

1. Eva Tcheripanoff

June 3, 2004

Ray Hudson: Okay, ah, It's June 3rd. June, June 3rd. This is too loud. This is June 3, 2004, with Eva Tcheripanoff. Eva, just say something on that mike and see if that—You don't have to pick it up, just say, see if it, ah—

Eva Tcheripanoff: Do I have to prepare it, what I say in Aleut in English?

RH: No, no, no.

ET: Just talk in Aleut?

RH: Ah, just talk in English first, okay?

ET: Okay.

RH: All right. With Eva Tcheripanoff. June 3, 2004. Eva, when were you born in Kashega?

ET: 1928.

RH: 1928. And who were your parents?

ET: My mother was Sophie. It was Borenin before and she got married and it was Kudrin. She was married to one of those Kudrins brothers. My dad was Alec Kudrin.

RH: Ah, Alec Kudrin.

ET: Yeah. My grandma was Olga Borenin. I don't know where my grandma's from. Must be from Kashega. But my mama [was] born in Chernofski.

RH: In Chernofski, ah.

ET: But my dad was from Kashega and I'm from Kashega. Olga Kudrin was my auntie. And Dora was my auntie, my mother's sister. I have Olga Kudrin for auntie because my mom was married to her brother, oldest brother. Yeah. And Dora was married to Mike Kudrin, one of them, step-brother or something.

I don't know my dad. I [was] born after my dad passed away. My dad went out to go hunting or either gettin' the wood. Long time people used to get wood, you know,

in a dory out the bay. And he was with my uncle, my other uncle, Willie Borenin, was 14 years old. He was oaring, you know.

RH: Yeah, oaring.

ET: And my dad was chopping wood. It was nice day, sunshine. All of a sudden blood coming out. And he couldn't stand up no more so he was down on the rocks and my uncle come up to him, sort of walk him down to the dory and took him home. And everybody comes to the bank and brought him home. He died that night. And he told my mom that if I was a boy he told her to name him after [him], but I was girl. I don't know who they named after me.

RH: So you don't have any sisters or brothers.

ET: No, by myself, no brothers, no sisters. I didn't want to have my sisters when my mother was sick. Cause I didn't have no help. I could be mad with her [a sister]. Fight with her to take care of my mom. You know.

RH: Um hmm

ET: Even I was married I was taking care of my mom. I used to stay with 'em, you know, night and day. Taking care of 'em. Once and awhile my husband used to come up here in Unalaska, [pronounced Uu-na-laska] used to come up and visit me like. [Laughs] She was pretty sick. Got cancer, had a cancer, you know.

RH: She was an amazing person.

ET: She used to make baskets and mukluks.

RH: And wonderful dolls. What's your earliest memory of Kashega? Or, let me ask you this: how old were you when you left Kashega?

ET: Ten.

RH: Ten, all right.

ET: When the war start I left from Kashega.

RH: Okay.

ET: My mom was cooking in Chernofski that time.

RH: For the sheep ranch.

ET: There was only me and my auntie, Olga Kudrin, and Mike Kudrin and her mom. She had a hard name, Efersinnia, something like that. Them Kudrin's mom, she was pretty sick. And Olga wanted to stay back so my mama left me with her. And there was

George Borenin, used to hold the church, used to be there. And we didn't even have no radio or nothing, you know, in Kashega. And after we had dinner, we went—Olga and I went down the bank to dump the garbage and I saw, we saw a kind of boat coming in, but we wasn't sure, you know. It's way down there. And her brother Mike was walking down to the bank and we passed him. We told him, "Looks like boat coming in but we're not sure." And we're walking up. I was staying at Olga's house. I was walking up. All of a sudden those five planes was coming. Good thing they didn't bomb us!

RH: Yeah.

ET: We was looking, standing there, looking at them—they went down that way. And the boat came in and a skiff came ashore and they told us to hurry up and pack up and go. And we didn't have no time. When Mike told them there was five planes went down that way, they said we can't take anything right now as long as we got on the boat.

RH: What kind of boat was it?

ET: Ah, tug boat.

RH: Oh.

ET: And it took a long time to get that Olga's mother on aboard, you know. So I didn't take anything, no clothes or nothing. Just the way I'm wearing, I got on the boat. There was no time to take anything because they can't wait for those planes to come back. They might bomb us, you know. That was terrible. They took us to Chernofski. The tug boat. From Chernofski they brought us here and we got on a big boat.

