

# MOLLY O'NEILL HUCKINS

Interview conducted by Logan Hovis  
and Geoff Bradley  
National Park Service  
May 27, 1998  
Tape #1  
Side #1

Hovis: *This is Logan Hovis with the National Park Service here in Kennecott Lodge on the 27th of May, 1998 with Molly O'Neill Huckins. Did I get it right?*

Huckins: *Yes you did.*

Hovis: *And Molly is one of the Kennecott Kids. I would like you, if you would, to tell me what you know about Kennecott and McCarthy.*

Huckins: *All right. And good morning. I was born here in Kennecott, in the hospital, on April 10th, 1922. My parents lived in McCarthy, where my father had a store - a general store. My mother came up here*

*several months before I was born to stay with the Gillespies, so I would be born in the hospital here. And shortly after I was born, my father came, picked us up, and took my mother and me back by dog sled to McCarthy. And [unintelligible] ... April. That's right, uh-huh. And, so it was ... and of course my memories are quite limited about McCarthy because we left there when I was about six years old.*

Hovis: *Uh-huh.*

Huckins: *Now my sister, Dini; so many people up here remember her ... Dini - Geraldine O'Neill. And she was eight years older than I, so she had many more memories, of course. And so, I do remember living above the store ... the ... mercantile store, as they call it -*

*J.B. O'Neill's. ... And ... I just remember a very few things ... I've never forgotten the sound of the ... I thought they were coyotes, howling, all night. That made quite an impression on me as a child. I remember when at Christmas ... we ... my mother [and I], were ... all ... oh! ... it's so sad, because the ship went down, the Aleutian, I think. The Alaska steamboat. [The Alaska Steamship Co. vessel U.S.S. Northwestern sank in British Columbia waters on December 10, 1927].*

Hovis: *Uh-huh.*

Huckins: *And ... with all the Christmas things from the outside into this area in the winter, and all the Christmas ornaments ... she [my mother] had been [expecting] ... decorations and gifts. She was very big on the holidays ... and all this community, the entire community, worked together presenting wonderful holidays - Kennecott and McCarthy. And mother was very active in these groups. So it was a sad holiday,*

*indeed, because there were no Christmas things at all. But, we made do. Mother said, of course, 'we're all getting [indecipherable] too'. So, all the wonderful wives and mothers got together with sheets, colors and things, and made a wonderful Christmas anyway for all the children [unintelligible] ... And so then ... some months later ... everything arrived from the bottom of the sea ... from the ... ship Aleutian ... [The U.S.S. Northwestern was refloated on January 30, 1928 and towed back to Seattle].*

Hovis: *It'd been salvaged?*

Huckins: *Salvaged? ... Yeah! And ... what had been salvaged ... I remember as a little child, was all water marked and had a smell of the ocean, and all. And that made quite a dismal impression. I remember my mother and father both rode horses. Actually, I was told that my mother, Geraldine O'Neill, was a pianist before she came up to Alaska with my father as a bride. She gave piano lessons,*



*The U.S.S. Northwestern aground at Eagle River, north of Juneau, Alaska, July 7, 1933. Photograph courtesy Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society Collection.*



*“I remember...at Christmas (1927)...the (U.S.S. Northwestern)...went down...with all the Christmas things from the Outside...all the Christmas ornaments.... So it was a sad holiday, indeed.... But, we made do...all the wonderful wives and mothers got together with sheets, colors and things, and made a wonderful Christmas anyway for all the children....*  
*...some months later ... everything arrived from the bottom of the sea ...what had been salvaged...I remember as a little child, was all water marked and had a smell of the ocean...”*

MARY O'NEILL HUCKINS

*and I was told that ... she ... came up to Kennecott on many occasions to give piano lessons. And it wasn't as much for the ... as for as any income, as it was just to be keeping active and busy up here in the long, long haul through the 12 months. ... And ... then I remember in ...*

Hovis: *Did she ever own [a] piano? Did she ...*

Huckins: *Yes! Oh yes! My father, my father brought ... because he knew how she loved the music, and had a lovely voice, and loved to play; he brought up an old piano ... on ... the railroad ... to her. It was ... we had that in our apartment in Kennecott. And just yesterday, in Kennecott, someone said "well Molly-O, I think your mother's piano is down in the ... the lodge"; So I went ...*

Hovis: *Baby grand?*

Huckins: *Baby grand; So I went over to look at it; and it could have been my mother's; and som...*

