

GEORGE POWELL

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

[With editing and clarification changes made by Powell on 6-19-00]

[Tape begins in mid-sentence
with:].

Hovis: ... Logan Hovis with Geoff
Bleakley here at Kennecott Alaska
on the twenty seventh of May,
1998. We're here with George
Powell, who is ... one of the
Kennecott Kids; and George, I'd
like to thank you very much for
talking with us.

Powell: O.K.

Hovis: If you have anything you'd like to
say to start, please do; otherwise,
we'll start in with questions.

Powell: *Oh, it's good to have you back in
this reunion again, and last two ...
It's ... just as good [as before].*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *Real nice [uncertain word].*

Hovis: *How'd you first come to be at
Kennecott?*

Powell: *I was born here.*

Hovis: *Really?*

Powell: *In 1923.*

Hovis: *1923.*

Powell: *Born in Kennecott.*

Hovis: *Yeah. O.K. Born in the hospital?*

Powell: *Yeah.*

Hovis: *O.K. You're father was employed here?*

Powell: *He was a machinist.*

Hovis: *A machinist? [And] your mother took care of the place?*

Powell: *Um-hum.*

Hovis: *Where did your family live?*

Powell: *[uncertain word] now you mean, or?*

Hovis: *At that time.*

Powell: *Well, at that time, right here.*

Hovis: *In the apartment?*

Powell: *... Just about ... in the house right here; In the first small one.*

Hovis: *Oh! In the first small one that got moved?*

Powell: *... Big one back behind ... small one in front. Apartment house was on this end.*

Hovis: *O.K.*

Powell: *My father got killed in the mines in 1925.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *No, in about 1928. My mother remarried, and we moved in to this place here, and ...*

Hovis: *Your mother remarried in Kennecott, then?*

Powell: *Yeah, um-hum. Yeah, he [his stepfather] worked in the mill here. [Uncertain words] sbaker table section there.*

Hovis: *How did your father get killed in the mines? Was that ...*

Powell: *Oh, he had a mine over at Rex Creek ... the top of Rex Creek.*

Hovis: *Yeah, sure the canyon, up there.*

Bleakley: *Yeah, I know who he was.*

Powell: *He had some tunnels back in there; and he was hydraulic'in; and*

a rock came off the mountain. He couldn't bear it with the noise of the giants there; Hit him in the head.

Hovis: *Hum.*

Powell: *They hauled him into Kennecott here on a wagon and horses. And ... he died in the hospital then.*

Hovis: *That's sad ... Were you ever up to those mines?*

Powell: *Oh, yeah! My mother wanted to lease the mine to a guy named Lou Anderton in about 19... 36, 35. N' he's back in a tunnel there ... and a rock fell on him. A big boulder - eight hundred pound boulder; Trapped him in there. And ah ... and he was by himself, so he ... nobody knew it until about a week or so afterwards. And the mailman ... missed [the] mail a couple of times ... Found him still missing a couple of times [later]; so he had 'em checkin' around ... And they found him back there in his rock [uncertain word - sounds like "environment"]. ... And his fingers*

were, scratched off ... at the second joint - [from] tryin' to dig his way out from under that rock.

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Bleakley: *Is this the same Lou Anderton that was ... he worked ... in Shushanna [Chisana] as ah ...*

Powell: *Anderton; T-O-N; Anderton; TON, not SON.*

Bleakley: *Yeab ... [he] worked in Shushanna as a hunting guide, earler.*

Powell: *Yeab. He, was, ah a loner. Kin'a ... prospect here 'n there [unclear word].*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *We had to go ... left Kennecott in 1932 due to slow down in Kennecott mine operations. We came back over in '37, and had [to] clean up all ... the ... tents and stuff like that; The water had ... get ... been high that summer. And it washed all the sides of the tents and stuff down into the ...*

over the bank. ... We had to clean up all that stuff. Yeab.

[Gap in tape].

Powell: *... back into the mine there, and seen a rock and [unclear words] the ground was pretty slack [unstable] in there ... and, ah ... [would] be solid in one place, and in another place, it'd slough off and cave in ...*

Hovis: *This was ... occurred in rock, not gravel?*

Powell: *Yeab. Yeab. There was some, some gravel, and some rock...*

Hovis: *I know it were ... good, good to get under a channel, I believe.*

Powell: *Yeab.*

Hovis: *I know where this tunnel is, too. ... Been back in it myself.*

Powell: *There's two or three tunnels in there that's been put in. My dad put some of 'em in ... an' he had mostly [done] placer work in there.*

Hovis: *Um-hum. How old were you at the time?*

Powell: *It, ah ... he died when I was a year and a half old.*

Hovis: *O.K. But, you stayed here for a lot longer than that?*

Powell: *Yeab, we stayed here in Kennecott ... [a few unclear words] ... [my mother] worked the laundry down here, and worked for Birch ... taking ... ah, house keeper. ... And [she] worked for Douglass. ... And ... [did] house work [for] ... [other] various people around.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *Laundry ... and ...*

