

KENNECOTT KIDS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH
YVONNE KONNERUP LAHTI
JUNE 17, 1990 KENNECOTT, ALASKA

Interview Conducted By
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(tape 1, side 1)

Kennicott Glacier Lodge, Kennecott, Alaska, June 17, 1990. Oral history interview with Yvonne Konnerup Lahti. She was raised in Kennecott during the time when the mill and mines were in operation. Presently, she is in Kennecott for the Kennecott Kids Reunion, hosted by the Kennicott Glacier Lodge. The interview is being conducted by Ann Kain for the National Park Service, Alaska Regional Office.

Kain: We are curious as to the age you were when you were in Kennecott, when you came and so forth.

Lahti: It must have been when I was six years old and we stayed for six years, till I finished the sixth grade in 1931 (?) when children were ready for high school.

Kain: What did your father do?

Lahti: Well, when my father first came up, he was straw boss of the yard gang for about a year, year and a half, and then got into the store and then he worked in the store.

Kain: Was he clerking or working with...?

Lahti: Clerking and...

Kain: Helping run the store in fact?

Lahti: Yes, helping run the store, yes.

Kain: Did he come from a mining background?

Lahti: No, no. Frank Iverson down here had the (?) in McCarthy and my father's garage business had gone under in 1923 when they had a recession. So he had written down and said they were hiring up here. And Dad couldn't get something he wanted down there so Dad decided he wanted to come up and try it.

Kain: He was an auto mechanic?

Lahti: Yes, he was just a general worker at anything, a jack of all trades, really. But his folks had run a grocery store and they had also run a lumber mill and they worked in the woods (?). Well, so anyway, he came up the first year and then Bill Douglass found out that he had a son the same age as Billy Douglass and there were no other boys Billy's age up here so he was after Dad to bring the family up. Mother wasn't very keen about coming up and found out there were two bedrooms in the

house up here so she was just adamant, she just couldn't possibly do it, she had two girls and a boy and she had to have three bedrooms. So (?) bedroom on the (?) house up there so cut off the kitchen I think and made a small bedroom (?). There were three bedrooms in that one.

Kain: So the two girls could be in one and the boy be in one and the parents could be in one.

Lahti: Uh huh.

Kain: Where did you come up from?

Lahti: We came up from - well the years Mom was - the year Dad was in Alaska (?) Mother and my aunt went to the Bellingham Normal School, cause Mother had been a teacher when she met Dad. So we came from Bellingham and went down to Seattle and then up. Our tickets were all bought through the office up here, or were ordered through the office up here and delivered to us. So, we came up without any excess baggage, which just about astounded the station master here but they didn't charge us for any excess baggage (?) all been ordered through the office (?).

Kain: Mr. Douglass wanted a playmate for his son pretty bad, huh?

Lahti: Yes, (?) so we were up here six years.

Kain: You left in '25, is that what you said?

Lahti: No, we came in '25.

Kain: You came in '25, right.

Lahti: And we left in '31.

Kain: Where did you go to when you left?

Lahti: We went back to Seattle. We sent my sister out alone for her first year of high school and then my brother was ready for high school so then it wasn't feasible (?). So we went out (?).

Kain: How long did your dad stay here?

Lahti: Well, he stayed here three or four years and then he went to Juneau for a couple of years and then he came back and worked for a year before it closed in '37.

Kain: You were all down in Seattle.

Lahti: Yes, we were all down in Seattle.

Kain: Did you see him during that time? Was he able to get off to come down?

Lahti: No. Well, we saw him when he went to Juneau, before he went back again, a few times, but that was all.

Kain: Did he stay until the mine closed then?

Lahti: No, I don't think he was here when the mine closed. I think he left the year before the mine close.

Kain: He joined you all in Seattle then?

Lahti: Yes. And then they took over Grandma Clamitt's store in Klamath Falls because she was getting too old to (?).

Kain: So he continued store work once he went back.

Lahti: Yes.

Kain: When you were up here, you mentioned living in the house down here on the same level as the lodge and they added a third bedroom.

Lahti: Um humm (?) is that south?

Kain: Yes.