Hovis: *Uh-huh.*

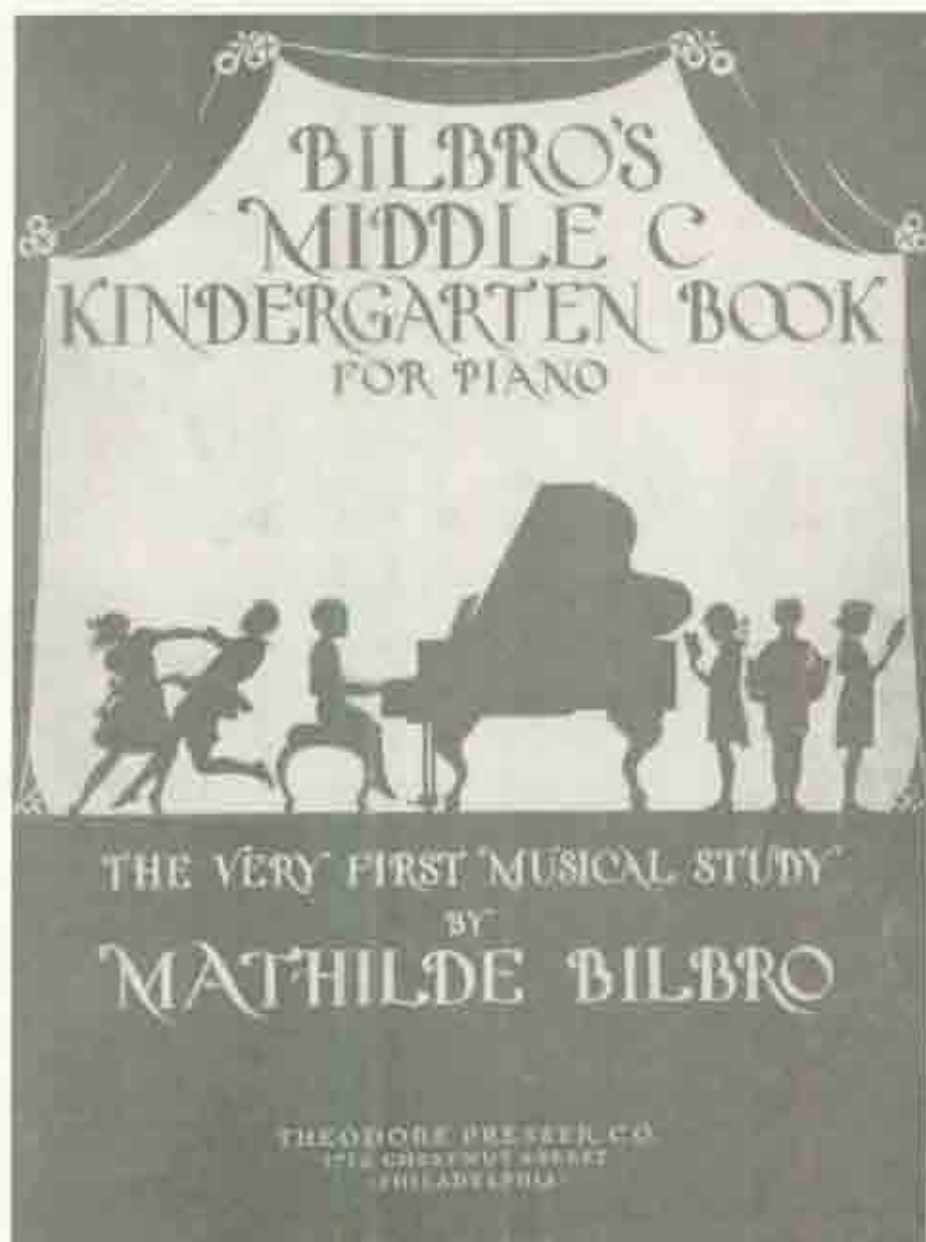
Huckins: *and as all the old timers here were saying, there weren't many ... there weren't many, pianos ... grand pianos, around up here ...*

Hovis: *I wouldn't think so.*

Huckins: *And ... so I ... remember my father saying, in later years ... we're leaving your mother's piano up there. And I thought about that and my mother ... yesterday. I opened the keyboard and thought of her, when I saw the piano ...*

Hovis: *Did you play?*

Huckins: *No! I had two very talented teachers - my mother; My mother taught my sister De... Geraldine junior ... But I decided it was too ... was stubborn ... And they were too critical. And so, [it's just] one of those stories. I'm sorry I don't play today [laughter]. I really am. But ... and ... My mother said, 'you'll be sorry one day'. And, very true! But they played so*



*Bilbro's Middle C Kindergarten Book for Piano.  
Courtesy the Sande Anderson collection.*

*beautifully, and I ...'least listened to them. All the ... so many of the men I've talked to here ... all of our friends ... then. We played together as children; [and] they all commented on how they loved to hear my mother sing, and play the piano. And my sister too.*

