about Theron's patience, we went to Amchitka. They had that bomb test there in 1968. We flew a DC-3 for the project and had several biologist and scientific-types to do the study. What we were suppose to do after they punched the bomb was to fly around Amchitka Island and make a count of the sea otters. This had been accomplished a few years before and they thought maybe we could make a similar count and see if there was any difference in the population. We took off, it was in November and the weather was absolutely terrible. It was just one storm system moving in after another.

Our first stop was Cold Bay and then we were going to go all the way to Adak. This particular DC-3 only had about an 8-hour range. We felt that if we went to Adak made an approach and missed, we wouldn't be able to get back to Cold Bay. We decided that we would stop at Unimak. We had permission from

Reeve Air to get fuel at their fuel dump. We landed and taxied up to the pump. There were just a couple of caretakers living at the facility at the time.

One of the guys came out and started the pumps. I got up on the wing and couldn't get any fuel out of the hose. We tried and tried. The guy didn't know what was going on. Theron went inside the pump well. You should have seen the inside of that place. It was a maze of valves and pipes and I don't know what all. I think some mad scientist got in there and put this thing together. It had filters all over the place. Theron, very patiently, went through the whole system, figured out how it worked and traced the system all the way through and we still couldn't get fuel to come out of the hose. Theron had a way of hunching up his shoulders when he got upset which was the only sign that I could ever see that something was getting to him. He finally walked out in this 60-knot winds, climbed the ladder up to this tank and looked in and the damn tank was empty! So now what do we do?

The guys said they had a couple of trucks and sometimes they transferred the fuel from the trucks to the tanks. So now we wait while they move one truck. Well, the truck wouldn't start. Theron had to go over and get the truck started, pump the fuel into the tank and sure enough, finally, we get fuel. We topped off our two reserve tanks. Then we drained the tanks to make sure we didn't have any water. We drained the fuel into styrofoam white cups, you should have seen what we got. There were cobwebs, all sorts of garbage! We knew we had a bunch of contaminated fuel.

We decided that what we would do is climb out on top and then switch to the reserve tanks. We would fly on them and if we had a problem, we could always shift to the main tanks, hoping we could get back someplace. We punched out and got up on top and we switched into the reserve tanks. Immediately both engines started sputtering and coughing and dying. We went back to the main tanks and then got on the radio only to find out the weather had fallen down behind us at Unimak. Cold Bay was down and Adak was marginal. We decided that the only thing that we could do was to go to Adak and take our chances.

We didn't have much in the way of navigational aids in this airplane. We're headed for Adak, which was a military operation at that time. They had gates; a 100-mile gate, then an 80-mile gate, etc. You would have to report over these so they could fit you in to the system because there were all kinds of military airplanes going in and out. This Amchitka thing was big and Adak was the main base for gas supply.

So when we got there, we didn't have all this sophisticated gear. The tops of the mountains were sticking up above the overcast and we were identifying the different mountains as we went along with VFR charts and we were using them to identify the gates, which we were guessing at. It worked. We made a GCA approach. This is where they talk you down. You just do everything that the controller tells you to do. You are flying and he controlling your descent, he tells you what your air speed is, your heading, etc. We were about 35 degrees off the runway heading and this really bothered me. This guy kept telling us we were right on, keep on coming and when we finally broke out, we had crabbed about 35-40 degrees into the wind and there is the run way out my left window. This guy brought us right down to the runway just perfect. We ended up there on the fuel in the main tanks and then we were stuck for two days while they purged the tanks. They had to take all the fuel out that we had pumped at Unimak, clean the tanks and refill them with good fuel before we could go to Amchitka. Then we get to Amchitka, it was blowing 80-90 knots. We sat there for 10 days, never did fly, so we turned around and came back home. One of my great experiences with Theron.

Jim: I guess that was one of the trips that made him think more about building a Grumman that he could operate out there in the Aleutians.

Ray: At the time, we were doing walrus surveys and these surveys required about 40-50 hours of flying. They were flown between the coast of Alaska and the coast of Russia. It required 8-10 hours of flying a day and the problem was,

you would get out there and commit yourself and a lot of times, the weather was bad someplace and you would have trouble getting back in for fuel. Whatever airplane you used, the co-pilot would have to get out of the right seat so one biologist could sit there, the other biologist would stand behind the captain and they would be doing their count this way. For this length of time, it got to be pretty grueling for everyone.