Lahti: (inaudible)

Kain: The house. On the same level as the lodge here.

Lahti: Yes.

Kain: One of our questions has been, whether you made any improvements on the house. Well, apparently, there were some with the adding on to the house.

Lahti: Yes. And then Dad fixed the porch. First he screened in the porch and we had a swinging couch on it, you know. He built that for us and the couch. He was very handy. And then there were two other (?) in the house (?) then enclosed it with the windows (?). And then he built wood flower boxes across the porch there then the porch out and down the side and then we had a large garden. (?) added on to the woodshed (?).

Kain: So when he came, he intended to stay?

Lahti: Well, yeh, um humm, once he came up here. (?) would stay, because it was the middle of the depression, you see, so there was nothing to go out for.

Kain: If you had a job you better stay where you're at.

Lahti: Yeh. If you had a job you stayed where you were.

Kain: Was that the only house that you lived in here?

Lahti: Yes. After we got up here, about six months I guess it was, Dad took the job in the store. The person left and they put Dad in the store. When you come up here, unless you were hired down there to come up for a specific job, you just came up and applied for a job, you were usually put in the yard then until they found a niche for you, if you fit into a niche, you know. That sort of thing with the store manager and he was put in...

Kain: In charge of that.

Lahti: Of the store so then we were on staff so then we could have moved to the (?) housing. But he went down and looked at it (?) how wonderful to have a bathroom and never have to go out that long stretch through the woodshed to the privy. Mother said (?) two bedroom.

Kain: She preferred the three bedrooms to indoor plumbing, huh?

Lahti: Yes.

Kain: How were these houses heated then?

Lahti: Oh, just a...

Kain: A wood stove?

Lahti: A pot belly...

Kain: Wood stove.

Lahti: Wood stove, yes, and then a wood range in the kitchen.

Kain: Since your father became staff then you had the opportunity to move to another house. The housing had to do with the social status or where you fell into the work force.

Lahti: We felt that there was quite a difference when we came in. I don't know, people that were here whether they noticed it and I don't know whether other people noticed it but we noticed especially there was quite a difference between staff people and non-staff people. We felt that way. If it actually was (?).

Kain: When you were with those other families, did you do things with different social categories or different labor groups?

Lahti: Well, to some extent, uh huh.

Kain: So it didn't reach necessarily beyond the housing and so forth? You still socialized with those people.

Lahti: Yes, but there was some (?). I understand there was a little bit of discrimination whether you're Danish or Norwegian.

Kain: Really.

Lahti: Whether you're Danish or Norwegian, Norwegian or whether you're Danish or Yiddish.

Kain: Right.

Lahti: We felt that there was, but then after we were on staff (?).

Kain: A lot of time you socialized with other staff?

Lahti: Oh, yeh, oh, yeh.

Kain: Rather than the laborers and the mill workers?

Lahti: Oh, yeh. Yeh, I don't think there was really too much, just a little bit (?) on staff. You know, I mean little things.

Kain: You had electricity then in your house?

Lahti: Oh, yes. We all had electricity.

Kain: But did a lot of wood cutting? Were you involved in wood cutting?

Lahti: Um humm.

Kain: A lot, huh.

Lahti: I still cut a lot of wood. I heat my place by wood.

Kain: Oh, you do?

Lahti: Yes, um humm.

Kain: Well, where are you at now?

Lahti: (inaudible)

Kain: You heat with wood then.

Lahti: Yeh, um humm. Yeh, I have a big house that I - especially the upstairs cause I have oil (?).

Kain: Yes.

Lahti: (?) cut it up and I stack it and I (?) and I haul it in.

Kain: That's interesting. So you got your start with wood heat here, huh?

Lahti: I've enjoyed it (?) better than housework.

Kain: Did you help your mother with the housework?

Lahti: Oh, yeh. We had to help with the housework, but my sister is very efficient (?). You know, it had to be done (?).

Kain: But you didn't like that kind of work anyway.