Hovis: *You said you had an apartment up here.*

Huckins: *Yes; over the store.*

Hovis: *Down in McCarthy?*

Huckins: *In McCarthy.*

Hovis: *Not here?*

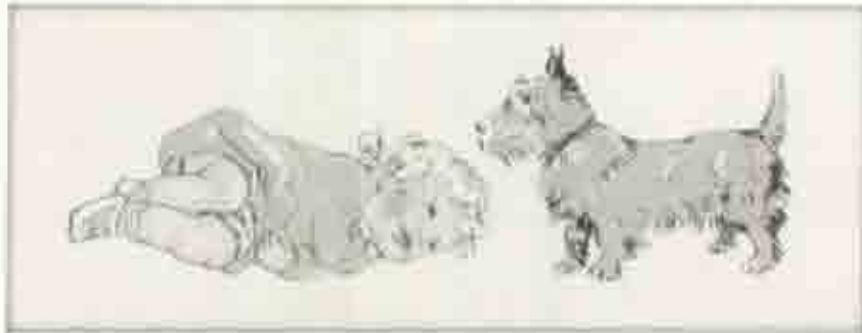
Huckins: *No, not at Kennecott. No. I don't remember coming back, really, to Kennecott, then.*

Hovis: *O.K. ... You didn't go to school here then?*

Huckins: *No, I didn't ... Still too young. And ... so I just remember ... living in ... town ... And oh, and the sounds of all ... I remember the malamutes ...*

Hovis: *Ub-hub.*

Huckins: *And their howling. I remember as a child walking by where they were caged ... and ... [being] just sort of terrified of the sound and all. ... And then one time, some of them got loose. And my sister had a dog - [a] beautiful collie by the name of Bob. And it was the saddest day. ... My father was in the barbershop in McCarthy, and her dog was [indecipherable word] and they'd gotten out and attacked our beloved collie, Bob. So, I remember that of course as a small*



*child. And he - my father, brought Bob home [and placed him] by the stove, where he died. ... And this ... made a huge impression [on me]. I had a little Siberian husky, [that was] given to me. And I used*

*... we used to play dog sled with him [Huckins and Hovis chuckle]. At least I enjoyed it. I don't know about [indecipherable]. So, not big memories, but sharp memories, nonetheless.*

Hovis: *Ub-hub. Did you spend much time in the store?*

Huckins: *I really don't remember that. My mother, I think, kept me so busy ... she was very resourceful. It ... I wasn't even really aware of the store. And my ... but I do remember sitting on the walk outside the store. And my mother [had] sent [chuckle] for my clothes from the east coast, and I was all dressed up with nowhere to go ...*

Hovis: *Ub-hub.*

Huckins: *... with bows and everything. And the children - that was another thing; all the children were so beautifully dressed considering where we were - in the interior. ... And looking back on the albums, I see that there was also much pride in keeping up - dressing the children nicely.*

Hovis: *And that was in McCarthy as well as ...*

Huckins: *McCarthy as well as Kennecott. Yes. Mother spent the [indecipherable word - may have been "summers"] in New York [shopping] for her children's clothes and things. So I remember sitting there on the boardwalk and being so, so bored, with nowhere [chuckle] to go. But just ... just being there ... just, just. ... And we knew about the ... Oh! My mother would tell me stories about the girls.*

Hovis: *Oh yes!*

Huckins: *The girls! And they were apparently right down the street. But, my mother was a wonderful, compassionate woman, and, there was a marvelous ... um ... rapport. And mother would ... when they were sick, or ... She, she was a wonderful cook ... she'd make soups and chickens and take them [to them] ... It was a very won... And then, I remember, she said the undertaker, every morning*

*dressed in black, would come by, 'n say 'good morning, Miss O'Neill - Mrs. O'Neill. And she didn't feel that was such a good omen [Huckins and Hovis chuckle]. But the whole community was just so, very close.*

Hovis: *Uh-huh. Even though there were some fairly strong divisions in the community, I believe - whether or not the community should be dry. But, at your age, you probably weren't aware of this.*

Huckins: *No, I was not aware of that. No. And I wasn't ... unfortunately ... didn't listen to my beautiful, wonderful father [chuckle] telling me all these things. And of course, now I wish I could ask so many questions of my parents.*

Hovis: *You showed me a picture, a little bit ago, of you as a small child sitting beside a prospector that your father had grubstaked. Do, do remember any of these people?*

Huckins: *Oh yes! Sam Means! 'Course, he has been brought alive over the*



years, to me, because of the picture they took of me ... when I was three years old, and all dressed up. And Sam Means, wonderful Sam Means, whom everyone in town knew and loved ...

Hovis: *Uh-huh.*

Huckins: *... and cared so much about. He worked for daddy, apparently in the store. And then he prospected. And ... everyone just adored him. And so they had ... I have this picture of Sam Means, beside me ... called "two sourdoughs" - "the two sourdoughs". And I've had that picture always, and it brings to mind lots of memories.*

Hovis: *Do you know where Sam was originally from?*

Huckins: *You know, I don't, Logan. I don't remember that ... There was such a community of bonding of this community - even with the so called ladies of the town. They stayed where they were. But the ladies, so to speak [chuckle] of McCarthy ... there was such*

*kindness and caring. And, as I said, my mother [would] take baskets of food and things [to them at times]. Because everyone was very tolerant. And understood. You know?*

