

KENNECOTT KIDS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH
INGER JENSEN RICCI
JUNE 21, 1990 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Interview Conducted By
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(tape 1, side 1)

The following is an interview with Inger Jensen Ricci in Anchorage, Alaska June 21, 1990. The interview is part of the Kennecott Kids Oral History Project. Inger was born and grew up in Kennecott and later came back to Kennecott as an adult to work for a short time shortly before the mine closed. The last time she lived in Kennecott was in 1938 and was on the last flight out. The interview is being conducted by Ann Kain, National Park Service, Alaska Regional Office.

Kain: Inger, what year did you move to Kennecott and what age were you?

Ricci: I was born there in 1918 at the hospital.

Kain: How long did you stay?

Ricci: I was there until 1932 and then I went to high school in Seattle for four years and Dad would come down and spend the winters with me and Mother would stay with me. And then I went back until - oh, I was up here about eight months and then went back to business college for a year and then came up and got married in Cordova in '38. And then they called up and needed someone for typing in the office in Kennecott. So they flew me up there in November and I was there through the day before Christmas, to type.

Kain: So you grew up there and then went out to school and came back and worked there?

Ricci: Yes, I was the only one that did. And we had always talked about this, cause we never expected the mine to close and we were all going to come back (?).

Kain: How did your parents end up at Kennecott?

Ricci: Well, from there they went to Cordova first and then they went to Kodiak. Being a carpenter, he never had any problem getting work.

Kain: Your father was the Master Carpenter?

Ricci: Yes, at Kennecott. And then they went to Kodiak and then to Seward where I was living after I left Cordova.

Kain: Where did they come to Kennecott from?

Ricci: From Denmark.

Kain: Straight from Denmark?

Ricci: Yes, um humm. Dad first and then Mother a few years later came over.

Kain: Was he involved as a carpenter at a mine in Denmark?

Ricci: No. He was - I figure he must have been about 21 when he came there [Northwest Coast of U.S.]. I'm trying to figure out (?).

Kain: Why did he decide to go there?

Ricci: Well, what he did, he ran away from home and I have no idea how old he was at the time. But he went on a Danish merchant ship and then he jumped ship in Seattle and came to Alaska (?). And I don't know what year it was but he had a picture of the first oil well, which is in Katalla in 1901. But then he also had pictures of when Mother and he got married in 1915 and they were pictures from Chilkat where we were going, close to Katalla, and it says honeymoon cabin, Chilkat. So, in between 1901 and '15, I have no idea if he was in Kennecott or Chilkat or Katalla or where.

Kain: He ran away and came over here, did he run away with your mother? Or did he go back and get her?

Ricci: No. He went back and courted her and then in 1915 she came over. And they were first cousins, which back in those days, in Europe at least, (?) they married (?).

Kain: And they went to Kennecott and there you began a long line of involvement in Kennecott.

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: You said you had left and gone out to school and come back and so forth. Did your parents remain in Kennecott the whole time you were out?

Ricci: No, Mother was with me and Dad came down in the winters.

Kain: When did he actually leave Kennecott and stop working?

Ricci: It was in the fall of '38. Because when they called me - I hadn't been married very long and I didn't want to go up then, but Mother had broken her arm and I was using that as my excuse. I had to stay with Mother, cause she was in Cordova then. So Dad says, no, I'll

quit and I'll come down there and take care of her and you go up, you go type. So that's when I came.

Kain: Then you were there until Kennecott closed?

Ricci: Yes, the day before Christmas. (?)

Kain: That must have been interesting.

Ricci: Yes, that was interesting.

Kain: When you were living in Cordova and you came up, you just came up on the train?

Ricci: No, that was winter. They flew me in.

Kain: The train wasn't running?

Ricci: Well no, it had shut down the eleventh of November. Which just happened to be my birthday, which I thought was kind of interesting.

Kain: Where did you live when you lived at Kennecott as a family?

Ricci: We lived up on the hill where the three houses are that they now call Silk Stocking Row. I had never heard that designation until recent years.

Kain: What did they call it then?

Ricci: The upper row, yes, houses on the hill.

Kain: I wondered about the Silk Stocking designation, when it was...

Ricci: Yes, I don't know when that came up.

Kain: I've seen it on maps.