Lahti: I didn't like that so I could get out of doing the dishes by cutting the wood. And I didn't like dusting (?). And the year my sister went outside I had to take over and help with the washing (?) the stove and the carpets (?) and we had to wring out the sheets and hang them out. I had to hang the sheets and learn to iron all the handkerchiefs and all the sheets and pillow cases and all the shirts. We had flannel shirts - the major things, we didn't have to do the (?) or the white shirts (?) did those (?).

Kain: Did your brother help with the housework?

Lahti: Not especially I don't think with the housework, but he took care of all the wood (?).

Kain: Yeh, and the wood was a big job since you were heating with it as well as...

Lahti: Uh huh, when you're heating two stoves all the time, you know, it was a pretty big job. And then in the

summer time he had to help Dad with the sawing of the logs. They skidded the - took the logs at the grove up here and then skidded them down to our woodshed.

Kain: Oh, off the top road.

Lahti: Yeh, the top road, cause they'd come right down and that was very steep, even though (?) a flat place there, you know, (?) saw the wood in cross sections and then split it.

Kain: Did you have a garden?

Lahti: Yes, we had a garden. We had quite a nice garden. Dad always put on the lower level Dad put (?) in beds. There were carrots in one bed and lettuce in another bed and (?). (inaudible)

Kain: Did you can? Did you can them to preserve them for winter or...

Lahti: No, cause we didn't have enough (inaudible). But the cabbage was huge and they'd get a 23 pound cabbage (?). And we would get a lot of currents, berry picking, current picking. The current jelly was good. We picked some raspberries but that was mostly eating because (?) enough to can. We would get cranberries and make cranberry sauce and cranberry (inaudible).

Kain: Most of your other food was purchased at the company store?

Lahti: Um humm. Yeh. You took out - you bought so many when you paid \$160 and you got your food with the \$60 worth of scrip that you got for (?) and used that mostly and you could use money too but you didn't use much money you used mostly scrip.

Kain: Do you know what the purpose of the scrip was, I mean, why did they have you use that instead of the money?

Lahti: I don't even know why they had us do that instead of money, except that you had money for groceries then. And maybe they didn't want that much money floating around, if you get cash or something. I don't know why, because it was a very honest place. You could leave anything anywhere.

Kain: No crime?

Lahti: No, practically none at all.

Kain: I assume most of the food you bought was canned, what about meat, how did you store the meat?

Lahti: Well, they had the meat locker down (?) and a refrigerator (?) you know, to store them. And so you just bought your meat.

Kain: On a daily basis?

Lahti: On a, yeh, but stew meat and you got roasts and you got pork chops and you got (?). And the company furnished each family a turkey for Christmas. I don't think they did for Thanksgiving but I know they did for Christmas. They had meat down there all year long.

Kain: And you just bought it when you needed it.

Lahti: Yeh.

Kain: Rather than buying a quantity and storing it.

Lahti: Yeh, well, you had no place to store it, you see.

Kain: Right, right. That's what I was (?).

Lahti: So it was all stored (?) and that's where we ordered it (?).

Kain: What about the clothing?

Lahti: Oh, we ordered from a store in Seattle, Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward. And if you wanted something special (?) Company in New York. There were lots of things we used out of that company.

Kain: Now, the store down here didn't have clothing?

Lahti: No.

Kain: Did they have work clothing for the men in the mill, I mean, in the mines?

Lahti: I think they had some clothing for the men (?). I think so, I think there were mens' clothes. Cause I know they had things like, oh, I know my brother bought mother a card table and napkins and (?). I still have it. And her slip.

Kain: You bought that at the company store?

Lahti: And got that at the company store. They had things like that. And Dad had a concession from some company

for jewelry, because a lot of the single men wanted jewelry for Christmas to send out to whoever they had outside or women just around here. So they could come in and look through the catalog and tell Dad what they wanted and send out for it (?). And I think they had some clothing there for the men, you know.

Kain: Humm. What about furniture then? No furniture?

Lahti: Not that I know of. No, they didn't have any furniture in the store.

Kain: Where did you get your furniture?

Lahti: I don't know.

Kain: It was just there.

Lahti: I was six years old (?).

Kain: You had a bed to sleep on and chairs to sit on and didn't care where they came from.