Hovis: *Did, did you ever know Margaret Harrais.*

Huckins: *Well, I was going to say. On one of my pictures, mother had written her name on the back. But, I don't really remember her. She was a school teacher. Was she ...*

Hovis: *And quite a strong Prohibitionist, as well.*

Huckins: *Strong ... Oh, really! Oh, ho! ho! ho!*

Hovis: *Yes!*

Huckins: *Well ... my mother actually was ...*

Hovis: *A very strong woman.*

Huckins: *A very strong woman. I remember, however, when I was living, either in San Francisco, or*

*Seattle many years ago - before my father died. She apparently was asking about me ... remembering me as a child; And she wrote me a lovely, lovely letter, I just recall - remembering me as a little child. And it was very, very warm ... affectionate. ... And how much she loved my mother. And my mother was pretty much ... she wasn't anti-alcohol, but she just didn't really drink. And, ah ....*

Hovis: *You have gard... Did you have a garden?*

Huckins: *Garden? I imagine we did. And I can remember my sister, one summer, in the spring time; and the wild flowers and wild roses; and my sister was, very much [indcipherable word] the excitement in the household, because, she was going to be on the float with all the native gold crowns, and all the wild roses that we ...*

Hovis: *Um-uh.*

Huckins: *... braided around the float. And they were ... All, all the work that went into it. [soft chuckle]. And she was named, at that ... crowned in McCarthy as Miss Alaska [Huckins and Hovis laughing]. That's the closest we ever got to any, to any beauty contest! [chuckle]. But, the memory of that ... is very strong ... Oh, and then we had a ... we had a camp out at Lake Baultoff.*

Hovis: *Baultoff Lakes.*

Huckins: *Baultoff. And, I can remember as a child going out there. Mother was always putting bats on me ...*



*either fur hats in the winter ...*

*And I'd always promptly throw them off into the snow. I never had a thing about bats. And then, we'd go out there with my sun bats, and I'd throw them out. But, once [when] we went out to Baultoff's [was] very vivid in my mind. The bears had been visiting during the winter. And mother'd left a jar of honey, or something [out]. And that made a huge impression on me as a child. Never had a fear of seeing bears, or anything, but was always just aware they there ... So, we would go ice skating there ...*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Huckins: *ice skating around ... and fishing ... and stuff. And, actually when my father died nineteen years ago in Seattle, he'd wanted his ashes to be scattered over Lake Baultoff. So, I was ill at the time ... [man's voice interrupts].*

Frank Morris: *You take care now.*

Huckins: *Same to you Frank. See you, I hope soon. ... So, I was ill at the*

*time, in San Francisco, and couldn't join my sister and others. But, there was a whole long line, I was told, of little acquaintances [indecipherable word] - all his loving O'Neill nephews and all up here. And my sister told me when she returned to the state, that it was all misty when they were going in to Baultoff; and they thought they couldn't get in; and she had wild ... she had flowers and things to toss from the plane. And she said it was the most ... remarkable thing ... that the sun just seem ... just flooded the area. And ... the mist behind them ... and they just felt that there was something ... beautiful about that. And the other side was all in mist - they were just able to get out. But, Harold[sp.?] ... and ... daddy would have loved that, because there were about ten of his beloved nephews, up there, in all.*

Hovis: *I have been in that camp.*

Huckins: *Have you! [very excited].*

Hovis: *There's a large cast iron wood stove left there.*

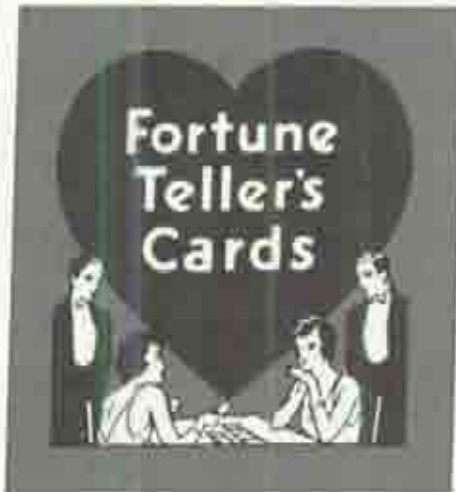
- Huckins: *Obl*
- Hovis: *Most of the building is down. Several boats ... I go fishing there.*
- Huckins: *You do?*
- Hovis: *And, it is a very pleasant ....*
- Huckins: *Is it?*
- Hovis: *... pleasant peaceful place.*
- Huckins: *Is it really? [much excited]. How 'bout out at McCarthy? Would you say ...*
- Hovis: *It's the other side of the Nizina ... It's probably ten miles ...*
- Huckins: *'bout ten miles out. It was a great adventure to go out there.*
- Hovis: *And your father had a car, and you'd drive over?*
- Huckins: *Yes! He did. I guess there weren't too many cars around at that time, but, yeah ... Something like an old Ford, or something, I suppose.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum. Drive down to cross the Nizina bridge ...*
- Huckins: *Oh yes.*
- Hovis: *and then up the hill?*
- Huckins: *Yes, it was ... My sister was much more adventurous ... being eight years, you know, ahead of me ... My father loved us daughters enormously, but I'm ... sure he always wanted to kind of have a son to introduce him to Alaskan fishing and all ... But my sister really was a marvelous companion to him, because ... I've seen many pictures where she was with her rifle ... and they're fishing ... and she was very much with him out-of-doors. My mother, my father later said, would go on all the pack trains, and on hunting trips. And you see, my mother was only 5'2" and very ... very petite. But, he said she never complained. [Chuckle]. I remember that so well. Never wel ... 'cause the men were [always] dubious about having a woman joining their party in those days ...*