RH: You picked up your mother in Chernofski?

ET: . . . Yeah, to pick up my mom and George, my cousin George Gordieff. He lives in Anchorage. We picked him up. He was working in Chernofski.

RH: He was from where?

ET: Who?

RH: George Gordieff.

ET: He was from Kashega.

RH: From Kashega.

ET: Yeah. Her mom was my mom's sister.

RH: Okay. Okay. Now, when you were living in Kashega as a child, what did you do?

ET: Oh, just play around!

RH: Was it a good place to be a kid? Probably.

ET: And I used to have wood, no, rocks for doll. Rock, light rock for doll. I think my uncle got tired of me, seeing me with a rock for doll, wrapping it up. And she made a wood doll for me. And my mama made a clothes for 'em and I think about it after we got here, you know. I should of grabbed hold of that. You know, rubber band inside.

RH: Oh, yeah. So the arms would move?

ET: Yeah, legs, you know. And some kind of yarn for hair. Yeah, she glued it on there.

RH: Ah, wow. But it got left behind?

ET: Yeah. And before that, I used to have a cat for pet, a little puppy. I used to have it, take it around like a person, you know. And he died! And I buried him by the creek. Every morning I'd go down there and pray by it! [Laughs] I'd pray by it. Yeah. I think that helps me for my health. [Laughs]

RH: Now were there other kids your age?

ET: No. There was only one of my friend. She moved to Kashega from Atka, named Tatianna Kudrin. She was married to Peter Kudrin. That was the only one I used to hang around with her. But she was older than me, so she got married and I was just a kid. I never used to care. I'd play with her outside. All day long and come home.

RH: Now when you were there, did they have a store in Kashega?

ET: Yeah, they had a store there. Its owner was Harry Jacobson.

RH: Okay, I've heard of him.

ET: He owned that. And they had a school there, too. All those Kudrin's family and my aunty Dora went to school.

RH: I think I've read about that.

ET: Yeah, and it was and all the grades were all up, you know, and they quit. They couldn't get more childrens to have school there. There was only just me and Dora's daughter, Polly. And, ah—

RH: Now, Polly wasn't in Kashega at the time of the war? She had already come to Unalaska?

ET: Dora brought her here after that school stop in Kashega. They had a school here. But she hardly went to school because her eyes bothered her. She had TB in her eyes or something like that.

RH: That's right—I remember.

ET: And [Alice] Moller moved here. She moved here after she got married to Charlie Moller. So her Mary had school here. So I was the only child and they couldn't find no teacher there. So my aunty brought me in to have school here. But my mom didn't keep me here too long. Yeah. That was it.

RH: Now, at Kashega they had a, ah, like a sheep ranch, right? or something? Did they have sheep at Kashega?

ET: Yeah. I have a picture of it. I called Pat last night to bring that picture down but she didn't. I have Kashega picture.

RH: These are a couple of pictures . . . that I think Alice Moller had. [In *Cuttlefish Two: Four Villages*, pages 40 – 41]

ET: This is Kashega.

RH: Yeah, I think they're all Kashega. They're not very sharp pictures.

ET: It's hard to tell, uh? This is the church house, right here. [Photograph A: top left photograph on page 41]

RH: Okay.

ET: And this is my uncle's house, right by the church.

RH: Right next to the church. Which uncle.

ET: William Borenin. He used to be *starosta* [church warden]. Take care of church. George Borenin's right there.

RH: Okay. Right next to it.

ET: And from there, going up, is my grandma's house. And Cornelius's house is right there.

RH: So your grandma's house is number 3. Cornelius' is number 4.

ET: This is George Borenin's.

RH: George Borenin's is number 2. And your uncle's is number 1.

ET: This is George Borenin's, from the house, clothes line, right here. And this is bath house. And this is not all. 'Cause the school's on this side.

RH: Now what's over here?

ET: That's same one, church house.

RH: Church house, okay.

ET: This is my grandma's house. You can see it better here, right here. [Photograph B: top right photograph, page 40]

RH: That's number 1 in the other photo.

ET: This is me, Tatianna, and my Krustna-mom Eva Borenin. [Photograph C: top left photograph, page 40]

RH: Is that who it says? I'm not sure. Let's see what—It says Sophie Kudrin, Oleta Borenin, Eva Kudrin, Tatianna Kudrin. That might not be right.