Lahti: Yeh. And, you know, people probably brought things up (?) you know, and so there was extra floating around probably and just used it for the - I don't know.

Kain: Did you ever buy anything, clothing, or food, or furniture, or anything in McCarthy or Cordova?

Lahti: (inaudible)

Kain: Were you able to go out somewhere? I mean, did you go like down to Long Lake? I've heard a number of people were going.

Lahti: Yeh. Well, Mrs. Jensen took me down with her to Long Lake one year. She usually went down (?) cause she had her people there and everything, you know. Cause she had lived here so long, you know, and of course we didn't know (?) took us down.

Kain: Did your family go at all?

Lahti: No, no.

Kain: You never went with them or didn't go on camping trips or?

Lahti: Well, we did a lot of picnicking.

Kain: Just up by the mines or?

Lahti: Fisher Tree or this way or down by the springs and that sort of thing.

Kain: Was there a day off for (?).

Lahti: (inaudible)

Kain: Did you ever go outside of Alaska when you were here the whole time?

Lahti: No, that would cost money and we didn't have money. We had scrip. We used scrip, you know. (inaudible)

Kain: So you did a little bit of day excursions here and there (?).

Lahti: Yeh. And we would go down to McCarthy for the ball games (inaudible).

Kain: Well, I just know that some of the other kids I talked with talked about going camping over a week-end or for a few days, not a vacation as such but and I just wondered (?).

Lahti: (?) we would, you know, like we'd do something like one time we walked over - the staff (?) to Green Butte (?) and Dad and Chris (Jensen) hired a car to come and get us (?).

Kain: A few of the people - it was kind of interesting - they were saying they had no childhood diseases. Do you recall having any when you were here?

Lahti: Well, I had the flu. I know Mel had the flu one Christmas. Chris went along with the horse and sled and jingle bells and delivered the Christmas presents that year. (inaudible)

Kain: I've heard that he dressed up as Santa Claus.

Lahti: Well, yeh, at the hall, but one year everyone was sick with the flu (?) trade a cigar for (?) were about the only ones unaffected by the flu (?) Chris went around with a horse and sled (?) hearing the bells outside.

Kain: So was there no Christmas celebration that year because everybody was sick?

Lahti: No, no, everybody was sick. (?) and I had colds and had my tonsils out up here the year we went out to Seattle because I could have them out here (?).

Kain: You had to pay for treatment though, a small amount for having them out.

Lahti: Yeh, a small bit for having my tonsils out, you know.

Kain: It would have cost you a lot more in Seattle had you had it done there than it would have here.

Lahti: Yeh, to have it done up here and (?) other than colds and flu.

Kain: No chicken pox or measles?

Lahti: No, we didn't have any of (?).

Kain: Did you get them later?

Lahti: Yeh. Well, I had the chicken pox before I went up, when I was a child, and I got the measles down in Seattle.

Kain: So you had them, but you had them when you were older.

Lahti: Yeh, yeh. As soon as we got down there we started school and (?) got the measles and then I got the measles and then I got (?) and was sick all year.

Kain: Other than having your tonsillectomy, did you use the hospital much at all, your family?

Lahti: Oh, yeh. We used the hospital for anything that happened to us. Like there was a (?) creek there and one time there was about a foot and a half or so of nice fresh snow and Mel and I started rolling down, you know, that first - I wasn't side ways but you know how the (?) and I went over that bank. Of course the stream was frozen over but there were large boulders sticking out of it and I managed to hit it and broke my collarbone. So it hurt, so I went to the hospital and the doctor said it was just the collarbone and he strapped me up and sent me home with a note telling that I had fallen in the creek and broken my collarbone. And then another time I was playing handball with my brother and I went like this and I got splinters under my fingernails and that was intolerable. I cried at the hospital. Anything that happened to you, you didn't bother to go home.

Kain: Because you knew they were just going to pack you up and take you to the hospital anyway.

Lahti: Yes, you just went over to the hospital and got treatment there. You know, they were all just minor scrapes and if you get a real bad, bad scrapes well you went to the hospital (?) rather than running home. It's closer to the playground than going home. It was there and we used it.

Kain: Were the same doctors there the whole time you were up here?