- Hovis: *Of course.*
- Huckins: *But, she said she was the most wonderful sport, and never ... and they loved having her along.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum. O.K. ... Well, let's see ... when you left here, where'd you go?*
- Huckins: *Ah, to Cordova.*
- Hovis: *Cordova?*
- Huckins: *And I think I was about six years old.*
- Hovis: *And did you stay there for very long?*
- Huckins: *[Takes a deep breath]. Perhaps a year, or so! ... I was trying to reconstruct things in my mind with all the ... friends of the family ... [that] knew all of us, because, it's just kind of a blank. But I do recall living in Cordova, because ... Harry O'Neill ... was a brother of my father. And, my wonderful aunt Florence ... and all my twelve cousins, were there.*
- Hovis: *Cbuckling.*
- Huckins: *And I do remember a lot, a lot of children running around the house. [Chuckle].*
- Hovis: *Were you ever sick as a child? [Did you] have the childhood illnesses – measles, mumps ...*
- Huckins: *No! I didn't! No! And ... However, when we got to Seattle, my sister ... I think it was [indecipherable words]. But, she was very healthy up here ... But, when ... we eventually moved to Seattle, I can remember scarlet fever, and the quarantines, and ... you know, illnesses then.*
- Hovis: *Very healthy climate up here then?*
- Huckins: *Oh yes! And to this day, I have an auto-immune disorder: rheumatoid arthritis. Sometimes they go two and two, but I would give anything [chuckle] to have the health I had when I was living up here.*
- Hovis: *O.K. ... I would ... love to hear ... if you have anything else that you remember?*

- Huckins: *Well, I was ...*
- Hovis: *I know you were only six ...*
- Huckins: *Um-hum.*
- Hovis: *... and it's got to be kind of hard to recall ... but, do you remember [anything else]?*
- Huckins: *It is hard! Very hard! ... I can remember going out ... and I think my mother, in later years, we would go out every winter ...*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Huckins: *And my grandfather, her father, was in Seattle. And ... he was a judge there ... and we would go out and spend time there ... and they would always make a big fuss about me ... [I] have a sourdough picture here from the Seattle Times. They put me in the judge's robes, and they said, "lil' tiny sourdough". I was three years old then, and with his gavel and everything. So they made a big [unintelligible word] - everyone was so interested in Alaska, of course. And ... then I loved when*
- I came back to Alaska ... the first time after all the years. I suppose I was about eight years old when we left. And my mother ... we went to Los Angeles at that time, which was quite a culture shock...*
- Hovis: *Pretty good change, yes.*
- Huckins: *Quite a culture shock! And the noise! The people! The traffic! The sirens!*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Huckins: *And then I can remember ... I apparently started school there. But I can remember always being asked, "now where were you born?" [indecipherable word] And I would say "Alaska!" And all the children would start to hoot and scream. Because Alaska, see, was so remote to them at that time. And they teased me [chuckle] mercilessly you know - the way children do. But they'd dance around me in circles at recess ... I can still remember that .... And say "Igloo, Igloo, Igloo", you know. And I'd cry, which was of course [chuckle] very tempting.*



*Local little charmer, name unknown.*



*“...I have such a vivid recollection of one summertime, that there were gypsies...up around McCarthy. And I can see them to this day! And my mother telling me not to stray off, because, she said the gypsies steal children... I...recall these very colorful people...with...big ...bright clothes. And they were singing and dancing. ...And, I don't know whether...I, I'm sure it was not (just) my imagination, because it was so clear.”*

