

1 **TRANSCRIPTION OF AUDIO DISC**

2 Oral History Tapes with Seldovia Village Tribe

3 ALBERT WILSON

4 Run Time: 20:49

5 MP3 Format/24MB

6 E78A3082000Wilson

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8 INTERVIEWER: LILLIAN ELUSAAS.

9 BEGINNING WITH QUESTIONING BY INTERVIEWER:

10 INTERVIEWER: Okay, this is the year 2000, and Albert
11 Wilson is here with us to—for the interview on the subsistence
12 activities and his experiences on his subsistence lifestyle, so Albert,
13 would you describe your household, those who harvested resources
14 with you and those you shared resources with?

15 And you could start from the time you were young or
16 wherever you want to start, so you could go ahead and explain what all
17 you did.

18 ALBERT WILSON: Well, most of my subsistence fishing
19 was done in Seldovia Bay and my hunting has been around in this area
20 also. And it's—it hasn't improved any, it's—if it wasn't for the
21 harvest—that planted fish in this—around Seldovia, I wouldn't be
22 catching any fish at all.

23 And as far as the animals go, there isn't any, I think I
24 got one porkie in the last two years, and that's about all, as far as
25 animals go.

26 INTERVIEWER: Like when you were younger, were you
27 able to go hunting or fishing with your dad or family or, you know, how
28 did you start off?

29 ALBERT WILSON: Well, when I was younger up in—
30 until my mother passed away, I mean, my mother would—I would go
31 out hunting by myself mostly, I mean, but I learned fishing and hunting,
32 I grew up that way, I'd mostly be by myself all the time, I'd go out duck
33 hunting and snaring rabbits and shooting a porcupine or a bear, and
34 that doesn't happen anymore, very seldom.

35 INTERVIEWER: Okay, and you grew up here in
36 Seldovia?

37 ALBERT WILSON: Yeah, I'd been raised in Seldovia,
38 right, it's the only place I ever hunted or fished.

39 INTERVIEWER: Whenever you went hunting or fishing
40 in a skiff or whatever, did you always have an outboard? Did you ever
41 have to row when you went somewhere, when you went hunting?

42 ALBERT WILSON: No, I never—I never traveled very
43 far, I always used the lagoon most of the times, the Seldovia lagoon was
44 mostly where my fish came from, or Seldovia Bay. And you need an
45 outboard to go up Seldovia Bay, but I—that's only in the recent years,
46 the next five or six years is the only time I used the outboard.

47 I never did row any distance, no.

48 INTERVIEWER: Okay, the next question is what
49 animals, fish and plants were the most important to your subsistence in
50 the past? And you could say what—you could go by what animals, fish
51 and then plants, and then just---

52 ALBERT WILSON: Yeah, well, the animals, usually I'd
53 try to get a black bear, and a porcupine and get spruce hens, which is a
54 bird, and that was about it.

55 INTERVIEWER: Okay, and how about fish?

56 ALBERT WILSON: Yeah, well, fish's always been--the
57 favorite fish that I liked the most that is not around anymore, was
58 whiting, I used to catch whiting and herring in the Seldovia Slough, and
59 that is not—there is none around here like that anymore to be had.
60 They are immature, they're not mature fish anymore, the ones that's
61 coming back.

62 INTERVIEWER: Whittings?

63 ALBERT WILSON: Yeah, well, whittings is a—well, I
64 haven't seen any, actually, I mean, I set a net out and there is none,
65 there's---

66 INTERVIEWER: When was the last time you noticed an
67 abundance of whiting, in the lagoon?

68 ALBERT WILSON: Oh, gosh, that must have been
69 before I went outside, that's been over ten years ago, or better, before
70 there were any of them left. Whiting.

71 INTERVIEWER: So, they're totally gone? Or there's
72 still a few?

73 ALBERT WILSON: There are a few around, occasionally
74 you catch maybe four in a net there, if you fish for a week you'll get
75 about four whiting and then there—I usually catch a few Pollock also,
76 but---

77 (Voice whispering in background.)

78 ALBERT WILSON: Huh?

79 Yeah, I used to catch a few Pollock, they call them
80 that—what the heck, you had to get the name for them though—Silver,

81 or something like that, I can't remember, but yeah, there used to be a
82 few of those that came in, they look different---

83 INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the cause of the
84 depletion of our fishes in our area that we used to have is because of
85 there is no longer canneries here in Seldovia, where, you know, how
86 they used to drain, you know, and they had a lot of feed here and stuff?

87 ALBERT WILSON: Well, yeah, that is part of it, that—
88 and—but really the feeding—the water—like the plankton and stuff is
89 been killed off there when the Exxon oil spill came, I think that did more
90 damage here to where it takes many years before it builds back up
91 again, it's just starting to show a little bit now.

92 But the Exxon spill was the most devastating thing I
93 can think, because it killed things that you won't ever realize, I mean
94 like the things on the shore, the plankton and all the small things, and
95 the other fish were starving too because of that.

96 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, is there any other fish that you
97 go out and fish for, like Halibut and Kings and---

98 ALBERT WILSON: Well, I go out and Halibut fishing, but
99 you have to go so far now, I mean you can catch a Halibut, but you have
100 to go at least two miles on the average to catch a Halibut, it isn't close

101 by like it used to be in the early days. And I very seldom go out and get
102 them because they're—they too are mostly smaller in the Springtime
103 they're immature Halibut which is good eating but it's still not—you
104 don't see the big ones until the Fall.