Theron envisioned and did build an airplane with a 4-pilot cockpit. That was the Super Grumman. The pilot and the co-pilot would fly the airplane and the two biologists would sit right behind them. They could see ahead and out the side and make their counts. Also, by having extra fuel on board and with a 12-hour range, you could always duck into a cove, land and beach the airplane if the weather got bad. You wouldn't have to worry about getting to an airport that had an instrument approach for get fuel when you got caught out. That's when he came up with the idea to build that airplane.

We talked about what he envisioned was the ultimate biological aircraft for doing all the overwater surveys. You get out in the Bering Sea area and it gets pretty lonesome! You're flying along at 300 feet above the water or above the ice looking at walrus. You start thinking about your gas supply and what you are going to do and you start listening and all the different airports are down because of weather. We practiced an approach or two at Nome in case we had to make a landing there. We had that approach down quite well. I remember Karl Kenyon just screaming "we don't have money for you to be practicing out there, you practice on your own time!"

Jim: I always felt Karl Kenyon had something to do with that Grumman development as well. That is neat that Terry, Theron's son, now is part owner of that Grumman and is using it some. He was talking about bidding on some surveys for the Service again.

Ray: I know Theron is excited knowing his son owns part of that airplane.

Jim: We got a lot of help flying around the country in those days from Wien, then the FAA had maintenance people around who could be helpful. You were mentioning earlier about the time we got a landing gear welded up in Unalakleet.

Ray: We were in Koyokuk and the weather was cold, like 40 below zero and we had to go to Unalakleet for some reason. It was clear weather, just cold. We taxied out in a Pacer. There wasn't much of a hole to look through for taking off because there wasn't enough heat being generated to melt the frost off the inside of the windshield. We were taking off on the river and the ice was rough as it usually was. As we made our take off run, we heard a crack and decided that it didn't sound too good but we certainly weren't going to land back in Koyokuk where there was nothing to work with. We flew to Unalakleet and landed very gingerly and sure enough, we had a cracked axle. We went to the FAA and they welded that axle for us and we went on our merry way.

Jim: That was neat to be able to find people that would take the time to do that sort of thing.

Ray: When I went to work for the State, I had the chief mechanic, Ken Daniels. He was a big guy that knew everybody. He did things for anyone that wanted help. He was a great mechanic and he knew everybody in the industry. Consequently, whenever we needed a part, he could go across Lake Hood, or someplace else and get it and then we would order it and replace it at a later time. This kept the airplanes flying because he knew so many people.

Just about the time I retired, the State got into an area where they were quite concerned that we didn't have enough of a paper trail of all of our parts and they just shut that down completely. They wouldn't let us do that anymore. We lost the ability to keep our airplanes flying just because we couldn't take advantage of this situation.



Jim: That is sort of the way it was at all the big airports. Everybody was helping each other.

Ray: You had to. As I mentioned earlier, I used to go down to Juneau and present my budget to the Finance Committee. After a couple of years, we got a new Commissioner. He did away with that. Then what they had was somebody from one of the other departments that would study everybody's program and then they would do the presentation. Unfortunately these people didn't know anything about airplanes so I would have to spend hours and hours with them trying to explain why we needed this money and what it was going to do for us so they could present the program to the Senate Finance Committee. This was an absolute stupid way of doing things. The Committee would ask questions and they would have to run to the phone and call me. That was the way business was being conducted. Every year I would have to train a new "bean counter" and get them to understand our program.

I always had in my budget overhauls for three 985 engines. These were the big round Pratt & Whitney's. We used them in the Grumman's and we also had a couple of Beavers that had the same engine in them. If we busted an engine, or had a change, we would have one on hand. It would take nine months to a year to send an engine outside and get it overhauled and shipped back again. The commissioner wanted to know why we had this particular money in the budget for these 985's. I explained to him that if we an airplane to go down at Cold Bay and bust an engine, we can take one right out of the shop, fly it down there, put it on and it would be back in service. Otherwise, you take that engine, send it for repair, and that airplane is down for a year. He said, "wow, yes, that makes sense to me." He said, "well, why don't you just carry a spare engine with you in the airplane all the time." This was the kind of mentality that you were fighting all the time to keep the planes operating.