Ricci: Yes, and you see it on the layout of the Great Alaska Kennecott Mine Company, the Silk Stocking (?). They must have been the ones to name it so they could designate where it was.

Kain: And of those three - none of those have indoor plumbing?

Ricci: No. No indoor plumbing. There was running water in those, but no plumbing.

Kain: And heat?

Ricci: We used the stoves.

Kain: So there was no heat in those houses either?

Ricci: No.

Kain: You had wood stoves for heating as well as for cooking?

Ricci: Right.

Kain: I believe there are sheds out behind those.

Ricci: Yes, and the outhouses were in the sheds. At least ours was. I don't know - I think that all three were, yes.

Kain: I think so. What was the bigger section of the shed for?

Ricci: Well, for storage or for wood.

Kain: What were some of your chores around the household?

Ricci: Oh, well, being such a tomboy, I wanted everything outdoors. I kind of helped dad with the wood a lot. You know, cutting all the wood for winter. Of course, Mother insisted that I do help in the house. I didn't like that part very much. I'd much rather be outdoors.

Kain: But you did help with the cooking and cleaning when that was required?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: You wanted to stick to outside chores. You were an only child?

Ricci: Yes. I had a brother who was a year older than I. And we went to Denmark when I was four and he contacted what I understand was tuberculosis of the throat. Now I'm not sure of that, but he passed away before we came back and we were only there three months. So it went very fast.

Kain: Yes. Those houses up there have two bedrooms, so you had your own room?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: Better than a lot of people had at Kennecott.

Ricci: Right, I know that.

Kain: All doubled up...

Ricci: We had a nice cozy little house.

Kain: Did you live in that house the whole time you were there?

Ricci: Yes, except the first year that I was born and that was in one that was down below, just above Shaw's, and it's almost falling down.

Kain: Down on the lower road past the mill?

Ricci: No, no, right - you know where Shaws are?

Kain: Oh, yes.

Ricci: And the first schoolhouse. Well, it was right up above that.

Kain: Okay.

Ricci: There were three houses and we had the middle one and it is just about down.

Kain: On the same level as the lodge.

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: You walk straight out from what is now the lodge?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: You had electricity?

Ricci: Yes, oh yes.

Kain: What about - your dad being a carpenter, what about improvements on the house?

Ricci: Well, we didn't have anymore improvements than anybody else. He built a lot of those.

Kain: He built a lot of the houses?

Ricci: Yes. And one of the things up there that we always think is different, he had drawers in the stairway going upstairs. And it was a closet underneath so that was quite, you know, quite the thing (?) storage. And all the drawers upstairs were in the walls.

Kain: Was it just your house that had the drawers in the stairs?

Ricci: No, all those three there. In fact, probably the other four did too.

Kain: So it was of his design?

Ricci: Yes, that was the last group of houses that he built.

Kain: When you bought food, did you get all of your food from the company store?

Ricci: Yes. And we used scrip. You came across that, I'm sure.

Kain: Scrip, yes.

Ricci: We didn't use money hardly at all. We'd take that scrip down to the butcher shop and to the store.

Kain: You didn't get any food out of Cordova or McCarthy?

Ricci: No. But I read in a couple of places that they got a lot of the fresh stuff from Long Lake. There was a fellow down there that raised horses and had a big garden.

Kain: What about clothing?

Ricci: They usually used Sears and Roebuck catalog. But they did have a little down there, but not that much. Sears and, you know, Monkey Ward. That was the big thing, when we got our catalogs.

Kain: Dreamed about it and...?

Ricci: Yes. That was a lot of fun.

Kain: Most of the families were able to live in the single family unit?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: There were several people that lived in the - what is now the lodge, they were of apartments?

Ricci: Yes, those were families too. That's where Eleanor Tjosevig lived.

Kain: Were you living up where you did because of - apparently not the size of your family, since you were one of the smaller ones - your father's level of work?

Ricci: I really don't think so. I think once those houses were built and this other little house was pretty small and he just put in and ask if he could get one of those.

Kain: So whenever it was available, your name basically went on a list and you were in need, you got the next available one?

Ricci: That's the way I think it was, because - now, I came up and got married in September and not knowing we were gonna close, we had already put in for the third house on there, and that was where we were going to live.

Kain: So it didn't have to do with your status on the work force?