Hovis: *O.K.*

Powell: *Kept busy, and ... The only women ... that were allowed around here, was people that worked, or were married to workers - had a reason to be here.*

Hovis: *Yes.*

Powell: *Yes. She was a widow ... [but] they ... had something going for her to keep [her] going ... those last few years.*

Hovis: *What, was it ... did she ever talk to you 'bout what it was like, 'bout what it was like to work in the laundry?*

Powell: *Who she work ...*

Hovis: *She ever talk about what it was like to work in the laundry; who she worked ... who the people were she worked with?*

Powell: *Oh, it was ... it was ... it was two people in there, besides her - [Tom] Mori and a Japanese guy that run the place.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *And, well, I used to go down there ... She'd take me down there; and I'd wait around there while she was ... working in there.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *But ... it wasn't [unclear word] hard work. It was, ah ... steady work, but not too hard. ... Was in the hospital linens, laundry, and the, ah ... uniforms and stuff like that.*

Hovis: *Wha... did they do the bedding out of the bunkhouses?*

Powell: *Some of it, yeah.*

Hovis: *Um-hum. So when she went to work for Douglass, or for Birch ... that was, that was ... a bit of an improvement?*

Powell: *Um-hum.*

Hovis: *She get to know them at all? Talk to ... Did she get to know Douglass and Birch? Talk about them?*

Powell: *Oh yeah. Um-hum. Yeah. She could [still] tell you till 1978. Ah, [then] her mind was off, off in the Alzheimer's; and so she [unintelligible].*

[Gap in tape].

- Powell: ... she had a nice house up in there.
- Hovis: ...'s too bad it's been torn down.
- Powell: Yeab. It had nice hardwood floors, and all that stuff.
- Hovis: Um-hum.
- Powell: And that one over next to the staff house, was [a] nice house there too. Don't recall who had that - who lived there, but she was involved in taking housekeeping [and] stuff [like that] in there, too.
- Hovis: Did she continue working after she remarried?



- Powell: Oh yeab. Um-hum. Yeab. Yeab. She worked down at the laundry then; and after ... and even after that till, about, oh ... 1930. We left there in '32. She worked up till almost '32 ... down there. But ... ah, had a place round there ... housekeeping and stuff like that.
- Hovis: You went to school there didn't you?
- Powell: Yeab, uh-um.
- Hovis: What was that like?
- Powell: Oh, pretty good.
- Hovis: Um-hum.
- Powell: It was a small, one room school house, and one ... [Uncertain word] lower grades on one end, and higher grades on the other side.
- Hovis: Um-hum.
- Powell: I went down there, yesterday, and looked around it. Piano's still there. It was, it was, ah ... had a lot of fun. Learned ...



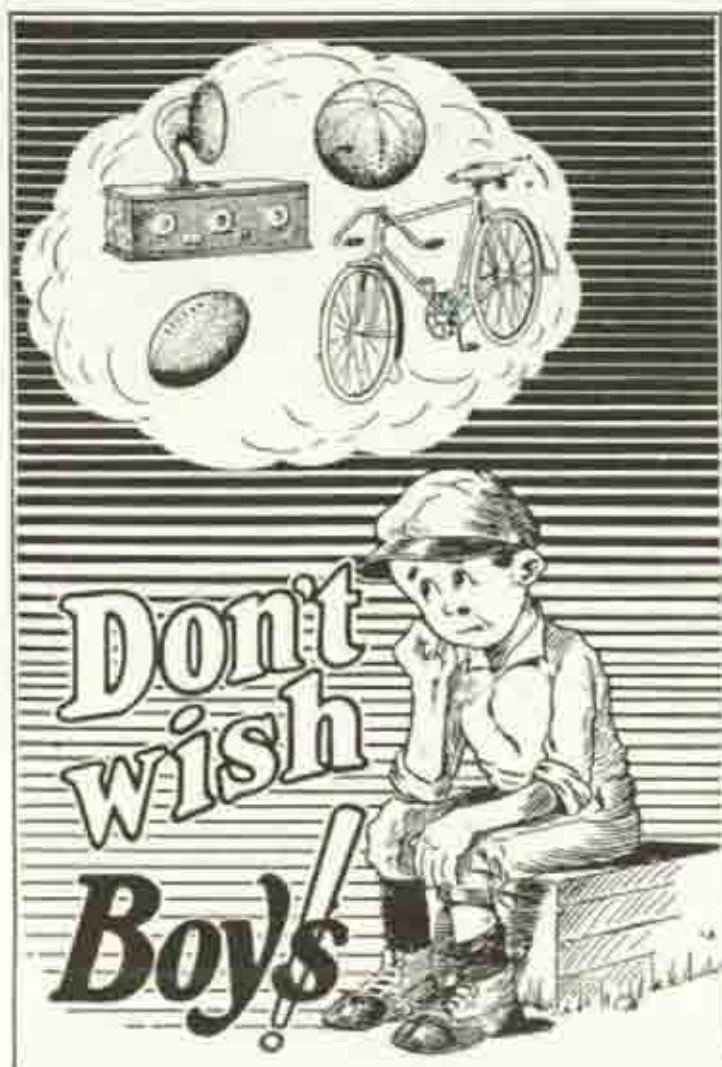
George Powell.