The ultimate thing that happened was when Red Dodge had a Grumman Goose which they were going to fly to the States. Then they were going to take it apart

and fly it to Hawaii. They had a TV program that they were putting together over there and it was called "The Tales of the Golden Monkey" or something like that.

This was the Goose they were going to use. Emit Soldin, who was retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service, was fixing the airplane, getting it ready to go down.

He came over to me and he said, "look, Ray, we need a set of brakes for this airplane. We don't have any and what I would like to do is borrow a set from you and we will fly this thing to Seattle. We'll take the brakes off and get them over to Garrett and ship them back." I said, "sure, we have three extra sets." I told the chief mechanic to go ahead and let Emit borrow them. They put the brakes on and would you believe that airplane went down off of Yakutat. They lost both engines.

--end of Side A, Tape 1—

(120 minute tape)

--start of Side B, Tape 1—

So this is not a state airplane, it is Red Dodge's Grumman Goose, going to Seattle with my set of brakes. They had landed at Yakutat to fuel, took off, and they were flying right across the Gulf, why I don't know but they were. Both engines quit and they went into the Gulf. It was a stormy day. They were out there bobbing around in this Grumman. As I recall the story, the helicopter went out there after them. They were sitting on the wings and as the helicopter picked them up and started flying away, the Grumman went to the bottom. It was just that close. Now, there are my of brakes at the bottom of the Gulf of Alaska. Emit came in and he said, "you know, we have a problem."

Come inventory time, we had one heck of a time explaining that. As a matter of fact, we never did get that thing squared away. It looked for a while that I was going to have to pay for a set of Grumman brakes. I don't know what they cost at the time but they were pretty expensive. I talked like a "Dutch uncle" and finally got them to agree that maybe it wasn't such a dastardly thing to do after all. It was after that, unfortunately we got into a real paper trail and everything was put

on computer and helping each other out can't be done anymore. That was the end of my lend/lease program with the State.

You recall the time when you and I were sealing beaver and we were going from Fairbanks down to Koyukuk. We didn't have much snow that year and when we got out to the airplane and got ready to go, we had forgotten snowshoes. We remembered that we didn't need them on the last trip so we weren't going to go all the way back to the office just to get snowshoes for this trip. We decided to leave without, big mistake!. This was in March, long days, and our departure day was absolutely beautiful. I was flying along and you were just sitting there dozing a little in the sun and I remarked that "you, know, if somebody killed an illegal moose right now, we would be able to see them from 20 miles away." You nodded and said, "yes, there's a moose kill right there." Sure enough, there were two guys with a moose down.

We looked around and the only place we could land was a quarter of a mile away. They were beaver trappers and they had a camp with a tent set up and they were out about a mile from their tent. We knew we had to land and get to them or get to the tent before they took their dog team and left. I landed on a lake or muskeg and the airplane immediately sunk right down to the wings. We knew we had to hurry so we split – you going one way toward the kill and I'm going the other way toward the tent in chest high snow with no shoe shoes. I finally got to the tent and there was a guy standing in the clearing. I told him who we were and what the problem was. His partners had an illegal moose. A short time later, the other trappers came back to the tent. I asked them where you were. They told me they were going to go back and get you. They hooked up the dogs and went out and brought you in.

There we were in an 8x10 tent. There were three trappers and the two of us. We had arrested them for killing an illegal moose and yet we were dependent on them for the night and here we all are in this little tent. They cooked their dinner and we sat there around the stove. We didn't have any sleeping bags. When

they were finished eating, which wasn't much, a little rice and some biscuits, they gave us a biscuit each. They flaked out in their sleeping bags and you and I stayed wrapped around that stove all night long, feeding the fire. It was about 30 degrees below zero.

The next day, we said, "well look, you killed a moose so what we are going to do is make a deal. We're going to have to depend on you to snow shoe out a runway for us so we can get out of here – now this is separate from the moose deal, because what we will do is meet you back in Tanana in the spring and take care of the problem. Meanwhile, we would like for you to snow shoe out a runway for us and for that we will drop you some supplies or whatever you want. We will pay for that by bringing you some food or whatever." They agreed. They didn't have any food and they were going to eat that moose to survive. Not only was it an illegal moose, it was a sick moose. The hunters said the moose looked like it had laid down to die.