Ricci: No, not at all, because my husband was just chasing buckets up there in the mill.

Kain: What about the furniture?

Ricci: You know, we talked about that and I think the places were furnished, but nobody can really remember if they were furnished. But they must have been. I can't see (?).

Kain: From the people I talked to, it seemed the furniture was there when they got there.

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: And it stayed there when they left.

Ricci: That's right.

Kain: They thought maybe they rented it.

Ricci: I don't know about that.

Kain: Or at least it was company owned and you just used it.

Ricci: Or it came with the house. The rent, that included it.

Kain: What about single people, single men and women? Where did they live?

Ricci: Well, they stay where they - like the doctors and the office workers and such, they lived in the staff house. But if they were just yard workers and so forth, why they lived in the bunkhouse.

Kain: But if you were a single female, you lived in the staff house?

Ricci: That's right.

Kain: On the floor strictly for females?

Ricci: Yes, the nurses and the teachers.

Kain: The clerical staff as well, the women typists and so forth?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: How about health? How were you? Were you healthy when you were growing up?

Ricci: No, not really. I had pneumonia and I was there - I found the bill when we were sorting papers - I was there for seventeen and a half days in the hospital and it cost \$58.

Kain: Fifty-eight dollars. So that answers my next question as to whether you had to pay for health care.

Ricci: Yes, someone said that they saw a list of their's that we paid \$2.50 a month for health care. Now, I wouldn't remember that but it's possible that we all did pay a certain amount for what (?). I don't know. And then when I was ten, I was still so sickly that we went to Seattle and had my tonsils out and they told them to take me to a warm climate and we were in California for three months. But when I came back I just didn't look like the same person, I had put on so much weight. I was so skinny up until the operation.

Kain: What about childhood diseases? Did you have any childhood diseases while you were there?

Ricci: No, we didn't get them up there because, you know, we were so secluded up there. But when we went back out then I had chicken pox and I had measles.

Kain: When you were older?

Ricci: Yes, when I went to Seattle.

Kain: What was the hospital staff? How many nurses and doctors?

Ricci: Oh, I'm not sure. There was never more than one doctor and maybe two to three nurses, I would think. I saw one picture in my book that had two nurses in it.

Kain: What about dental?

Ricci: Yes, we had a dentist. His office was in the same building as the private mess.

Kain: Was he there all the time?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: Did he bring his family or was it just him?

Ricci: Yes, he had a family. (?)

Kain: Do you remember any type of mine accident that happened or mill accident that happened?

Ricci: No, I don't. I probably wouldn't have noticed or heard that much about it.

Kain: Was the hospital pretty full, you know, on a daily basis?

Ricci: I have no idea, being just a kid.

Kain: Well, we understand that. You said you had to go Seattle to have your tonsils taken out, but you could have had them taken out there at Kennecott.

Ricci: Yes. Probably could have.

Kain: Why did your mom choose to take you out?

Ricci: Well, I don't really know why she did it, because Dad was (?).

Kain: Was that the only hospital in the area?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: No doctor in McCarthy or?

Ricci: Not in McCarthy. There was in Cordova.

Kain: In Cordova?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: Was there a hospital in Cordova?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: Kennecott Hospital - did it supply medical assistance to the outlying areas, not just company people?

Ricci: Yes-anyone in the area.

Kain: We were talking about childhood diseases and that kind of pushes me into the school subject. When you were in school, how many children were in your class?

Ricci: Well, there was probably 20 in the schoolhouse and there were three of us that started first grade and went - in seventh grade one of them left, but we got one more in eighth grade. As I remember, there were never more than three in a class at any time.

Kain: At any time?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: But 20 pretty much all the time?

Ricci: Yes, with the two rooms. One up to the sixth grade and - first to fifth and then sixth, seventh and eighth in the other. A big room and a little room.

Kain: So there must have been two teachers?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: Female teachers and were they single?

Ricci: Yes, at least for the moment. It didn't last too long if they were single, however.

Kain: The same thing with the nurses?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: Now, when they married, did they continue teaching?

Ricci: No, they weren't suppose to teach. There was one exception, however, that I know of. But that was in latter years. And so they'd have to get another teacher in the middle of the year if they were married in the middle of the year. But I only remember that once.

Kain: What about the nurses, could they continue to nurse?