“(my father) had a mine over at Rex Creek...the top of Rex Creek. He had some tunnels back in there; and he was hydraulic’in; and a rock came off the mountain. He couldn’t hear it with the noise of the giants there; Hit him in the head. They hauled him into Kennecott here on a wagon and horses. And ... he died in the hospital then. ...he died when I was a year and a half old.”

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- Hovis: *Learned a little bit?*
- Powell: *Everything you need to know!*
[Laughs].
- Hovis: *Good!*
- Powell: *Think better than today I think*
[Chuckles].
- Bleakley: *Was just ten or twelve students at a time?*
- Powell: *Yeah ...it's ... 'bout ten. ... It wasn't very, wasn't too many ... Yeah.*
- Bleakley: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *It was more like ... ah ... oh ... it was [a] company, company school, and they had company policies, and company ... education and all. Almost like, was almost like ... [unintelligible word] ... they, ah ... wouldn't ... they accommodated us, but it was a ... school had strict rules and regulations ... what you learn and stuff like that.*
- Hovis: *Can you remember any of those regulations?*
- Powell: *No ...*
- Hovis: *... that might be different from what other people had?*
- Powell: *No. Some other kids might ... some of the older kids might, but I was, ah ... wasn't, wasn't worried about the ... rules and regulations ... we'd ...*
- Hovis: *Oh, yes, we've talked to the women who worried about the rules, and the men who really didn't*
[laughter] *dare. [Laughter].*
- Powell: *Rules keep your nose clean, and stuff like that. Do it ... take care of your stuff ... and, and take care of other people's stuff left out.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *Everybody helped everybody else. And it was a good deal all around.*
- Hovis: *O.K. You pretty much had the run of the place? Could you could go just about any place you wanted to?*



Powell:

Oh yeah; we[d] ... go up to the mill ... go up and watch my stepfather ... his work, and, ah ... and the machine shop ... and the power plant [unclear word]. Nobody bothered you ... as long

as you ... you did things that wouldn't upset things ...

Hovis:

Don't stick your nose in belts ... No biggie. ... O.K.

Powell:

[Unclear word] had me, traded me off several times when we were working ... watched the operations, and stuff like that.

Hovis:

Any favorite parts of it? Any parts of it that you enjoyed more than others?

Powell:

Oh ... not particularly ... it was just, oh ... it was all educational. ... Yeah there ... [were] hockey games 'n, ah ... and ... [unclear word - sounds like handball] they call down there ... and, ah ... and they had the, ah ... baseball diamond ... with bases out down there ... Had a black bear, used to come down there all the time, and play with the ... play with the bases [all laugh].

Hovis:

All right [continued laughter].

Powell: [Unclear words] *could ab put a pint of alcohol out there ... when ... bea'... bear [chuckle] lapped that up, and made about three laps of the bases there, and tore the bases all up a bit ... nothin' left ...'s event the bear [laughter].*

Hovis: *O.K. ... [Unclear word - possibly "that'd"] have been a cook out of the west bunkhouse down here then?*

Powell: *Yeab.*

Hovis: *Yeab. Um-hum. Was that, was that a Chinese cook?*

Powell: *Pardon.*

Hovis: *Chinese cook, or ... Chinese?*

Powell: *No he wouldn't been Chinese. ... Cook wasn't Chinese [unclear words]. White, white people, white man. Yeab.*

Hovis: *We're very vague on how many different groups were out here - how many Chinese, Japanese. ... Whether there were any ... natives worked here ...*

Powell: *There was a few Chinese, and, ab ... Japanese. ... Japanese run the laundry. The Chinese ... [unclear words - sounds like "member what the, he's ah"]. But ... [Unclear words - sounds like "One ... time ..."] down to Cordova, any ... one time on the train, and [he] talked to the section house down on the river, down there by ... oh, between Chitina and Cordova.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *And there was ... a waterfall, 's real ... heavy ple... heavy river rapids there... and I asked this guy what the name [of] that river was. You know. And he said they called it "China Man Charlie" rapids. And I guess, he said, "What did you call it?"... "How'd you bear that?" He says ... he bought five hundred tickets on the ice pool ... and he lost it by a minute, or something like that. He committed suicide, ... Jumped in the river there.*