MARY O'NEILL HUCKINS



Hovis: *Yes, that's very cruel.*

Huckins: *Well, it was cruel, but isn't that ...*

Hovis: *Did you ever get even?*

Huckins: *No, I wasn't that kind ... No! I just cried [laughter with Hovis]. And then I guess, finally, I must have fit in - adjusted. But, I was a very shy child in coming from this environment ... to that. But, then we had some ... 'course, very wonderful years. But, then the, ah ... when I came back to ... Anchorage ... my father was here then ... living in Anchorage.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Huckins: *And he was running ... Richmond's Restaurant ... bar, or something in Anchorage. And, I hadn't seen him in some years. He and my mother had divorced, many years before. And he wanted me to come up ... to get ... to sort of know me.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Huckins: *So, it was in the spring of 1943 ... and I was to come here in April to visit my father. And his best, best friend, whom he absolutely adored, was Harold Gillam ... one of our famous bush pilots. We were very close to Harold and the family. And, so daddy ... [and] Harold ... Gillam was going ... had gone ... was going to [the] mid-west somewhere to pick up a plane for Morrison-Knudsen.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Huckins: *To carry it back here, back to Alaska. And of course, then, it was war time with the Japanese. And ... Harold ... promised daddy he would stop in Seattle to pick me up - he had one extra passenger seat on the plane. And it was one young woman, and a few others I guess, from Morrison-Knudsen. So then, I was so thrilled, and I knew Harold so well. And then just ... several ... about a month before the trip was actually to ... ah, take place, my father telegraphed ... because of the housing problem. He needed*

*another month, or so. So [he] canceled the earlier trip. Well, as it turned out, I was devastated with disappointment. But then Harold did come through Seattle, and we saw him briefly, and he crashed in that plane. 'N that was his last flight.*

Hovis: *Umm.*

Huckins: *And he was considered a real hero, always, in Alaska. And I met, in Palm Springs years later (I used to go down with my husband to hotel conventions there) Dewey Netzdorf, who was a survivor of that plane [crash]. ... There were a few survivors, but ... So then I came up [to Anchorage] ... daddy said [it was] alright to come by ship. It was a military zone then - Alaska. And not everyone could go there. You know, [people] could stay up there, but [Outsiders] couldn't go there - any civilian. And so daddy talked around [with] some people ... and all ... [and] because he was a resident of the territory of Alaska, the military intelligence and so*

*forth, came to me and granted me a pass to come up on the Baranof. And that thrilled me to death. I was twenty-one years old. And I got on the Baranof. And the excitement of ... I always loved the sea and voyages, 'n all. And so ... that was then a troop ship.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Huckins: *I don't know how many hundreds they carried, but ...*

Hovis: *You were very popular, weren't you!*

Huckins: *Oh! [stammering!]. I was very ... Two of us women on board ... It was [chuckle] ... I mean most women sigh today when they hear that ... [deep breath] And ... Yeah, two of us women on board. She was a young ... stenographer, I think, going to - up to Elmendorf. And, I ... always loved them. I always remember, too ... how sad ... they were ... scared to death. They were just from ... all from Louisiana.*

Hovis: Yes.

Huckins: *Hot climates, you know, and all that - and going out to the Aleutians. So when we disembarked in Anchorage ... I mean ... no, no - it was Seward!*

Hovis: *Seward.*

Huckins: *And Captain Ransour [sp.?), the skipper, remembered me - [from] when I was a little girl.*

Hovis: *Was ... [that] from the Alaska Steamship [Company]?*

Huckins: *From the Alaska Steam. ... And he ... adored my mother in a very nice way. But, she was, ah ... He ... told me [that] when I was on board ... well I spent the rest of the voyage, really, on the bridge with him [chuckle] ... and he told me all these stories about when I was a little girl, and how when things got so rough. The seas were so rough! Mother never got sea sick. She put us children in the bath tub [chuckling]. We didn't get seasick. Whenever we*

*got ... she would play the piano in the social hall to keep everyone's spirits up, because it would be rather frightening, tossing around 'n all. And ... so he would call, in the boat [indcipherable word] in other words, sing. And she would lead the singing, and it was all ... made it very happy. And, so then, one morning ... That voyage took two weeks, because [we] were avoiding submarines - possible submarines in Alaskan waters. We had to wait for a convoy. And I remember it was very impressive, because all the troops ... and then the Chaplain, and the Sunday service, and we were really, really, you know [indcipherable word] thinking of the danger that could be ahead. So, then when he sent his ... [indcipherable word] and we started [a]cross the ... Wrangell, the Narrows. And he sent his cabin boy down about five [chuckle] in the morning ... whatever time ... [the] ship was going through the Narrows. And the cabin boy said "Miss O'Neill, the Captain would like you on the bridge". And I said "well, no*

*thank you!" [chuckle]. I wanted to sleep, you know - just being twenty one. And like ... and not realizing the import of this. And telling him I'm sor... thank you; but no! And so then he came back again about ten minutes later, and said "Miss O'Neill, the Captain orders you on the bridge". [Chuckle]. So, with that I got ... And thank goodness Captain Ransour persisted, because it was incredible! Just incredible. And I was on the bridge, then, for really the rest of the voyage. So it was fun. So, [then I] came to Anchorage then in 1943.*

Hovis: *When you went out, earlier, you'd go down on the steamship. So that's where you met the Captain?*

Huckins: *Yeab!*

Hovis: *But, do you have any memories of riding the train between McCarthy and Cordova?*

Huckins: *No memories of the train!*

Hovis: *Um.*

Huckins: *No! I don't. I don't recall that at all. But, I don't know how we got to Cordova, or ...*