Sure enough, they snow shoed out a runway for us and after a bunch of starts and getting up on top of the snow we finally were able to get out. Before we left, we asked them what they needed or wanted the most. Guess what they wanted more than anything – cigarettes! We flew back to Fairbanks, got a good nights sleep and the next day, we got some cartons of cigarettes and a bunch of food together and flew over them and dropped it to them. Then later on in the spring we met them in Tanana and took care of the moose violation.

Jim: For 20 years, I flew those duck transects and there was one of the transects that ended right near that place so every year I would be reminded of that story. I would point it out to whoever might be with me that year.

Four or five years after this, I went to a dog musher's banquet after the dog races in Fairbanks. They had these long tables and you sat facing somebody on the other side. There was this guy across from me. I didn't recognize him at first but he seemed to know me. Pretty soon, we got to comparing notes and it turned

out he was one of those guys that we spent the night with. We had a good laugh over that.

That brings up something that I wanted to hear some of your thoughts about. We really had good relations with the people up there along the rivers, particularly the trappers, in spite of the fact that we were pinching them now and then and getting them fined. That was a good example. We were able to do something for them that they appreciated and still hopefully impressed upon them the need to not kill cow moose in the spring. There were opportunities so many times to do things for people. I know we helped lots of people who were having problems or lost or something.

Ray: First of all, it was so different in those days. We never carried side arms like today. Protection Officers carry side arms, hand cuffs, the works. I think the thing was we respected the people and they respected us in return. They knew what they were doing and they knew if they got caught we would take them to a U.S. Commissioner. Most of them held no grudges. If we caught them fair and square, they would go before the Commissioner and take their dues. But in return, we did a lot for the people. One of the things that I appreciate more than anything else to this day, is the fact that I can go to any of those villages where we did our enforcement work and people are still happy to see me and they greet me and they keep saying, "boy, things aren't like the old days, you guys used to treat us good, you used to help us out." I remember ferrying lots of sick people to the hospital. We were in a government airplane and we took care of people.

I think the thing was we kept trying to impress upon them was that if they took moose during a closed season, it wasn't good for the moose. The closed season was the calving time and that was when they should be left alone. We were more like referees, making sure that everybody got their share. We weren't picking on individuals, we were just trying to make sure that everybody was able to harvest but at the same time, making sure they were harvesting at the time

when they weren't hurting the resource. I think they respected us for that. We always had good times in the villages; we didn't have problems there.

Jim: I think enforcing the seasons in the fall was good. We would be around before the trapping season started and the people would know that we were around so somebody else wasn't trying to get out to their trap line and do some high grading before they got a chance. That then saved them from going out on thin ice. They could wait a day or so before the season when the ice was good and not feel that somebody else might be sneaking in. It was sort of the same thing in the spring. They could come in when the season was over and not feel that somebody might go take a few more beavers out of the holes.

Ray: We were fair with them. When we went before the Commissioner we would tell it like it was and what happened, fair and square. The Commissioners respected that. We never had any trouble with the U.S. Commissioners. They would go right along with us because we were trying to be both fair to the people and trying to protect the resource. That was our job. I always felt good that we were able to go into these villages and not feel like we were their enemy.

Jim: For years, after I got to doing the waterfowl job, I didn't have any more to do with law enforcement. People would come up to me and say, "you know, we don't see any game wardens anymore." They seemed disappointed!

Ray: They probably were. They didn't have the rapport. We had rapport with the people. We had those meetings every February with the Game Commission. The regulations were promulgated and formed and then they were sent in to Washington for approval. You look at the current day events going on – the meetings that are going on with the game board, the fish board, the commercial fish board – all these boards and they meet for weeks on end. What we used to do was go to the villages and say, "hey, look here are the regulations, are you happy with them or what would you like to see." If they had a reasonable approach, for example, the season was too early and they would like to see it a little later when the weather was cooler so they could better keep their meat, etc.

We would try and find a way to accommodate them, we did. We would take their recommendations and take them down to Juneau with their concerns.

In Fairbanks, we used to have one meeting with the public on regulations. It lasted one evening. We would get upset if it went to 1:00 in the morning. Now the meetings go on for weeks! It has become very complicated. I think the fact that we would go to the people in the villages and talk to them and ask their advice and then we would assure them that if there was any way we could accommodate them we would, but we also had a certain frame work to adhere to. I think they appreciated that.