Ricci: No, they had to quit.

Kain: What about women clerical staff, if they married?

Ricci: I don't think they could work there either, because I remember Nel McCan - she was one of those that had a lot of the addresses for the reunion - she lived in the apartment house.

Kain: So, if you were a married woman you could not hold down a job?

Ricci: Right.

Kain: That's interesting. I hadn't run across that information yet - I mean, I knew teachers didn't teach if they were married but I didn't realize that was true of other professions. Back to the school. You all had to attend school?

Ricci: Oh, yes, unless there was no school then we didn't have to go.

Kain: Do you remember any particular kids that were bullies or that were problems in the school at all?

Ricci: I remember one boy who was kind of a problem, but maybe it was just because he and I didn't get along. I don't really know if he was a problem at school.

Kain: Do you think that it was a fairly typical school, other than the fact that it was a smaller school than most? What about adult education, classes for miners and mill workers.

Ricci: As I remember it, when my aunt came over from Denmark, I wasn't very old, and they had night school here for those who wanted to become citizens. Dad might have gone there too, because after all, he did jump ship in Seattle and (?) and he may have done the same thing. But she went to that night school and became a citizen.

Kain: What about English as a foreign language?

Ricci: Yes, I suppose they must have had English - at that night school they must have had a (?).

Kain: I was wondering, because there seemed to be a lot of people from different ethnic backgrounds that came up to Kennecott from Europe. Do you think there was a

particularly large group of one particular ethnic background?

Ricci: Well, it seems to me that there were more Scandinavians and Germans than I remember of any others. But there were others.

Kain: Do you have any idea why a lot of Scandinavians would have been in mining?

Ricci: Well, in the first place, the climate was a lot like Norway. Of course, Mother was so homesick because it's so flat in Denmark and here she was surrounded with these mountains and she said she was so hemmed in and no ocean. It was like, you know.

Kain: You think maybe the climate was a draw for a lot of those people?

Ricci: Yes, I think so.

Kain: Were there many Oriental. In a lot of other mining towns in the Lower 48 that I'm familiar with, there were a lot of Oriental workers.

Ricci: Yes, we did have some up here. They had the laundry, which I guess was Japanese, because my aunt worked there. And I think they were Japanese that were cooking in the private mess until they got someone else. Mildred Erickson, her uncle, cooked there for a while.

Kain: What about miners being Oriental, do you know?

Ricci: I don't think there were very many up there. I don't know what I did with that sheet. I ran across a sheet that had all the nationalities in 1921 that were working up there. It was really interesting how many of each kind there were.

Kain: You remember mostly the Oriental being involved in domestic type of things, the laundry, the cleaning, the cooking.

Ricci: They may have had - those that were cleaning at the bunkhouse could have been too.

Kain: You had mentioned Japanese cooking and you mentioned a - what do you call it, a general mess or a...

Ricci: A private mess, for those who lived in the staff house.

Kain: A private mess.

Ricci: The people that lived in the staff house and the - like the teachers and the nurses and so forth, all (?).

Kain: Was that in the staff house or was it in a separate...?

Ricci: That was in the building next to the hospital - on the right side of the hospital.

Kain: Front of one bunkhouse?

Ricci: Yes, that's the one.

Kain: As I recall, it had kind of a common sitting room in the front of it.

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: The private mess was back behind it. Was anybody else living in that building?

Ricci: That was the same building that had the library and the dentist office. And at one time I think the creamery, where they put the milk in the bottles. It was either in that building or in the bunkhouse in the back of that building.

Kain: It was a creamery there then?

Ricci: I guess that's what you'd call it. All they did was bring the milk up there and put it in bottles.

Kain: They'd store it a little while?

Ricci: Yes. Well, until they could take it around to people, you know, (?).

Kain: Going back to ethnic groups and the working - your father being the Master Carpenter - did he have any problems that you're aware of as far as labor?

Ricci: I wasn't aware of any. I remember that he had a Norwegian that worked for him (inaudible). That's the only one that I actually remember working for Dad.

Kain: You don't remember any labor problems?

Ricci: Well, there probably were but the kids, they don't notice those things.

Kain: He didn't come home and talk about it?

Ricci: Well, if he did, it was way over my head.