Hovis: *I assume as a young child you were told to stay away from the rail yards.*

Huckins: *Oh, yes! Yeah. Very ... 'n away from the dogs, and away from a lot of things.*

Hovis: *And were you a very dutiful daughter?*

Huckins: *Very!*

Hovis: *Oh you ...*

Huckins: *Oh, yeab very! [Chuckle] I was terrified to do anything I shouldn't [laughter with Hovis]. And I was not adventurous. If mother said don't do that, I didn't. But I did have a, a recollection, and I asked people coming here on the Kennecott Kids group ... 'n they said 'oh no that couldn't have been'. But, I have such a vivid recollection of one summertime, that there were gypsies ... up*

*around McCarthy. And I can see them to this day! And my mother telling me not to stray off, because, she said the gypsies steal children, or something like that. Well, obviously ... But, I do recall these very colorful people. I never seen any ... and with, you know big ... bright clothes. And they were singing and dancing. And they were darker skinned ... And, I don't know whether ... I, I'm sure it was not [just] my imagination, because it was so clear. And we were told to stay away from them. But they ... What they would have been doing at that time in McCarthy...*

**Hovis:** *Do you have any memories of Japanese, or Chinese, or, Ahtna Natives.*

**Huckins:** *Yeah, one Chinese I remember ... My little dog "Sniggy" [sp.?], my little Siberian Husky ... and the tailor [uncertain word]. My godfather had brought him back from Siberia to me. So Sniggy went everywhere [chuckle] ... and, ah, apparently Sniggy, or Sniggy*

*and I, had gone into the restaurant, or something. And all I recall is ... or [unclear word] probably the dog went in ... And I had a long ... rope, but he was free at the time. And all I recall [chuckle] is the Chinese, or an Asian ... cook with his apron on ... and a big cleaver in his hand, running after us screaming [Hovis and Huckins laughter].*

**Hovis:** *Um-hum!*

**Huckins:** *So that was; that was a reality!*

**Hovis:** *That made an impression ...*

**Huckins:** *Yeah. So I never went back [laughter] to the restaurant again [chuckle]. I remember one Christmas my father ... I think it was the Christmas when they tried to make it up to all the children, particularly because of the sinking of all the gifts and decorations. And I remember they put me to bed, saying "now Santa Claus is coming", and [it] did seem like the snowiest scene of course ... snow on the roof. I remember that ...*



*Mrs. Marshall of Kennecott holds a pair of bear cubs.*

*if he were tense, and you heard the experiences he'd had ... He would stutter when he was, you know, in conversation. But we got used to [it] ... and we simply adored him. And every time we were in Seattle, Andy would come by and have dinner with us - [and] stay with us. He was so beloved, and so modest. ... I do remember one story with Andy, must have been when we were in McCarthy. ... Ah, two stories now. Ah ... he'd rescued some bear cubs. [their] Mother 'd been killed. And he had an old movie camera, I guess ... whatever they did in those days. But, I can still remember we were all feeding the little cubs with bottles of milk. And ... it dribbling down their fronts; and their holding the bottles. And Andy had pictures of those [cubs], which we loved. And, then, another Andy Taylor story that I recall so well, was ... and as I said, he was [so] modest. But my mother and father worshiped him, as a person. And ... they said, "Andy tell [us] a story. Tell a story". [And he'd say]*

*and the dark sky, and the cold of Christmas ... And then, my father apparently ... Oh, a very elaborate thing ... that he dressed as Santa Claus, and [breathes] with the Ho! Ho! Ho! and everything on his back. And my mother couldn't [chuckle] wake me up. And my poor father [chuckle] was out on the roof waiting for her to awaken me. I've always liked to sleep! [Huckins chuckling]. And, so that was ... daddy. ... But it ... made [a] wonderful ... They were such ... great people up here in those days. Still are of course.*

[Short pause].

**Bleakley:** *... Would like you to make one ... comment. That ... Andy Taylor is one of my great heroes!*

**Huckins:** *No!*

**Huckins:** *... loved Andy so ... oh! She loved Andy so! Oh! And ... same with the people in Kennecott in the Kids "bureau thing" [Unintelligible] and then they didn't seem to know of him. But*

*he just ... he was ... he was so! Tell me what you remember!*

**Bleakley:** *Well ... I know all about ... I've done a lot of work, in the Shushanna [Chisana] area. And I know about his role in the Shushanna. But also, I came to Alaska originally as a climber, twenty-five years ago.*

**Huckins:** *Oh! You did?*

**Bleakley:** *And so I know of his climbing reputation ...*

**Huckins:** *Climbing ...*

**Bleakley:** *... from everywhere.*

**Huckins:** *He was always at our house for dinner - dear Andy. And he brought me ... the Siberian Husky. He was almost like my godfather, really! And he was such a close family friend. And I was telling people the other day, when he'd start to stutter ... mother would just say ... "now ... just you relax" [stated very soothingly]. And Andy 'd be alright. But, of course,*