Jim: I think so. We knew people in all those villages. They knew who we were. Now the game wardens, the fish and game protection officers, don't have anything to do with setting the regulations. They just get the same book that everybody else does and they can't explain why the regs are the way they are.

Ray: After Statehood, the fish and game protection officers were part of the Department of Fish and Game. Then at some point, Governor Egan got very upset with the situation so he took them out of Fish and Game and he put them into the Department of Public Safety where they became Troopers. That had its good points and its bad points. When they were enforcement agents under the Department of Fish and Game, they were on the low end of the totem pole and they didn't feel they got their fair share of the money to operate as enforcement agents. But at the same time, they had a rapport with the biologists. They were part of the regulatory process. They went to the meetings and when a proposal would come up for a regulation, they would turn to the enforcement folks and ask if this is going to work and are you going to be able to enforce this reg. They would respond with yes we can or no we can't and why. When they got put into the Department of Public Safety, that dialog was cut right off.

Now they are police officers and while on the one hand it was good because they are part of an enforcement agency, they get a good budget. The problem is they

don't have anything to do with the regulatory process. They don't have any rapport with Fish and Game. They just get the regulations that are handed down. They sit there and they read them, word for word and that is what they enforce. They enforce the letter of the law. They don't have any idea what the background is. They are not really able to make any judgement decisions in the field, which I think we were able to do. If a law was particularly lousy and somebody got picked up, they had a family, we might not take the meat, etc., but today, they can't do that, they must enforce the letter of the law. Consequently, we have lost that ability of the two agencies to work together. We lost a lot.

That's why, right now, you go into the villages and all they talk about are the police. They not only enforce the game regulations, they are State Troopers. They are involved in investigating rapes, whatever, so as a result they are cops, period. All the things and opportunities that we had are lost. That's too bad because the people have lost the continuity. They don't have any faith, and so now it is "them against us" and we are into strictly a cop situation. I would hate to be working right now. Everything I read in the papers on these subsistence issues, I thank God I am retired!

Jim: I think there is quite a separation between the Fish and Wildlife law enforcement and the biologists and refuge people where they don't work together very much.

Ray: We talked about that. That was a unique time, that time before Statehood. It was so different and we had such a good rapport among the different divisions. We always had our thoughts about biologists and they had their thoughts about the enforcement agents but there was respect for each other.

I remember Roger Allen. He was a pretty heavy-handed biologist and he didn't have much use for enforcement agents but if you recall, we were the ones that had the rapport with the public. We were the ones that the public associated with. They knew us because they saw us all the time. We used to do all this sampling for the biologists. Roger came up with this fish survey that he wanted



us to do when we checked a fishing license. It was kind of a pain to fill out one of these cards and ask all these questions every time we checked licenses, but we did it. That was our job. I remember talking to Roger about that and I said, "really, what are we doing this for." He said, "well I could explain it to you but you wouldn't understand." We had our differences, but at the same time biologists like Sig Olson and others and they would turn in violators when they were doing field work. We had that relationship and we respected each other. It was so unique; it can never be again. I was so thankful that I was part of that era. It was the very best time of all.

We can look back on how the beaver had gone down and when we had the beaver tagging program. We would go out and seal all the beaver skins in the villages and that would be another time that we would get together with the trappers. That would be when they were having their parties. We would go in there seal the beavers and talk to them. We could always show them how they had knocked down the populations to where there weren't many beaver. Now they have a limit of 10. They were required to trap them through the ice. They couldn't shoot them but they were now coming back by leaps and bounds. We would use examples like this to instill in them what conservation was all about. Their beaver were coming back, their moose were starting to move into places where there weren't any before.