Lahti: Oh, no. Dr. Gillespie was here the first year and I think it was Dr. Turner, who was a real good doctor, and then Dr. Peterson was here. I don't know if it was Mrs. Turner or Mrs. Peterson that gave us the piano lessons. But anyway, one of them. Then, because I was so nearsighted - she didn't know what was wrong with me but I was scared of everything - and I couldn't see (inaudible).

(tape 1, side 2)

Kain: We were talking - just to open this side of the tape - we were talking about health and you were mentioning your problem with nearsightedness. Did they discover that here and could you get glasses here?

Lahti: Well see, I started out this size and I was sitting right up next to the board. Then I got to be a second grader and all the first graders were sitting up next to the board in the front of the room and I was sitting in the back of the room and all of a sudden nothing was coming out right, you know. The teacher was getting concerned because I was the second one she (?) you'd better have her eyes checked. And it's funny, mother was a teacher, that she wouldn't have picked it up because of all the years that I had as a child. But she didn't. Anyway, they picked it up in second grade and I couldn't see the big E on the chart.

Kain: Boy, that is nearsighted.

Lahti: And so - yeh, I couldn't tell a (?). You know they didn't have the facilities here to deal with me. And I had those little round, little round, (?) glasses with the black rim around them (?).

Kain: Did you have to go somewhere else to get them or did they write a prescription and send off?

Lahti: No, they sent for them. He used the lens that he had here. He had a box, you know, and they had just the doctor not the eye doctor, and got them just as close

as he could and sent a prescription out. But I didn't realize until I was outside that there were that many stars in the sky. I was aware of only the bright stars in the sky that I saw.

Kain: That is nearsighted. What about a dentist?

Lahti: Oh, that was (?) occasional, once a year or something like that. (?) cavities. I don't know, my sister and I seemed to have cavities all (inaudible). And then when we went out we had to have most of it all done over again.

Kain: Oh, really.

Lahti: Yes. Cause I can remember I had saved a hundred dollars when I left here of extra savings (inaudible). So I had this hundred dollars and they were going through this depression in Seattle. In junior high school and in high school there wasn't enough money to pay for my extra pair of glasses, cause I had to have my glasses changed every six months. My eyes were so bad. Because of that there wasn't enough money for Dad to pay for that (?). There isn't enough money to pay for the dentist. One or the other of us was constantly going to the dentist. But the dentist would come up here once a year and took care of them...

Kain: And stayed until everybody in camp was taken care of?

Lahti: Yeh, uh huh. And I don't think he was probably too good a dentist. I don't know. He was a different dentist most every time.

Kain: The company, I assume, brought him up.

Lahti: I suppose.

Kain: What about other medical assistance? Were there doctors in McCarthy or nurses or anything like that?

Lahti: No.

Kain: No?

Lahti: No. You know, if there's a bad accident on the train, you stay in Chitina (?) and if there is a bad accident -one of the Indians in Chitina had a child and he was hurt very badly. I don't remember (?) anyway, he was ... (?) but he didn't have a wife, whether she was dead or what ever, he had a five-year-old little girl and my mother said, well now, we should get all you kids

together and get some dolls, cause she had to stay at the hospital too. He was staying at the hospital and she had to stay at the hospital too. And get some clothes, each one of you contribute some clothes for this little girl. I can remember picking this big, dear (?) doll that I had gotten for Christmas the year before, because I couldn't give up my other two dolls from the past two years. So most of the accidents...

Kain: Even if you weren't connected with the company, didn't work for the company, you could still use the hospital, use the hospital facilities?

Lahti: Yes, uh huh, until they could arrange some kind of transportation outside or something. You know, (?) out. I don't know who paid for it or anything like that.

Kain: Could the people in McCarthy, could they come up here and buy things at the store?

Lahti: No, I don't think so. They had their own store.

Kain: Just for medical assistance, because it was the only available in the area?

Lahti: Yeh, yeh. It was just (?) company is company. As I understood it, if a miner, somebody from the bunkhouse, was fired on Wednesday and your boss got mad and said this is it, you've had it, he had to go down and stay in McCarthy until Saturday until the train came.