Hovis: *[Sigh]. Hub ... Holy ...*

- Powell: *I don't know if it's true, or not, but that's ... [what he] told me ... Called it China Man's Rapids after that.*
- Hovis: *That's a sad loser.*
- Powell: *Yes [laugh].*
- Hovis: *Um, Yeab.*
- Powell: *Yeab, in 1932 we left ... here. They closed ... slowed the mines down quite a bit.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *We went down [the] ... Copper River on the train, and the bridges [were] going out. ... They salvaged most of the ties and stuff ...*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *... for reuse, and ... [unclear word] ... rebuild the bridge again. What, they had two by twelve planks nailed across [one] from the top of the piling. And a two by four rail [put] up for a hand rail. So ... we had to get off the train there and*
- walk across the bridge, on that ... and ... catch, catch another train on the other side ... [at] Cbitina .*
- Hovis: *Um-hub.*
- Bleakley: *That must have been about the sixteenth of August 1932, cause the seventeenth ...*
- Powell: *Ab? [stated emphatically].*
- Bleakley: *I seen pictures of the bridge gone ... in the river.*
- Powell: *I don't remember [unclear words] ... I thought it was earlier ... June time, myself. ... It might been there that, that late [though].*
- Bleakley: *'S, I've got a picture that's dated by who ever took it: August 17, 1932. ... That shows pieces of the, of the tracks and stuff in the water.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Bleakley: *And the bridge gone.*



Copper River Railway Bridge at Chitina, Aug. 17, 1932. Courtesy Anchorage Museum of History and Art.

Powell: *I never seen the pic... [unclear word] of that [unclear word]. But ...*

Bleakley: *Do you have any ...*

Powell: *I would say [unclear words] I don't know I was wrong. Going across there ... My mother was scared stiff.*

Bleakley: *... Your mother was hysterical.*

Powell: *[Laughter with Hovis and Bleakley].*

Hovis: *O.K.*

Powell: *Was a good trip, but, today, I can go down through that road in a car, or something, and I can't imagine a train goin' through there.*

Hovis: *Awfully steep in spots isn't it?*

Powell: *Well, the steep places mostly had trestles.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *Top there, to top them ... and there was lots of trestles ... and they ... stuck in there ... good experience.*

Hovis: *So, where, where'd you go when you left, left Kennecott?*

Powell: *Went to Anchorage.*

Hovis: *Went to Anchorage?*

Powell: *Yeab. Yeab, my stepfather got a job on the railroad over there ... He worked there until, ah ... 1940, ah ... '47, or along that. And, he went towards [unintelligible] probably about '48. Then he went out to Portland, Oregon. Him and my mother kind 'a split up about that time ... and he got down the ... Portland, there. And ... he, he got tangled up with some of these boxing ... underworld. He was, he was, kind of ah ... promoter ... He use to promote fights in the community hall in Kennecott. And so he got that down there, and, somebody killed him there. They don't know who it was. They found him in the river, with ...*

- with, op... [unclear words- sounds like Sauvie's Island], or some place down there.*
- Hovis: *Hum.*
- Powell: *That was in ... I guess ... 50... no '51 ... they found, ab ... died.*
- Hovis: *He use to bring fighters in here to Kennecott?*
- Powell: *Yeab. We had 'em ... they ... he was a promoter ... and the miners, and the people in shops ... had volunteers [that would] box you know. Stuff like that.*
- Hovis: *You usually won?*
- Powell: *Pardon.*
- Hovis: *Did it, were there regular winners?*
- Powell: *No ... they was, ab ... Every couple months ... he had ... put on an exhibition. Whatever happened be ...you'd ... you would volunteer, or ...*
- Hovis: *Bare knuckle?*
- Powell: *... get your head knocked off.*
- Hovis: *Was it bare knuckle fighting?*
- Powell: *No. They had the ... ab ...handball court, over there by the school, between that and the bunkhouse.*
- Hovis: *Um-bum.*
- Powell: *And he was, he was, ab ... in to handball [unclear words]. Had two [unclear word].*
- Hovis: *How old were you when you left here?*
- Powell: *Nine.*
- Hovis: *Nine? You got some pretty strong memories of the, of the place.*
- Powell: *I ... I've forgot, forgot so much of it by now. But ... and it's ... getting to the point that ... I can't remember a lot of the ... mmm ... small details, and stuff like that.*
- Hovis: *Seem to be doing all right by me!*