Jim: The older people knew that. After the gold rush there had been this swarm of people all over the country shooting moose to feed their dogs, shooting beaver, breaking beaver dams in the spring so the beaver could be shot. I think it was Klingbiel and I who brought a bunch of trappers into Ed Callin's house in Kaltag. We brought the Commissioner down from Ruby and he fined them all. They had been trapping too close to beaver houses. I think they were fined \$50.00 each. Callin put it on the books in his store but none of them paid anything then he asked if his wife had made lunch. The Commissioner, Klingbiel and I had lunch with them. Art Johnson flew the mail in from Unalakleet in a Gull Wing. He showed up and he had lunch. As we were eating, a schoolteacher

came in and Ed Callin, who was always such a gentleman, very politely introduced us to this schoolteacher. The teacher was kind of red in the face to start with and he just erupted about the evilness of the government taking \$250.00 out of this village which didn't have any money to start with and he went on and on and on and he finally ran down. The rest of us were just sitting there. Ed Callin just quietly said, "yes, but before we had the game wardens, we didn't have any beaver." Art Johnson said, "yeah, that's right, we didn't have any beaver around here when I was a kid." The poor old school teacher had to excuse himself. There was a lot to that.

One year we were attending the dances at Dominique's and we had 4-5 guys in the dance there that were waiting to go to jail. We told them they could party for a few days but we were going to take them to jail when they got through.

Ray: Those times will never happen again. I think it gets back to one word and that word is "trust." They trusted us and we trusted them. Many times I would go out and pick up somebody for illegal trapping and tell them to come into the village in the spring so we could take care of the citation. They were always there waiting.

For me to be able to go into all these villages and see these people and talk to them and they still greet me as a friend - that to me is the best of everything.

As you also recall, Elsie, my wife was from Nulato. I remember when we were dating, they used to call her "Mrs. Game Warden."

Jim: Not too long ago I was talking with someone and they told me this tale of how game wardens used to take people to jail and leave their dogs out to starve and their families out in the bush. I said "you know those kind of stories, I know there are some of them around but they never happened. They have been dreamed up by somebody and now they get repeated enough that people think they are real but I'm sure that never happened."

Ray: Sam White, in the very early years as a game warden, always said they never did that. He probably had some pretty rough customers then. There was one situation where he had to shoot the dogs but he didn't leave them to starve. I can remember Don Stickman. He didn't like us very much. Dave Lanni and I got caught out there on the Novi river and we could not get into Ruby, we couldn't get anywhere. It was a freezing rain. We got stuck when we landed. We saw a tent and it happened to be Don Stickman's wife and they had a kid. I went up to the tent and told them that we were stuck and asked if we could just stay there for the night, and that we would be out first thing the next morning. She was very gracious about it and gave us some food and we slept there. The next day we were able to beat the ice off the airplane and we went into Ruby.

Don had left his wife out there and she didn't have any milk for the baby. We bought a couple of cases of milk, a bunch of food and flew all this out there to her. At first Don was livid when he found out about what had happened. Later when I ran into I told him we took about \$50.00 worth of food out and I thought that was pretty good payment for her putting us up, then he backed off. We always paid our way. We never went around taking advantage of anybody.

Jim: When we were goose banding up there on the Koyukuk, we stayed at Galena for awhile. We ran into Don Stickman. It was not too long before he died. He came over to us and wanted to talk. He wanted to make sure I remembered him.

Ray: Well, you know, everybody has their hang-ups. A lot of times it was the "in thing" to not like the game wardens.

Jim: Just this past winter, I came up with the last of the Game Commission reports which was in 1960 and in there is a letter to the Alaska Game Commission signed by Governor Egan. It was a letter of appreciation for having turned the wildlife resources over to the State in such good shape.

Ray: That is true. You talk to Jim Brooks or any of the earlier folks and as much as they hated the federal government, they all have to agree that when we turned that over to the State, the game populations were probably at their top peak. They have never been any better since then. We had a good predator program. Going back again to those days, we were able to do a lot of things then that can't be used now. We had a lot of tools available for us that they can't use now. In our predator control program we never had to apologize for going out and taking wolves and they can't do those things anymore.

Jim: They have forgotten why they wanted to get rid of wolves. There were reindeer, trappers, etc. and the wolves could really wreck a person's income.

Ray: They knew we were actively knocking down the wolf population in their area and they knew it was helping their livelihood. It worked well.

Jim: I was just attending an EXXON meeting and there was one of the guys talking about weather cycles and temperature cycles in the ocean. When the water gets warmer the salmon go down and when the water gets colder, the salmon survival in the ocean is better. All that period just before Statehood when the salmon were down, was one of these warm water cycles. It then cooled off just in time for the State to get a lot of credit for building it up again but it is just starting to go the other way now.