ET: Must be. Must be this is my mom. This one. [Left] And this is Oleta. [Center]

RH: Oleta, okay.

ET: And this is Tatianna. [Right] And this is me! [Standing in front]

RH: Ah. Ah! Neat.

ET: This is staring people: Sergie Borenin, George Borenin's nephew, niece or something. [Photograph D, center left photograph page 40]

RH: How many stars did they have in Kashega?

ET: Just the one.

RH: And it belonged to the church or to—

ET: Yeah, it belongs to the church-house. This is Pete Kudrin, holding that star. Tatianna up there. Olga's mother, Olga's mother, Olga Kudrin. My grandma. And John—I forgot the last name. Mrs. Moller's uncle.

RH: Ah, Denisoff?

ET: Denisoff, yeah. This is horses. I don't know what this is. What does it say? This is whole thing, uh?

RH: I think so.

ET: This is all?

RH: Ah, there's one other page. Ah— [page 42]

ET: That's the same staring. [Photograph E, photograph page 42]

RH: Yeah. And it's not a very good picture.

ET: Tatianna, Peter, Dora, my mom. Barely can see 'em, blurry, huh?

RH: Yeah, yeah.

ET: Polly right there. Vassa.

RH: So Vassa I'm going to make 1. Polly is 2. And who is over here?

ET: Dora right there.

RH: Right here?

ET: Right here.

RH: Dora is 3.

ET: Peter Yatchmenoff.

RH: Peter Yatchmenoff is 4.

ET: Tatianna.

RH: Tatianna is 5.

ET: My mother right there.

RH: And Sophie is 6.

ET: I can't tell this one. It's hard to tell.

RH: Yeah, yeah, it's a very washed out photo. Wow, neat. Now one time, ah—

ET: This is George Borenin. [Photograph F, photograph on page 39]

RH: Yeah, George Borenin, yeah. That was after the war.

ET: After the war?

RH: Yeah, because that was taken by Ted Banks after the war.

ET: Yeah, because they had a radio then.

RH: Ah, I think—well, maybe it's not in here.

ET: What isn't?

RH: One time I had—Polly Lekanoff drew a map of the houses in Kashega—

ET: Oh.

RH: —But it's not in here now. I thought maybe it was. Here's a picture of the inside of the church. [Photograph G, photograph on page 36]

ET: I have this.

RH: Do you remember the name of the church?

ET: Ah—

RH: Was it the, ah, the, ah—

ET: Berries' holiday!

RH: Yeah, Ascension? Not Ascension. Resurrection? No.

ET: I can't think of it. [Laughs]

RH: I think there was an icon that—

ET: *Preobrazhenie*—something like that.] [Transfiguration]

RH: Yeah. Yeah.

ET: I have them pictures here, too. [Showing me photographs.] This is my uncle, William, Bill. And that's me right there.

RH: Ah. My goodness, Eva. That's a wonderful photo.

ET: That's by her house. They used to live close to the church. This is my gram.

RH: So this is in Kashega?

ET: Uh-huh.

RH: This picture. It's a good picture of the church, too. Oh, and this is—

ET: My gram.

RH: Oleta?

ET: My gram, Olga.

RH: Olga, Olga.

ET: Borenin. There's writing on the back.

RH: Oh, yeah.

ET: These are three sisters.

RH: Look at that!

ET: They have names on the back.

RH: Oleta, Dora, and Sophie. Wow! It looks like Sophie, yeah. That is neat. And they have, ah, fur collars on of some kind, you know. Those are great photos.

ET: I have that Kashega picture. Pat has it. But that's not all of it there. That school used to be up there, you know. Where is it? This is the church house. It starts from here, from my uncle's house and George Borenin's house, my grandma's, and Cornelius Kudrin. And that store. And from there going down that way, Harry Jacobson's house, and Kudrin's, school. Then down this way is Peter Yatchmenoff's and the water pump house right there. And go back down, ah, you were just telling me a little while ago, that Moller's ah—

RH: Yes, uh, uh,

ET: Nikfour —Denisoff.

RH: Denisoff. Yeah.

ET: And from there, there's a bridge going to that sheep ranch.

RH: Okay. Now Harry Jacobson didn't run the sheep ranch, right?