Kain: He couldn't even stay here in the bunkhouse until...

Lahti: I don't think so. That's the way I understood it. I don't know how true that is, but that was my impression.

Kain: That's what we're after, your impressions. Now, your dad worked in the store. Did your mother work outside the home at all?

Lahti: Oh, no.

Kain: Not at all. You are the youngest, right?

Lahti: Yes.

Kain: How much older was your brother than you?

Lahti: Three, and my sister was four.

Kain: And they never worked here at all?

Lahti: Well, yes. My brother did back in - I think he graduated in '35 - '35, '36, '37, and then came out in '37 because we started college together. I graduated in '37.

Kain: So he came back up here.

Lahti: He came back up here and he worked at the (?) and Morris hoister on the tram.

Kain: And his name was?

Lahti: He was Mel Konnerup.

Kain: Mel.

Lahti: He was known as Connie for some years.

Kain: But when he was living here with the family, he didn't work, he was too young?

Lahti: There was always something he could do for somebody, that he'd get paid for.

Kain: Odd jobs type of thing?

Lahti: Yes, but nobody worked, none of the children worked. And as far as I know, none of the mothers worked at anything. Somebody that was a nurse might fill in if, you know, that had been a nurse, might fill in for a month till we got a new nurse or somebody that had been a teacher might fill in if teachers got married and couldn't keep up (?).

Kain: Well, that's interesting. If she got married, then she was married so she couldn't teach, but a mother who was married could come in and fill in the rest of the year?

Lahti: Yeh, I think so. Or maybe she could teach, I don't know, but they didn't hire married (?).

Kain: Yes, I'm aware of that.

Lahti: They didn't approve of married teachers. I don't think that they would have approved of bringing up one in the office.

Kain: Who was married?

Lahti: Who was married.

Kain: Same with nurses.

Lahti: Yes.

Kain: So they wanted all the...

Lahti: All the nurses - when I was there, all the nurses and all the school teachers and all the secretaries were single.

Kain: That's interesting. When they married they didn't work anymore.

Lahti: I don't think so.

Kain: Did your dad talk about work much at all when he came home? Problems that were coming up or?

Lahti: I don't know.

Kain: None that you remember.

Lahti: None that I especially remember. He enjoyed his work I think. It seemed to me he did. Dad was a very social person, a very likeable person. He was the manager of the baseball team (inaudible). And he built - in order to earn some extra money, he was the janitor there at the school and he also ran the projection machine for the movies.

Kain: Oh, I see.

Lahti: Yeh, that brought in a little extra. And he was into everything. He helped organize the dances (inaudible). He was the one that instigated things like the Badger Game (?). And he and Chris were pretty much - they had a costume party (?) something crazy (?) Dad in a barrel.

Kain: So he was kind of the social director of the camp, huh?

Lahti: Yeh, he was into a lot of the activity there.

Kain: He and Chris Jensen?

Lahti: Yeh, and he and Chris - when the snow got deep enough to really slide down the hill, which was usually around Halloween time, he would let us chain our (?) in a chair down the hill. You know, from then on, not until next year when the first...

Kain: Not allowed to do that again, huh?

Lahti: Uh huh. To put a chain - because you know, you spin out.

Kain: Right.

Lahti: (inaudible)

Kain: While we are on the subject of recreation and social life down here - I assume you were quite involved in social activities, since your father helped organize a lot of them?

Lahti: Yeh, um humm. Yeh, I was chief reader at the library (?) and we went to the dances and sat around the stove (?) in that choir and sat around the stove. When you get to be about ten, well Miss (?) had a dance (?) and she always had a dance.

Kain: How often did you have dances?

Lahti: Oh, I think at least once a month.

Kain: Really?

Lahti: Um humm. And then we went skating at night, every Friday and Saturday night we'd have lights (?) and put up light poles so we (?) on Friday and Saturday nights (?) played the music (?) and the people that knew how showed us how to dance (inaudible).

Kain: Did you play hockey?

Lahti: Yeh. I had a couple of (?) it was always cold (inaudible).

Kain: Yeh, they're good for that aren't they. There were tennis courts. Did you play much or?