Kain: Now, your mother - did she, being a married woman she wasn't allowed to actually work, did she do any other things within the town, other than housewife type things?

Ricci: Well, when she first came, apparently they were up at Angle Station, which is one of the stations on the way up to the mine and she did some cooking up there. And she had chickens, because I have a picture her feeding the chickens up there. And she used to go down to town on her skis - both Dad and Mother skied - and then ride the tram back up. And for a long time she was the only woman that ever rode that. But Frank Morris said after, later years, that others did that.

Kain: But it was a long time coming to allow women to ride the tram cars?

Ricci: Yes. But they weren't gonna let her have to ski back up there.

Kain: That would be kind of difficult. You mentioned that you went out to Seattle for surgery and then you went to Denmark. Do you remember any other travelling that you did?

Ricci: No, that's it.

Kain: Those were for specific reasons.

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: Seattle for surgery and...

Ricci: Denmark for family, to visit them.

Kain: Did you only go to Denmark the one time?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: Did you go out on family picnics and things like that?

Ricci: Oh, yes. We used to go down to Long Lake and to Strelna also. Strelna had real nice cabins to rent and he had horses to ride and that was fun.

Kain: How did you get there?

Ricci: Well, we either went on the train or by the Speeder. I don't know if you have heard people mention the Speeder.

Kain: Yes.

Ricci: That's usually the way we went. And then occasionally, I had some good friends in Cordova and I used to go down and spend two weeks in the summer with them and they let me ride the caboose to go down there and I loved that. Sit up high and look out the window.

Kain: So you went out and stayed in Cordova with friends. Your parents didn't go along?

Ricci: No, no. Our friends in Cordova, they had two little girls.

Kain: They'd bring you down to play.

Ricci: Yes, and they were from Denmark. They were my parents good friends.

Kain: Oh, I see. We were talking about your mother and you helping around the house. Did you have a garden?

Ricci: Yes, Dad had the garden and I did help in the garden some too.

Kain: That was outside and you liked being outside.

Ricci: Yes. He was a great gardener. He had a root house where we kept the vegetables all winter.

Kain: So some of the vegetables were kept?

Ricci: Oh, yes, the potatoes and cabbage and carrots.

Kain: It was a pretty good size garden to grow potatoes and...

Ricci: Oh, yes. And he also had chickens and rabbits. They built the chicken house over the steam line so there was plenty of heat there.

Kain: It's still there.

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: The building is still there.

Ricci: So is the rabbit hutch.

Kain: The chicken wire is still on them.

Ricci: And Deb and Jane Vickery's father was involved in that too, in the chickens.

Kain: (Inaudible).

Ricci: Yes. That's when they lived in the third house. Then they moved over to the last one of the four houses, so they were a little further away. But he was a great gardener too.

Kain: What about religious services?

Ricci: We had an itinerant minister that came by, maybe only once a month. One of them was situated in Cordova and the other one was, apparently, over out of Seward, I think. Cause later on he became the Alaska Railroad minister and would go up and down the railroad and hold services.

Kain: Did you have any religious services when he wasn't there?

Ricci: We had Sunday school and some of the mothers got together and had Sunday school. There would be a pretty good turnout in the schoolhouse.

Kain: So it was on Sundays when the minister wasn't there.

Ricci: Yes, that's right.

Kain: Well, you were there probably longer than most.

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: You consider Kennecott your home?

Ricci: Oh, definitely.

Kain: You felt your family (?).

Ricci: Um humm.

Kain: The social life. Did the families socialize with any of the single people working there?

Ricci: Oh, yes. They had the community dances down in the community hall a lot. In fact, it was almost every Saturday. And when they had their dances at the staff house it was a little different, because everybody wasn't invited to that.

Kain: But the ones down at the community hall were for the whole camp - now, did that include the miners up in the mines?

Ricci: If they wanted, but they never came down for that. If they came down, they went to McCarthy.

Kain: They just came down and grabbed the train and went to McCarthy and then just came back through?

Ricci: Yes. There was also a taxi service out of McCarthy.

Kain: The people that you knew and did things with were they people who worked at the mill, and lived right there in that vicinity where you were living, on a lower level of the hill. Did you frequently have the single people over for dinner?

Ricci: Oh, yes.

Kain: What about other families?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: Did the families go back and forth for dinner?