ET: No, no, no. Just the store, just that store.

RH: Let me ask you another question about Kashega. What did people do if they got sick? Did you have, was there a midwife? Was there—

ET: No. No. I seen them used to get something off the ground. You know, they used to have a kind of Aleut medicine. Get 'em off the ground and soak 'em in the water. Then you rub it all over you. And there's green stuff they call 'em *sixsiqan*, those green ones [wormwood, *Artemisia unalaskensis*]. They use them in the bath house, put soap on 'em, and you rub it on you. That's the way it used to be.

RH: Yeah. Who was the chief there in Kashega when you were a child? Do you remember?

ET: Oh, Peter Yatchmenoff, I think.

RH: Ah, ah. Now, ah, so you were taken from Kashega and you stopped in Chernofski to pick up your mother.

ET: Yeah.

RH: And then you came to Unalaska?

ET: Yeah. They brought us here.

RH: And waited here.

ET: Waited to pick up those Unalaska people. There were some, ah, Makushin—

RH: Probably maybe Umnak, or Nikolski—

ET: Umnak people, they were on there. They were already on there. They had some of the Unalaskans on there, you know, but not all of them. They were waiting for them. And we left from here.

RH: When you were in Southeastern, did you expect to go back to Kashega?

ET: We were going to, but we weren't enough people to go back. Because some, like people from Kashega, they died in Southeast Alaska. We were just me and my mom and Olga and her brother was just [all]. We weren't enough to go back so I think they picked a place to go. All of them would get off in Akutan.

RH: Ah, in Akutan, ah.

ET: Yeah. And my— And when I came over [to Unalaska] to get married, my mom came over with me. And she looked for a job. And she got a job. And I went back with my husband—

RH: To Akutan.

ET: Yeah—and I stayed in Akutan for one year and I came back.

RH: So when were you and John married.

ET: 19—something. I forgot that.

RH: Ah, '45.

ET: Same year we came over.ⁱ

RH: Which I think was '45. I think was '45.

ET: I met John down in South. [laughs] He didn't come back home with us. He was on Adak, on a tug. . . .

RH: Okay. Now, I know that after the war George Borenin and Cornelius Kudrin went back to Kashega?

ET: No.

RH: No?

ET: I think Cornelius Kudrin came here, cause Polly, you know. He used to like her, Polly. She had a, you know where that Nick had that old house down there, where their new house is, that's where they all lived. He lived with 'em, you know.

RH: But I thought this one picture . . . with George was after the war.

ET: But George used to go in and out of Kashega from here.

RH: Oh, I see. After the war.

ET: Yeah. He was in and out of Kashega after the war.

RH: . . . why did he go there?

ET: Oh, he was just checking on there, I think.

RH: And probably on the church.

ET: Yeah.

RH: He was a reader in the church.

ET: We didn't have time to take anything from the church. So after the war he went back to check on it, but hardly anything. So he wrecked the church down and made that little thing. [A small roofed structure protecting the consecrated site of the altar.]

RH: Oh, right, right.

ET: And he stayed with my mom, till he's gone.

RH: I remember meeting him the first year I was here [1964], I think. He lived in that little tiny house.

ET: Yeah. Yeah.

RH: Yeah. He was quite a tall, tall person, I think.

ET: What?

RH: He was a fairly tall person, as I remember.

ET: Yeah, tall. Skinny.

RH: Was he ever married?

ET: Yeah. He was married to Oleta, my mother's sister.

RH: Oh, yeah.

ET: Yeah, Oleta. That's why she's Borenin.

RH: Oh, sure.

ET: They were all Kudrins, I think. [Pause] Yeah. I was wishing I could see my dad or else a picture of him, you know.

RH: Yeah.

ET: Never had a camera at that time.

RH: Right, right. Did a priest ever visit Kashega?

ET: I don't know. Yeah, yeah, I remember I seen one, a long time ago. I remember that.

[Laughs]

RH: Oh, I know what I wanted to ask you. At your house, your house in Kashega, ah, what was it like?

ET: There was no one. We lived with my uncle. It was a big house. It had an upstairs.

RH: Oh, it had an upstairs?

ET: Yeah. A living room, kitchen. He made a sink himself. He made a sink out of tin.

RH: Really?

ET: Yeah. Nobody had no running water except us.

RH: You had like a tank outside to bring the water in?