Ray: I think the reason the federal government got such a bad rap was when they separated Fish and Wildlife from the Commercial Fisheries and made it into two different bureaus. One of the reasons they were criticized was because of the fish traps and all the regulations were being handled out of Washington, D.C., all political. That was not within our purview, we had nothing to do with that.

Jim: People ask me every now and then what I think about the federal government taking over subsistence management and management on the

federal lands. I don't see that it makes any difference either way. The people that are managing the resources are coming out of the same schools. They are working for the federal government or the state and they are not going to let anything disappear.

We have covered quite a few of the things on my list. Another thing that is hard for me to get from people in these kinds of interviews is some of the hilarious things that happened. There were some, like when we threw Bob Scott's skulls out of the hangar.

Ray: One of the things that I like to tell on myself so much is because it is one of those things you can look back at and laugh. It was in the early 1950's. There was a science conference going on in Fairbanks. It was in the spring and there were some of the Canadian biologists attending like – Banfield – who was the caribou expert from Canada. It was also a time when Canada was missing a lot of their caribou. We knew that the 40-Mile herd went into Canada and the range extended both ways quite a bit and at the time we had a lot of caribou. They were calving up there on Beaver Creek on the other side of the White Mountains toward Fort Yukon. A trip was set up to take these three scientists up there and show them the calving grounds and show them what was going on up there and show them where their caribou were. Sig Olson was going to be the narrator and he was going to be the tour director and I was going to be the pilot.

They had just built International Airport; there were no hangars. They had just put a tower up. That's all that was there. We had our airplanes tied up right in front of the tower. As you recall, the Gull Wing Stinson had three seats in the back and had a fairly high nose attitude. It had one door so if there were people in there, you would have to kind of step on their feet to get up between the seats. The pilot's seat was on the left and the co-pilot was on the right. Sig and I had been flying together for quite a while and we sort of had a routine. He did things, I did things. I depended on him to untie his side of the airplane.

We got there and I was anxious to show these biologists a good flight and show our Canadian counterparts that we knew what we were doing. So we got them in the plane and I untied left wing and fired up the airplane. I thought they might like to hear the conversation with the tower. There was a speaker up above and I flipped the speaker on. After I warmed it up and ran the prop through a few times, I called the tower and said, "Fairbanks tower, this is Stinson 782, ready to taxi to the active runway." There was this pause and finally the voice came back and said, "well, 782, you are cleared for the active runway but I suggest you untie your wing first!" I looked over and sure enough the right wing was still tied solidly. So I had to shut the engine off, step on their feet, get out, untie the wing, go back up and start all over again. I thought "jeez these guys must think they are flying with a real winner." They never said anything; they were very gracious about it all.

This is one of those embarrassing moments that you swallow your pride and say "yeah."

Another time, I was going to take a group of congressmen on a flight out over Cook Inlet where all the big oil platforms were. People were all interested in what was going on. I was going to fly them out in the Grumman. The hanger crew gussied up this Grumman, polished it, cleaned the windows, vacuumed it and cleaned it thoroughly. The Director insisted that I had to be in my uniform. I had these leather soled Jodphur boots on and I was in the airplane when the caravan drove up with all these people, these congressmen and their wives. There were going to be about eight people going on this trip. I'm in the plane, folding the seat belts up to make them look nice on the seats.

If you recall, the Grumman has a set of steps that hang there. There are two steps that you use to get in and out. I walked to the back of the airplane and they all got out of the cars. As I got out of the plane, my foot slipped and it went in-between the steps of the airplane. The only way I could salvage that without breaking my leg was to fall forward on my face. There I am on my face and my

foot hung up in the steps. One of the congressmen had to remove the steps so I could get my leg out of there. I stood up and I said, "hi, I'm your pilot."

Later they were convinced that I wasn't always that clumsy, but it's those first impressions sometimes that get you.

Jim: One spring going out to Kotzebue, we were coerced into thinking we had to wear those brown uniforms. Before we got to Kotzebue we spotted some duck hunters. Some way or another, I got out of the plane to accost somebody and you taxied the plane around and I wound up out there a quarter of a mile away from the airplane. I started over and I went through a snowdrift and into a pond underneath it. I arrived back at the airplane, soaking wet. We got into Kotzebue and you looked at me and told me that you weren't going to go to the restaurant with any one that looked as sloppy as I did. That was the last time I ever wore a uniform!