- Powell: *Oh [laugh].*
[Gap in tape].
- Powell: *... Oh yeah, on that ... that trip down the ... to Cordova there ... Couple of times ... made three trips on the railroad I guess, but ...*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *That, that ... train was something else.*
- Hovis: *Do you, do you have vivid memories of riding the train?*
- Powell: *Oh, yeah.*
- Hovis: *What, what was it like? Were the cars hot? Ah ... horse hair seats? ...*
- Powell: *No. It was, it was ... they were old-fashioned cars, you know ... and they were warm, and everything [was] workin' on 'em The train picked up a Native down there in Chitina ... and, ah ... he was ill, for some reason ... But he got into Cordova ... Even*
- hungry ... My stepfather gave him a tuna fish sandwich.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *And he's ... Guy, got down into, ah ... Cordova ... [And] why, he just got off the train and dropped dead ... on the platform, there.*
- Bleakley: *Cer... Certainly hadn't been ... Nothing to do with the tuna fish! [All laugh].*
- Powell: *No. He was, he was, ah ... looked like [he was in] pretty bad shape. But, he came in our car looking for something to eat there.*
- Hovis: *Yeah.*
- Powell: *He was going to the doctor, or something, in Cordova, at the time ... And ... he was the first [dead] body I'd seen outside of a funeral, or something like ... that ...I'd seen up here.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum. D' you ever have much to do with people who lived down in McCarthy?*

- Hovis: O.K.
[Gap in tape].
- Hovis: ... and he was pretty good with ... 'bout that, with some people, weren't they? Letting some people work out on their own mines in the summer ... taking them in the winter.
- Powell: Um-hum. They had, they had a good machinist crew here then. ... They had, ab, Carl Engstrom was up there. I think you heard of him.
- Hovis: Um-hum.
- Powell: And ... they had, oh ... quite a bit of work ... But there was slack periods and everything ... where a guy could get off ... and do ... their ... stuff like that. If they had ... work to be done, they'd ... get a hold of them, and bring um back - get um back here.
[Gap in tape].
- Hovis: ... father down in the cemetery?
- Powell: Yeah. It be ... he's back in the far wall. ... He ab, he ab ... [unclear word] best ground. But ab ... you know, where [the] chicken wire fence fell?
- Hovis: Um-hum.
- Powell: I was down there four years ago, 'n they had it all painted up ... white washed.
- Hovis: Um-hum.
- Powell: Yeah, somebody cleaned it up pretty good.
- Hovis: That was the crew from the asbestos removal [loud noise blocks words]. The people that took out the asbestos here ...
- Powell: Yeah.
- Hovis: They hadn't made themselves quite as popular as they could have. So they decided to do a community service project, and go down and clean up the cemetery.

- Powell: *Well, they didn't do that, I don't think ... [indecipherable mumbling].*
- Hovis: *Oh, we had to clean up after them too!*
- Powell: *But, as far as I'm concerned, them asbestos people are out of their mind anyway. 'Cause it ... all people up here ... ah ... of all the people here, I don't think ... probably none of them had ever died of asbestos.*
- Hovis: [Laughs].
- Powell: *They worked ... they worked with it ... and lived with it ... and everything else, for*
- Bleakley: *Yeah.*
- Powell: *For years.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *I think it's, it's ... an overrated bazard ... so.*
- Hovis: *Probably.*
- Powell: *I worked with asbestos, from the, ah ... around airplanes, for forty years ...*
- Hovis: *Um-hum. Never wore a ma... a mask?*
- Powell: *Insulation and stuff on the ... ah ... hydraulic lines ... [and] stuff, you know, and like ... it's, ah ... overrated as far as I'm concerned ... Scare at that ... scare business from running.*
- Hovis: *What, what did you ... after you left Kennecott? Where did you go?*
- Powell: *I went to Anchorage.*
- Hovis: [Unclear words - sounds like: "what did you do there?"].
- Powell: *Went to school fall of '32. Mowed lawns for several residents including [the] Atwoods and Larsons. Delivered papers, etc. Worked at Alaska Fish Cannery in '38 - '39. Then I went to work on the ... ah ... Eckmann's Furniture Company [downtown?] driving a truck ...*

- Hovis: O.K.
- Powell: ... Kid ... taught me to drive ... a model "A" ... car he had, on a golf course after school one night ... And the next day, I went down and I got a job drivin' truck ... at a ... furniture store. The guy says "you drive?" I says, "oh yeah."
[Laughter].
- Powell: Was a five speed International ... Never had a lick of trouble [all laugh] ... didn't even have a license at the time ...
- Hovis: Um-hum.
- Powell: I worked there for about four years. ... Three years, I guess. ... I ... They ... well ... Before that, I worked over 't canneries down there, at ... Anchorage.
- Hovis: Um-hum.
- Powell: I ... Ah ... General ... Alaska General Fish Company. Delivered papers, etc. Worked at Alaska Fish Cannery in '38 - '39. ... It was, it was, good ... [unclear words] ...
- no pay ... It was a dollar ... No, eighty-five cents an hour, I started ... And I got, ah ... You didn't ... Got in there 'n got something. ... Already [uncertain word - sounds like "five"]. But ... we had a problem with all the kids in school work[ing] there [in the] summer time. When I didn't work there, I worked over at Eckmann's Furniture Store.
- Hovis: Were you another one of the kids, that when you left here, you got all the childhood illnesses, one right after the other?
- Powell: No! Ah, no.
- Hovis: Oh, the ... Several people have said that when they left here, they were really healthy when they were here. But, when they went to ... went ... left Kennecott, they got, ah ...
- Powell: Health problems?
- Hovis: They got ... the mumps ... chicken pox ... measles [many talking at one time here]. ... Never got any of the childhood diseases here.