ET: Yeah, yeah. Flushing toilet.

RH: Wow. And this was. . . who did this?

ET: Who?

RH: Yeah, you said it was your uncle.

ET: My uncle and my mom and me.

RH: Okay.

ET: He wasn't even married. Got sick.

RH: Ah.

ET: And he died.

RH: Did he die in Southeastern or in—

ET: No, in Kashega.

RH: And, excuse me, Eva, but what was his name again? Your uncle's name?

ET: William.

RH: William, yes. All right, thank you, thank you.

ET: And like, he hunts for foxes.

RH: Oh, yeah.

ET: And there was one fox that was only 50 cents that time.

RH: My goodness. Wow.

ET: And he makes a lot of foxes and they send them out. Sends their foxes out. And he gets groceries on it, buy cases.

RH: Okay. Here at Unalaska?

ET: Yeah?

RH: They would send them here to Unalaska.

ET: Yeah. So in the winter we used to run out of food.

RH: They would trap in the wintertime?

ET: Yeah. I go out hunting with him one time. Couple times, I think. More than that! I didn't know you were supposed to hide away from the fox. And I was just standing and talking to him, you know. I seen him. He was kind of waiving to me or something, you know. "I thought you told me to come." Here he told me to go down on the ground. I chased his fox away! [laughs] Maybe he was mad at me, but he didn't tell me. [Laughs]

RH: Now your mother, I think I remember her saying, that she learned to weave baskets by herself.

ET: Ah-hah.

RH: Were there other basket weavers in Kashega?

ET: Who?

RH: Did other ladies weave baskets?

ET: Just my mother I know, as far as I know. She just learned by herself.

RH: That's what I remember her saying, yes.

ET: I think my grandma did, but I'm not sure. I think that was where she learned. But I never seen my grandma doing it.

RH: Right. Neat.

ET: You know that fish basket?

RH: Yeah.

ET: I know my grandma made one. That fish basket.

RH: That's right. I've seen a photograph of that with Anfesia [Shapsnikoff] holding it, I think, or something like that. It's in a museum in [Okland,] California.

ET: We used to use that for going out picking sea eggs. We never used bucket. No. Fish basket.

RH: Was Kashega a good place to get things like clams and sea eggs and— ?

ET: Everything. Lot of fish there. Lot of fish. I use to pack that fish with a fish basket on my back. And wood! My woods are like this! [Raises her hand above her head and laughs]

RH: Did you have to go far to get wood?

ET: Yeah, yeah, had to go to camp to get that.

RH: Where was the camp at?

ET: Way down that way, I don't know what's the name was.

RH: Toward Chernofski?

ET: Yeah.

RH: South.

ET: Sometime we stayed there overnight. It was hard to get wood. Really hard.

RH: So the house you stayed in, you burned wood? You had a wood stove?

ET: Yeah. Everybody burned wood.

RH: I'm going to stop this and then we can play the tape from Sophie, okay, and I'll turn this back on. Woops. I wanted to ask you another question. In Aleut, what did the people in Kashega call themselves? Ah, You know, like Unangan or Qawalangin or—

ET: We're Qawalangin. Like Nikolski's and Kashega's and—

RH: Chernofski or Makushin?

ET: Makushin. These Unalaska people, they're not Qawalangin. They're Tayagⁱⁿ. They call themselves Qawalangin; they're not.

RH: But Makushin people were?

ET: All the Chain should be, Qawalangin. Tayagⁱⁿ—ah—

RH: Akutan?

ET: Yeah. So John and I hardly talk Aleut. Our words, you know. We used to talk mostly English. 'cause John's words were different than mine. Like, ah, "two" we call 'em "*aalax*," you know.

RH: "Aalax," yeah.

ET: "Two"—"*aalix*." And on John's word is "*aatuukin*."

RH: "*Aatuukin*."

ET: Yeah. *Aatuukin*. It's different so I don't understand his words so she usually talked English with me. [Laughs]

ⁱ John Tcheripanoff was born November 1, 1921, in Akutan. He and Eva met at the Ward Lake Camp during the internment. They were married, according to an article in *The Aleutian Current* (December 2000), by Father Baranof of St. Paul Island and later remarried in 1945 by a judge. Records date this wedding on August 29, 1945. However, it is probable that the civil wedding took place first as the priest only visited Unalaska periodically. John died on July 26, 2000.