When they had the retirement party for me in Juneau, Keith Schreiner, Regional Director, was in Juneau for something else, but he stayed for the retirement event. He came into the office that day and scolded me for not wearing my uniform, the day before I retired.

Ray: Uniforms were not really a favorite for most of us. It was O.K. for public relations and the fair grounds where we had a display and this type of stuff but out there in the working world, they really weren't that great. It was a good thing to wear them if you went on the military base.

When we were just becoming a State and Lt. Trafton, the trooper there in Fairbanks, wanted me to take one of his troopers out and introduce him in the villages. Nobody had ever seen one of these territorial policemen so he had me take Ray Hill. Ray was about 6'6" – a big guy in his uniform. The first place I landed was Nulato. It was in the spring of the year and the snow was wet and sticky. I knew that I had to get turned around if I was going to get out of there. I

was in the Gull Wing and it didn't have a steerable tail ski. I told Ray that he was going to have to get out and push the tail around while I taxied or else we would never get out of there. Ray is back there pushing on the tail, and when I made the turn, we got into some overflow and then I really had to push on the throttle, otherwise I was going to get stuck forever. I firewalled the plane and I finally got it up on the hard snow and I looked back and there was Ray. His tie is torn off and he is a complete disaster. Now, I have to take him up and introduce him to the villagers. The only remark they could make was "boy, he's a big one." That was the glorious entry of the territorial policemen into the village of Nulato.

Oh, there were some good times but times have changed.

Jim: One year, I took Trafton and Emery Chapel, two troopers, to McGrath. They got to talking about moose. You offered them your boat to go moose hunting for the day. Along the way, there had been some lifting and they both had a bad back and then they wanted me to take them moose hunting. We got your boat and took off up river and went around a couple of the bends and found an area where if there were any moose around, somebody else had already shot them. We walked around the woods for a little while and thankfully, we didn't see a moose. I always thought that was a weird approach to moose hunting.

Ray: We had a trapper that was missing when I was in McGrath. This old timer was up in the North Fork of the Kuskokwim and he used to come to McGrath a couple of times a year, in the spring and the fall. The spring, he always came down with his boat. He would get some seeds, his catalogs and his mail and go back up; then come back in the fall and then you wouldn't see him all winter. This particular spring, he never showed up and no one knew what happened to him except that he was missing. We flew up there and we searched all over and we couldn't find anything. We could see that he had the boat in the river and it looked like he was getting ready to go down to McGrath. We assumed that he had probably drowned. He was in his 80's. We looked all over and when we went back, a report was filed and that was that. That winter, one of the other



Natives trapped part of his trapline, since he was no longer there and low and behold, about a 100 yards from his cabin, they found his remains. Wolves had worked him over pretty well, there were some ribs, a skull and a few things.

I was deputized to go out there and pick up the remains and gather up what we could. When we got back and cleaned up the skull, it had a bullet hole in it. So we had to have a coroner's inquest. As a deputized U.S. Marshall, I had to present the findings of old Charlie Woods. We found a 22-pistol there with one shot out of it. The conclusion was that he probably had gone back and fell and broke his leg and rather than lay there and suffer, he ended his life by putting the bullet in him himself. That was the finding and to this day, who knows exactly what really happened. That was the best we could do.

That was just some of the other duties that we did. When I was in McGrath, I was the only enforcement agent in that whole area. We had a marshal when I first got there but he left. Gilsher was the marshal in Bethel and that was the only law there on the Kuskokwim. There were a couple of commissioners and whenever there was a problem, like murder, rape, or whatever, I would get a call from one of them. I would get deputized and we would go and do the investigation, remove the remains and do whatever else that needed to be done. There were no other enforcement people available. We played many roles, more than just Fish and Wildlife Service agents.

Jim: Well, Ray, this tape is about to click off and we have been doing this for two hours. That is a long time. This has been just great. It brings back a lot of memories. I think everybody that I know from the 50's period still talk about what a great time that was to be working for the Fish and Wildlife Service. It was a great time to be a part of it.

Ray: It was the best. It was the best of the Fish and Wildlife Service. The experiences could never happen again and we were part of it.

--end of Side B, Tape 1—  
--end of interview—

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