Lahti: Well, (?) played quite a bit and I was a little bit older and, you know, and wasn't into the caribou or trapping and you know, the kids (inaudible). But she had a piano and she had her poetry. She wrote beautiful poetry (?). And she played tennis pretty well and she skated beautifully (inaudible). And she was a good skier.

Kain: What about the more sedentary activities, such as a library or?

Lahti: We had a library and Mother and Mrs. Jensen ran it mostly. We had good books, you know, Call of the Wild and they (inaudible). But they got hold of a lot of

childrens' books (?) and all those Huckleberry Finn and all those books. And we read (?) an awful lot. And there was an English couple here and they used to come down and she played the piano and he'd play the mandolin and we'd sing, everybody except me because I couldn't sing (?). The company usually did that again. (?) and I had paper dolls. We made our own paper dolls (?) paper dolls and, you know, clothes (?). We also made family paper dolls out of catalogs and cut out the children and the mother and the father and the umpteen younger children. And then we'd take jacks (inaudible).

Kain: You talked about the English couple coming down. Did you socialize a lot with other families in the evenings?

Lahti: I don't remember too much, just - I can't remember their names now - the English couple came down once a week. And then of course most Sundays we always had John McKenzie from the waterworks during the war. He was a guide in one of the parks up here in the summer time took people up for the dall sheep and then in the summer time he worked here in the yard then. And we had them - they would stay for dinner because they (?).

Kain: So you did socialize some with the single people?

Lahti: Oh yeh, um humm. And then you could walk down the tracks for exercise or something and stop in for coffee and cinnamon toast or whatever. And some of the courting couples, you know, walked down the tracks and stopped in the evenings for cinnamon toast and cocoa (?).

Kain: (?) for the evening?

Lahti: (?) for the evening.

Kain: Do you feel your family was pretty typical of the families that were there?

Lahti: Yeh, I think we were. I think other children here and all the families here were family oriented and children oriented and we had a wonderful...

Kain: ...wonderful time. You liked living here I take it?

Lahti: Oh, we did.

Kain: Were you sad to leave when you had to leave?

Lahti: Yeh, I was sad to leave. I had a hard time adjusting, you know, (?) and then Seattle through high school.

Kain: I've heard that from several other people, that they had a real hard time with social adjustment.

Lahti: Finding a niche in the social structure.

Kain: How did you feel? Did you feel academically you were prepared, you were equal with those other kids?

Lahti: Yeh, they told me they were all set to skip me,, you know, 7A, 7B. You know we had split at that time in Seattle. And they were all set for skipping me a half grade and then I came down with mastoid ears and they didn't know if it was going to be mastoid or what it was going to be and I was out two or three weeks in November and December and didn't come back until the fifth of January. (?) taught me at home but I, you know, so I didn't get skipped a grade but they were all set to do it. I still got all As. (?) I was well prepared, I thought.

Kain: How long do you think it took you to get through the social adjustment?

Lahti: Well, it took me forever, a long time. I'm still getting over it.

Kain: You still have it.

Lahti: Still have it. No, in the ninth grade I started having girlfriends that I wanted to have. Before that I had girlfriends that I didn't especially want, but I had to have somebody.

Kain: Right.

Lahti: Then in ninth grade - then as a sophomore it sort of eased up a little bit and I got by all right, but I never was a social butterfly.

Kain: Three or four years before you could fit in reasonably.

Lahti: Um humm. Before I found a group of girls that I really wanted to fit in with.

Kain: Right.

Lahti: Yeh, that was three or four years before I found a group that - the kind of person that I felt comfortable with.

Kain: And probably because of that you felt even more homesick to come back here.

Lahti: Yeh. Um humm. And I couldn't - you see, I couldn't be just a plain girl to them because there were so much outdoor things here that a seventh grade girl wouldn't be interested in down there (?) because I was still interested in climbing trees (?) and that sort of thing, you know.

Kain: Yeh, very much a tomboy type.

Lahti: Yeh, um humm.

Kain: So it took a lot of the people - a lot of the girls here were that way.

Lahti: Yeh.