Bottom steps: Lyle Morris, Jean Presley, Catherine Howard, and unknown child. Upper steps: John Watsjold, Bruce Morris, Frank Morris, unknown child, and teacher.



*“It was...like...[a]...company school,
and they had company policies, and
company...education and all.*

*...they accommodated us, but it was a ... school
(that) had strict rules and regulations ... what you
learn and stuff like that.*

Rules keep your nose clean...”

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- Powell: *Yeab, I got ...cbicken pox. ... And got measles after going to Anchorage ... And something else. But, that's all! Nothing else. ... Nobody ... Ab ... O.K. Maybe ... ah ... special ... everybody in town bad, ah ... cbicken pox ... But ... there was no, ah ... well [unclear words]. It's just, just ... some[thing] went through. ... But, ah ...Filipinos work[ed] on the, ah ... on the cannery down there...*
- Hovis: *Um-bum.*
- Powell: *... that one guy on the weight machine. ... Ab ... case come through ... full of ... ah ... what ... thirty-eight, or forty pounds, or whatever it was. Anyhow ... ah ... we found a way to re-stack the cans in the box ... You put two extra cans in there. And the case weight checker went through the scale ... and it'd be too heavy. So he'd just ... dumped the case out. And weigh each can separately, and it was ... all worked exactly right. He ... could never get these two cans back in the case [Powell and Hovis laughter]. About two or three weeks later, we'd do the same thing again. And we ... was driving that guy crazy [laughs].*
- Hovis: *Ab-hub ... yes.*
- Powell: *[Chuckling]. You put four cans, and three, and a four, and three, and four, like that. And leave space on the end, so you can get the extra cans in.*
- Hovis: *Um-bum.*
- Powell: *That, that guy was real proud of his mind [laughs].*
- Hovis: *Did you play any practical tricks like that when you were out here ... at Kennecott?*
- Powell: *Oh ... we done a few things here ...*
- Hovis: *Um-bum.*
- Powell: *We were down here throwin' rocks at an outhouse one day, and ... the butcher caught us ... We didn't see 'm comin' ... So he nailed both of*

us. Took us up to the, ab, meat market here. And he was going to cut our ears off and hang us on a meat hook. Boy, you grabbed [unclear words]. He was tellin' us all about throwing rocks and boy, he scared the livin' hell out of us. [Laughter].



MEATS

Hovis: *How long [laughter] before you threw rocks at an outhouse again? [laughter].*

Powell: *We didn't throw rocks no more! [Continued laughter]. He got our attention!*

Hovis: *Yes.*

Powell: *He got that ... he set it down there, and he had a meat cleaver, 'n [was] knockin' these hooks back 'n forth on a meat hook rail up there, and ...*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *... was going to hang us up ...*

Hovis: *You gone back in there?*

Powell: *Um-hum.*

Hovis: *Oh yeah. Yeah.*

Powell: *He set us, set us down ... and grabbed his, ab ... steel to ... sharpen his tool up, there. ... And we took off, you know! [Laughter]. He was laughing like hell.*

Bleakley: *I'll bet!*

Hovis: *How much did you say you'd dress out to? What'd he say you'd dress out to? How much good meat left?*

Powell: *'Bout fifty pounds [laughter]. Once you ... Anybody about six years old.*

- Powell: *Yeab ...*
- Hovis: *I'm glad to bear that.*
- Powell: *Yeab. People were compassionate ... Helped everybody else.*
- Hovis: *Thank you very much. O.K. [unintelligible].*
- Powell: *There were ski parties, and stu[dents] ... go up 'n down the railroad tracks.*
- Hovis: *You guys ever go across to 4th of July Creek, or?*
- Powell: *I probably did.*
- Hovis: *Didn't like ... or anything like that?*
- Powell: *Well, some of 'em might have. But, I was ... I never got to do it ... Most of the kids were older than I was ... Wben, ... I was ... born in '23. And, ah ... but, ah ... There was only ... four, or five ... Six ... was born within [the] '22 ... to '24 range there.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *Most of the kids were older than I [was], and ... any old timers ...*
- Hovis: *At age nine. Age nine ... Now you were old enough to ask this question - [Did] you ever have any girl friend out here?*
- Powell: *No.*
- Hovis: *A little girl ... Puppy love thing?*
- Powell: *No. No. [laughs]. [I was only] nine at the time ... Wasn't worried about girls then.*
- Hovis: *It's a shame ... My son's started ... He's six ... He's still ... Startin' to worry ... He's starting to worry about it already! Scary.*
- [Pause in interview conversations].
- Powell: *Went to St. Louis in 1942. They sent many families out of Anchorage for safety during ... the war.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *We went by Tri-motor Stinson from Anchorage down to Juneau ... And then ... boat to Seattle ... and back to St. Louis by train.*