Ricci: Yes, um humm.

Kain: What about other social activities.

Ricci: Well, we used to play a lot of cards and we'd visit back and forth when we went to school. And then, of course, we had the library and Mother used to be involved in that and she would be down at the library taking care of it. And I kind of inherited it after I got bigger. (?)

Kain: You helped with the library when you were a little older, checking out the books there?

Ricci: They had a pretty good selection up there.

Kain: Did they?

Ricci: And when they closed it, why, they kind of divided them up. I still have a few of the books (?).

Kain: It will be interesting to hang on to them and see what happens. Did you have a lot of childrens' books?

Ricci: They had a pretty good, yes, well I don't think the public library had too many childrens' books, but the school had a pretty good school library.

Kain: What happened to all those books?

Ricci: I imagine that they were divided up or (?).

Kain: What other kind of socializing - you mentioned the dance. How often did they have a dance?

Ricci: Well, sometimes - as I say, in the winter they probably had it every week. Or maybe not that often, but I know that everybody came and the children came and danced and then afterwards they had coffee and cake. I can always remember all those delicious cakes that the women brought. Then they also had some basketball games down there. And then in summer, they had baseball games, McCarthy versus Kennecott, or the miners had a team also and they would come down, especially on the Fourth of July and play baseball. And they practiced a lot and in the evenings in summer we'd go down there and watch them practice.

Kain: Social gatherings, like those dances, it was for the whole family or just the adults?

Ricci: Really more, including the whole family.

Kain: Everybody was invited?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: You mentioned the baseball games and playing against McCarthy. How did the people in Kennecott see McCarthy?

Ricci: Well, they didn't let their children go down there alone. They thought it was sort of an evil town, but there were a lot of good families that lived down there besides the line. And all the bars are mostly down there too.

Kain: There was no alcohol allowed at Kennecott?

Ricci: No.

Kain: None bought or sold?

Ricci: Not suppose to be. There were home brews in places. And currant wine - my dad made wonderful currant wine.

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Kain: Did you go to McCarthy very often?

Ricci: Not too often. In the summer we would hike down there. Our mothers would usually go with us. In McCarthy we'd go in the drugstore and get ice cream cones, whereas you can't do that in Kennecott, so that was our treat to go down there. And then we'd walk back again, so it was a good hike.

Kain: You were about ready for another ice cream cone when you got back to Kennecott. What did the people, other than running the bars in McCarthy, what did they do?

Ricci: Well, of course, there was O'Neale's store, which was an all around store, just like Watsjold's store was.

Kain: So Watsjold's ran a store there as well.

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: There were a couple of people running stores.

Ricci: Yes. And there was the drugstore before that burned down and the ice cream parlor. I think there was a barber shop. And then of course, where the lodge is in McCarthy, Huberts lived there and he was a photographer. And then the dormitory across the way belonged to who we called Ma Johnson and she took in boarders.

Kain: McCarthy was a sizable town then?

Ricci: Yes, yes, it was.

Kain: Did it pretty much fold when Kennecott closed up?

Ricci: Yes. But there were more people that stayed there. In Kennecott there was no one except one family who stayed as caretakers, a German family.

Kain: How long did they stay?

Ricci: I think a couple of years. They were good friends of Mother and Dad. But then after that, there was no one watching (?).

Kain: Why did they leave them there - was there a possibility of coming back in and reopening?

Ricci: Yes. Cause we all thought that we would reopen.

Kain: Then after a few years they decided that wasn't going to happen?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: And they sold it.

Ricci: Yes, and they sold a lot of the buildings.

Kain: Did they sell the buildings soon after closing?

Ricci: No. I don't remember when the Great Kennecott Land Company opened, but it was owned by several different people around here. I imagine (inaudible).

Kain: So they formed a company and bought the buildings from the Kennecott Copper Corporation?

Ricci: Apparently. And then there was a group that had tried mining and that's when they took down the superintendent's house and the manager's house and the staff house, because they were mining on the side there.

Kain: Which is now in the creek. The creek was coming right into the office as well.

Ricci: Right.

Kain: And that was?

Ricci: I'm not sure what year it was. It's a shame that those buildings - those would have been nice buildings, especially the superintendent's and manager's houses.

Kain: I would imagine. They just tore those down.