*"Oh Nol Nol" But in this one, he'd taken a climbing party of some eastern - some Yale students from Connecticut the year before, up climbing around. And he lost one of them, at least one of them ...*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Huckins: *... went down. And didn't ... Andy said later, wasn't following his orders. And the boy went down [in a crevasse]. Was gone. And they couldn't get the body. But, the family so wanted the body [the sound on the interview tape fades to barely audible at this point] of the boy returned to Connecticut. So they pleaded with ...*

TAPE 1  
SIDE 2

Huckins: *... he didn't have to take any jobs, really. Andy had so many ... much to choose ... And he thought that this was better. I remember that the boy stayed in his resting place in the glaciers. But, the family insisted. So, Andy said 'all right'. And, he felt it was a very*

*dangerous thing to do. But, they went out ... the search party. And they finally found the body of the young man from the year before. And Andy said ... and he had an old motion picture ... of their trek across the ice and the glaciers, and everything. And he said they traveled at night, because [so] ... the body wouldn't [thaw]. ... They buried it in the day to prevent it from defrost[ing] and decomposing I guess. ... And it was a very treacherous trip, but he did it for the family. They insisted that their boy be brought back. But, other guides up there were saying that they would never do anything like that. But Andy took it on.*

Bleakley: *You have a lot of photographs of hunting parties. Was [Andy] guiding in any of those?*

Huckins: *Ah, [chuckle] he probably is, yeah. Well he was probably with us all the time. Yeah. Andy was just a member of our family, really, in McCarthy. And then when we were outside ... It was interesting*



*... he had many very wealthy eastern clients.*

Bleakley:

*Um-huh.*

Huckins:

*New York and all. And I ... it wasn't Rockefeller family ... but it sort of seemed on that scale. When Andy was ready to retire, and they ... Everyone wanted him to come and live with them ... as family. And Andy finally went ... And they said 'we will take care of you for' [unintelligible word - probably "life"]. And they lived on this big estate in New York.*

Bleakley:

*I always wondered what happened to him.*

Huckins:

*Yeah, and there ... and here Andy ... modest Andy, come by this funny suit, you know, his hat and growing stutter [uncertain words]. I think he was really crazy about [chuckle] my mother. And, but it was such a loving ... He was such a gentleman. In our family ... He didn't have any family, so he spent ... And then my cousin Pat [Patrick] O'Neill, one of the*

*O'Neills ... belongs to the Explorers Club in New York. And is a very well known mining engineer. Going [uncertain word] around the country; around the world. And he would see ...*

Hovis:

*Um-hum.*

Huckins:

*And, so at any rate, though, Pat [Patrick] said Andy would be invited at times as a very, very [uncertain word] member of the Explorers Club in New York.*

Bleakley:

*Um-hum.*

Huckins:

*And they wanted him to come 'n talk with them ... everyone. Oh, he was a wonderful person.*

Hovis:

*Did you ever meet Brad Washburn, when he was up here? He climbed with Andy a couple of times.*

Huckins:

*I don't know. I may have. But I was so young.*

Bleakley:

*Right.*

Huckins: *He was young then too ... yeah ... Well [chuckle], and perhaps so, because they brought everybody to our house for dinner ...*

Bleakley: *Yeah.*

Huckins: *And my mother was a great cook, as I have said. And, and he was a member of the family. So he brought many of his people in and out of McCarthy.*

Hovis: *And this was a friendship that lasted long after you left McCarthy?*

Huckins: *Oh yes. Yes. And, 'course we finally lost track, and Andy was old and in New York then. And mother was ... gotten to Alzheimer's then. And, sort of starting then. But, I guess daddy kept up with him, and as I said, my cousin Pat O'Neill would see him in New York.*

Bleakley: *Yeah, I've seen a ... photograph very similar to the one you have here; with him down [in] the crevasse and posed on ... looks*

*like maybe the end of the Nizina Glacier, with a ... with a long ice axe ... And wearing ... [what] looks like that same hat.*

Huckins: *Yes, yes, probably ... [unintelligible words, laughter] yes.*

Bleakley: *Yeah, [I] may ... sometime come up with some additional Andy Taylor questions, and write you a letter.*

Huckins: *I wish my sister were still alive because of her advantage of the years, you know - remembering.*

Bleakley: *Yeah, we just created a special award for service in [the] Wrangell St. Elias National Park ... and we're going to call it the Andy Taylor Award, because he sort of epitomizes ...*

Huckins: *Isn't that wonderful.*

Bleakley: *A resident of the Wrangells. He did everything during his career.*

Huckins: *That makes it really ... so emotional to me. How wonderful. That dear man. And, as I said ... his modesty! I can't remember any big, brassy, braggadocio men up here at that time. They were all quietly, very courageous to me. No big deal about it, you know?*

Hovis: *Excellent.*

Huckins: *Thank you Logan. It's been a pleasure.*

Hovis: *It's been a pleasure listening to you talking.*