Hovis: *That must have been ... [A] Tri-motor! ... Must of been quite a flight.*

Powell: *Oh yeah, it was fun. Yeab.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *Yeab, it's same type goin' outside now again. [The Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum had it out there; and they sold it in '99.]*

Hovis: *Same one?*

Powell: *It's the same type.*

Hovis: *Ab ... It's the. ... That's the one they're selling.*

Powell: *It's goin' back to Indiana, some place.*

Bleakley: *It's like, the only one left! I think.*

Hovis: *Yes.*

Powell: *There's only a couple of 'em left. Yeab. They're lucky ... they got this one ... I think ... in a short time, it would have, ab ... crashed itself.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *'Cause they ... They found some problems with it out here before it left ... that hadn't been corrected previously.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *They fixed it [and] ... they probably saved it ... from crashing.*

Hovis: *When you're ... Did they have the airstrip down at McCarthy when you were here? Or was ...*

Powell: *They had a small one down there, yeab. Yeab, [unclear name - sounds like Bud Seltenreich] had his plane down there; and ... him and his brothers Ted and Fred ... [Harold] Gillam use to come in there ... sometime[s]. And a few more of them.*

- Hovis: *'D you know Bud?*
- Powell: *Oh yeah! Over there ... Bud got me started in the airplane business about 19.. ah ... '38, '39, or something like that. ... Cleaned parts for 'm out of Merrill Field there.*
- Hovis: *O.K.*
- Powell: *That's back in a long time.*
- Hovis: *You're a pilot, aren't you, too?*
- Powell: *Pardon. I have flown, yeah. But not since about 1970 ... or ...*
- [Gap in tape].
- Powell: *... Bud and his brother had ... he had ... a biplane. And he used to fly back. ... Was first year Gillam came up.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *Was up 'n down through here ... about 1928 ... 29 ... something like that.*
- Hovis: *They were a couple characters, weren't they?*
- Powell: *Yeah. In 19.. ah ... '84 ... '85 ... brother Fred [Seltenreich] was over on the ... in Shushanna, or some place over here; and he found, a ... a diary in an old roadhouse that ... belonged to my dad.*
- Hovis: *Really!*
- Powell: *He gave it to me; and, ah ... [I found] it had ah ... bunch of his, ah ... notations from mining and stuff like that.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *Recipe for raisin wine.*
- Hovis: *Well, you're going to be over there ...*
- Powell: *Hope there's [unclear word]. ... In mint condition! Almost.*
- Hovis: *You still have it?*
- Powell: *Yeah.*

Hovis: *Would you mind if I called you in Anchorage? And took a look at it some time?*

Powell: *Well, ah ... yeah, if I could it [laughs].*

Hovis: *I would, I would love to see this.*

Powell: *Note ... note book like that?*

Hovis: *Um-hum. Did it talk about what he did on the ... on the [unintelligible].*

Powell: *There's not, there's not too much information ... eh? ... 1920. Two, I think ... '20 ... '21 ... '23.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *Year before he died.*

Hovis: *O.K.*

Powell: *But, I don't know if I can find the thing anymore. I'll look for it. See if I can find it.*

Hovis: *O.K., I'm going to make a note that you have that, because I would*

love to, if you do have it, I'd love to see it. I need a good recipe for raisin wine! ... Most of mine are really rotten. ... O.K.

[Powell later found his father's note book and brought it to a meeting with Hovis at the NPS office in Anchorage on June 19, 2000. Hovis copied portions of it to be stored with the NPS Alaska Regional office curatorial collections].

[Gap in tape].

Powell: *... old roadhouse over there [unclear words] ... Shushanna.*

Hovis: *... O.K. ... And that, and that was the diary he would have been keeping on Rex Creek, though? It found its way all the way up the Shushanna.*

Powell: *No. No. It wasn't a diary ... [it] was just a log book ... with all his notes [unclear words]. He didn't have ... didn't have much in it besides notations on his, ah ... [bills?] and stuff like that.*

Hovis: *Um-hum. ... Well, that's as much of the mining as being able, being able to find the gold.*

Bleakley: *Yeab. I'm still tryin' to figure out who it was that ... that made that first landing in Shushanna [Chisana] in '29. There was an injured ... over there, and somebody flew in from McCarthy to Shushanna, and picked em up.*