Ricci: As I read in that "Ghosts of Kennecott" and didn't realize that Steven Birch - it says that he had that superintendent's house built as his honeymoon cottage (inaudible).

Kain: So when Kennecott closed, that pretty much took care of McCarthy, but a few people remained there. You don't have any idea how long Kennecott was left just sitting there with nobody taking care of it and still being owned by Kennecott Copper Corporation.

Ricci: No, I don't remember just how long it was.

Kain: And you left because it was closing.

Ricci: Oh, yes.

Kain: Did your father retire- then you left and went to Seward?

Ricci: Yes, after - we lived in Cordova one winter and then went to Seward because my husband had gone to high school in Seward and knew a lot of people.

Kain: Did your father retire and go there with you.

Ricci: No, he went to Kodiak. Did some work in construction there (?).

Kain: Did you work when you went to Seward?

Ricci: No, I was in the family way and after the children started school -we [my husband and I] had a grocery store by then and I was working in the grocery store part time.

Kain: He was running the grocery store?

Ricci: Yes. And meat market.

Kain: When did you come to Anchorage and how long have you been here?

Ricci: About 22 years.

Kain: That's quite a while. One thing we briefly talked about before we began the tape was socialization once you left Kennecott. You said you left there and went to school in Seattle, going from a school of 20 kids to building of 2,500. What kind of problems did you find there with that?

Ricci: Well, I was just so shy that I was afraid to do anything except the very essentials. Like I would have loved to play basketball and that sort of thing, but I was too shy to enter into those things. After the first year, I did. When I walked to school, if I saw someone coming along the street, I'd cross the street so I didn't have to pass him. It was really difficult.

Kain: Yes, I bet. Did you make any friends in that first year?

Ricci: Oh, yes, definitely.

Kain: You did have a few people that you knew?

Ricci: Just sat around in the home room, you know. Oh, yes. There were two of them. I was quite tall at that time, not now but at that time, and there were two other girls that were a little taller than I am they both played basketball, so I got involved with them. Also, children from Kennecott who left before me all went to the same high school, so there was moral support.

Kain: Did you play any other sports other than basketball?

Ricci: We played hockey in the summer, but I was all for ice hockey and this, of course, was field hockey. It wasn't the same. When I went back for my fiftieth high school reunion, one of those two tall girls was there, so I got to see her.

Kain: When you got out of high school then, you went on to...?

Ricci: Business college, also in Seattle, but I went home in June and back in February.

Kain: To business college?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: That was also in Seattle?

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: And you were there a year, two years?

Ricci: A year, then worked till September in Seattle.

Kain: And then you came back up to Alaska.

Ricci: Yes.

Kain: When you left here to go to school, did you ever come back and visit during that time you were outside in school?

Ricci: No. So you see, there is four years that I don't know anything about what really went on in Kennecott, who was going to school or anything.

Kain: But you came back up and lived in Cordova, or did you go straight back to Kennecott?

Ricci: No, I went back to Kennecott for just a little while.

Kain: Not in Cordova? And I imagine that you were quite sad when the mine closed.

Ricci: Definitely. That's where I was raised with my family and planned on raising my own family there.

Kain: Yes, that would be hard...did you keep in contact with most of the people from Kennecott when you left?

Ricci: Yes, a lot of my girlfriends I did. And a few years ago we had a luncheon reunion in Seattle and there were seven of us that came. Two from up here and others from the Seattle area.

Kain: So over the years you've kept in touch with those people.

Ricci: Yes, at Christmas time any way.

Kain: And you've been back to Kennicott a number of times since they've closed.

Ricci: Oh, yes.

Kain: Did you take your children over there and say, see there's...

Ricci: No, two of my children have never been there. The other one has an airplane and he's been in a couple of times. And because this reunion is so exciting, why, we are talking about a family reunion next year up there and getting those who haven't seen it up there. I don't know if we'll do that, but it could be fun.

Kain: Yes, I bet. The two that haven't been there, where do they live?

Ricci: They all live here in Anchorage.

Kain: They live here in Anchorage but haven't been up there?

Ricci: We never could get together on it, because they're working and, of course, I'm retired but I can go any time, but they can't.

Kain: Well, I think that pretty much covers what I wanted to cover with you and I think we could probably turn off the tape. Thank you very much.

(end of interview)