Kain: They weren't necessarily tomboys, but that's what everybody played, and you all played that.

Lahti: Yeh, we all played that, we played an awful lot of active stuff, even though the weather was very cold. People nowadays, those people down there, they stay in. We were out doing things. And of course, when I went out, you see, I was 12 when I went out, most of these kids went out when they were 13/14 to high school. I started out in junior high school.

Kain: You went on to college (?).

Lahti: Oh, yeh.

Kain: And what did you major in?

Lahti: Teaching.

Kain: In junior high or high school or elementary?

Lahti: Elementary.

Kain: Elementary.

Lahti: Yeh.

Kain: So you taught?

Lahti: Oh, I've taught all my life

Kain: (inaudible)

Lahti: Yes, um humm.

Kain: All different grades or?

Lahti: Well, no, I've always taught in elementary school and then...

Kain: Well, I meant, mostly first grade or mostly...

Lahti: Mostly first and second grades.

Kain: First and second.

Lahti: Uh huh. And then when I (?) to get my masters, we went (?) his doctorate. I worked on my masters and then I started having kids (?) so I didn't finish it there. And then when I flew back to Washington (?). I had to back to (?) when I went out they would give you a six year certificate and you had to...

Kain: ...renew it, yeh.

Lahti: So I had to go back to keep that test renewed. So finally I took my masters at Western [Washington]. I got my masters in reading, which was real nice because then I could teach (?) and I could go to a certain school (inaudible).

Kain: I assume you're retired?

Lahti: Oh, yeh.

Kain: Yeh? How long have you been retired?

Lahti: Nine years.

Kain: Nine years? Another one of the gals I was talking to had trouble with the social adjustment when she left here and became an elementary teacher and she felt that she was much more sympathetic to the children, much more understanding because of what she had gone through, when she would have a student that came that was very shy or whatever. Do you feel that was true for you as well, as a teacher?

Lahti: Well, I don't know. Probably it did, probably because - yeh, I - it bothered me when I had children that didn't fit in and couldn't adjust and sit there and I think that is probably because I had the same adjustment too.

Kain: You knew exactly how they were feeling.

Lahti: Yeh, yeh.

Kain: Did you, as a teacher, did you ever wish that you would be teaching in a school such as Kennecott?

Lahti: (?) it's certainly funny, in Bellingham when Daddy was first up there I was substituting and there was this - they had two small schools, Marietta School on one end of town and Geneva on the other end. There were, you know, just two or three school houses and they had first, second and third, fourth, and fifth, sixth you know, and down like this and you had a whole bunch of kids and it was just sort of a little country school, you know, within the school system. And anyhow, I went out there to substitute and the teacher just kept getting worse and worse. She was having (?) problems so she didn't want to finish the year. So then of course, I always thought, oh, it's so hard for substitutes and here I am substituting and I thought, oh, I'll finished the year for her, you know. And I had the kids at home, you know, and didn't want to do it full time but every time I substituted I'd end up doing that. But then I started teaching and I taught two more years out there at that little country school. It was fun and it had the feeling of this, you know, and I fit into it real well and I really enjoyed it, I think the most of my teaching, you know. It was just a fun time of my teaching, you know.

Kain: How many times have you been back here? This is not your first time back here is it?.

Lahti: Yeh, about five years ago, I can't remember, about four or five years ago. (?) and Charlie were coming in (?) so I flew up (?) Anchorage.

Kain: And you've kept in touch with your friends all these years?

Lahti: Yeh, I think all of us have pretty much kept in - most of the kids, the majority of us kept in touch with Inger.

Kain: She would be the binding force of the whole group.

Lahti: Yeh, she (?). Yeh, if you wanted to know anything about anybody else, you know, you write (?).

Kain: You kept tabs on each other over the years.

Lahti: (?) and I were always best friends and, you know, so we always...

Kain: Kept that relationship going?

Lahti: Yeh, that relationship going all these years.

Kain: That's interesting. Well, I think that pretty much does it and I appreciate you giving me the time and the information.

Lahti: (inaudible)

Kain: I think there was probably quite a bit, thank you very much.

(end of interview)