Powell: *Wasn't Bud Seltenreich, or Fred, was it?*

Bleakley: *I don't know. I haven't, ab ... Nobody's [laugh] ever said who it was.*

Hovis: *Was that in that, ab...*

Bleakley: *Was in McKennan's [Robert A. McKennan's] ...*

Hovis: *McKennan's study ... Diary. Yeab.*

Powell: *Well, Bud Seltenreich [would] probably know.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *He can probably tell you. His brother ... ab, crashed an airplane over there ... about that time.*

Bleakley: *It was somebody from McCarthy, I think ... was flying around here then ... There couldn't have been that many people with airplanes here [laughter].*

Powell: *Yeab. He'd know who it was. Yeab.*

Hovis: *Well, track Bud down then and ask him.*

Powell: *Ask him, yeab. Yeab, he's got good memory. He, ab ... [In the 6-19-00 meeting with Hovis, Powell pointed out that Bud passed away in '99].*

[Gap in tape].

Powell: *... lot of things going down in McCarthy, there ... He [Red] ... used to, ab ... have a dog team. And he'd haul miners back 'n forth from ... McCarthy to Kennecott. Be down there for a weekend ... or for over night.*

Hovis: *Um-hum. Get 'em back for [the] shift in the morning?*

Powell: *Slip 'em on to a sled and bring 'em back here, and ... [Hovis chuckling] Five bucks, ab [laugh].*

Hovis: *Yeah, he's told a few moonsbine stories, too.*

Powell: *Um-hum. Yeah, that, ab ... Yeah, Red died a year or two ago. And he's ... he had a lot, a lot of his stories ... Like Bud, he should write that stuff down that he's got.*

Bleakley: *The problem is ... sometimes we don't know the right questions to ask.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Bleakley: *You know? And then, by the time we think of the right questions, it's too late.*

Hovis: *Yeah.*

Powell: *Yeah ... It's, ab ... I wrote a lot of stuff down back in the last few years. But I can't ... I ... Just try ta...*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Powell: *Get it down before I forget it.*

Hovis: *Well, if you would ever like to share it, we'd be a very appreciative audience.*

Powell: *Well, most is what I've ... told you so far ... Haven't, ab ... Given ... little odds and ends here 'n there about, ab ... But ... most stuff, it's, ab... What I've written down ... has ... nothin' to do with Kennecott at all. Just [unclear words] and Kennecott, Anchorage, and ... durin' the war, and stuff like that.*

Hovis: *Um-hum.*

Bleakley: *Well, that's all interesting stuff, too.*

Hovis: *Yeah.*

[Gap in tape].

Powell: *In 1945, I found an airplane over in China.*

- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *And ... I copied its ... name and model [number] off it ... and the engine numb... type, and ... her Year. Tryin' ta find information on that thing. I told a friend of mine here about it, about twenty years ago. And he's, he run across a model airplane magazine [that] had a picture of it, and plans for it. But, ah ... [the nineteen] ninety-seven ... Wings Magazine came out with [a] story about another [similar] plane. Had pictures [and] all the stuff like that. [It] was made in Canada. [At the] Canadian [Carand?] foundry.*
- Hovis: *Oh, yeab.*
- Powell: *And, ah ... the article said that airplane was ... was burned up in a fire; in, ah ... Canada ... Eastern Canada.*
- Hovis: *There's the problem. There's another one over in China.*
- Powell: *Another one over in China. It was ... I got a ... [unclear word] -*
- sounds like "picture"], Got hope ... now. Got a hold of [the Wings] magazine. Told 'em 'bout finding this thing over there.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum.*
- Powell: *I got the pot stirred up over there now ... And they got ... I was tryn' ta track down ... how that plane got there. Wasn't suppose to be out ... They only made one of 'em.*
- Hovis: *Um-hum. Burned up in the fire. Was only one of 'um. Only one [laughter].*
- Powell: *I got several letters back from this guy that wrote that story, and I think there's more information comin'. Was a beautiful little airplane!*
- Hovis: *O.K.*
- Powell: *Must have been a fighter ... an FDB-1. Was a fighter bomber. But ... the United States government got in to the act, and they couldn't sell airplanes for, ah ... too many*



Main Street, Cordova. Courtesy Landfear B. Norris Collection.



“The train picked up a Native (man) down there in Chitina ...looked (in) pretty bad shape. ...he came in our car looking for something to eat...and... My stepfather gave him a tuna fish sandwich. (The Native man) was going to the doctor...in Cordova... and (when we) got down into...Cordova...he just got off the train and dropped dead...on the platform there. ...he was the first body I’d seen outside of a funeral, (the first)...I’d seen up here.”

GEORGE POWELL

Hovis: *Well, George, we'll say thank you again.*

Powell: *O.K.*

Hovis: *And I'll turn it [the tape recorder] off, and I'll expect you to start to start saying something else again [all laugh].*