105 INTERVIEWER: Okay, then it says on here, please—oh,
106 we forgot to talk about plants, is there any type of plants that you
107 gather, you know, from the beach or from the woods?

108 ALBERT WILSON: Well, goose tongues, I used to eat
109 goose tongues a lot of times, which was a—is a good edible food, but I
110 haven't been doing that lately because there isn't—there isn't any
111 place that I can harvest them like I used to be able to.

112 INTERVIEWER: Okay, the next one is please describe
113 your reason—or your season-round of subsistence activities, where did
114 you go to harvest, who usually went with you?

115 ALBERT WILSON: I went by myself, mostly.

116 I mean, in the early days me and my cousin lived
117 together, Lewis, he was living with me and we'd go out together
118 hunting, I remember he went hunting with me, and---

119 INTERVIEWER: Where did you guys go?

120 ALBERT WILSON: Well, we'd go mostly up the lagoon,
121 and up on the outside beach, the lagoon, up the lighthouse lagoon.

122 But I did go with—Andy Seaford used to take me up
123 the head of Selodovia Bay for moose hunting, but I have never went up
124 there for years and years now, because there's too many people
125 already out there, you go out hunting now you have to wear red clothes
126 and you got to have a hunting jacket on with something red so they can
127 see you, you're afraid of being, you know, mistaken for a moose, you
128 know, if you go without proper clothing on there so they can see you.

129 INTERVIEWER: Okay, I guess that would be under—it
130 says please describe a hunt or fishing trip or berry picking, et cetera,
131 you want to explain what you did on your—on one of your hunts, or
132 your fishing trips?

133 ALBERT WILSON: Well---

134 INTERVIEWER: Maybe you can talk about your moose
135 hunt?

136 ALBERT WILSON: Well, my moose hunt was late in the
137 Fall of course, the August month, and if you got the moose that time of
138 year you had to—you'd have to get it—taken care of right away, and if
139 you didn't have a freezer to put it in it'd spoil on you, so you couldn't

140 get very—the moose there, I think the last moose I got spoiled on me, I
141 got one moose up the head of Bradley Lake—or Fox River I should say,
142 and I had to salt it down before I even got away from there.

143 INTERVIEWER: Hmm, that's a good—that's one of
144 the ways to---

145 ALBERT WILSON: Yeah, I salted the whole thing
146 down—it was a small moose and I salted it down and then I think the
147 next one after that I got with Punch—and I was fishing with Punch and I
148 got a hell of a pull and he got a moose up there and that moose was—I
149 went and took all the meat off the bone and let him have the bone
150 there and I took my share of it, we split it fifty-fifty, but I took just all
151 meat, I just cut all the meat off the bone, what I wanted, and took---

152 INTERVIEWER: Did you ever smoke or can moose
153 meat?

154 ALBERT WILSON: My mother did, but I didn't, no. No, I
155 haven't---

156 And living by myself now I don't need that much food,
157 so I'd rather not do it, I can get it from friends now, if I can have
158 somebody give it to me rather than go out and get it myself.

159 INTERVIEWER: Okay, the next one is how were fish
160 processed and preserved, how did you ever put away your fish, you
161 know, whenever you go King salmon fishing and stuff?

162 ALBER WILSON: Well, with these here stock raised fish
163 that they have here in the--I freeze them and can them, I mean, I've
164 done that, I think I froze all of them, like we do during the summer, you
165 can some of them during the Fall, after that then the season is over
166 with, but I haven't done a good job of it, all the fish that I canned has
167 made me sick so I had to quit doing that, I didn't do a good job of it,
168 cleaning the fish.

169 I've got two cases right now at home and they're un-
170 edible because they make me sick from being—I apparently didn't
171 clean it good enough or whatever it is---

172 INTERVIEWER: It could be that it's not sealed?

173 ALBERT WILSON: No, it sealed, the thing is sealed all
174 right, they're well sealed, but I get sick from them if I eat it, I don't
175 know if it's that or the fish or if it's because I didn't wash it enough or
176 some darn thing, but it just doesn't—it makes me sick.

177 INTERVIEWER: Wow. Do you smoke salmon?

178 ALBERT WILSON: No, I never did. I never did learn
179 how to smoke salmon.

180 INTERVIEWER: Okay, the next one is, how was
181 subsistence fishing worked around commercial harvesting? When you
182 were commercial fishing did you—did you also subsistence for your
183 fish, to take home?

184 ALBERT WILSON: No, not during the commercial
185 fishing, no, I'd wait until I'd get that over, after the season all the time,
186 no, I didn't used any of my commercial fish time for that.

187 INTERVIEWER: But you did go out and use your
188 commercial gear to bring home your fish---

189 ALBERT WILSON: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, I'd do that.

190 INTERVIEWER: Okay, how have your subsistence
191 activities changed over the years?

192 ALBERT WILSON: Well, my activity has gotten less all
193 the time, I mean it isn't—I don't have no family to support, I don't have
194 nobody to—no reason to go out anymore, to—and as I get older I don't
195 eat as much, and I'm living by myself so anything I get in any abundance
196 I'd have to give it away.

197 INTERVIEWER: So, do you use more or less wild foods
198 than you used to?

199 ALBERT WILSON: Less, much less, yeah.

200 INTERVIEWER: Okay, what have been the major
201 factors affecting variation in your subsistence harvests?

202 ALBERT WILSON: What have been the what? Major
203 factors?

204 INTERVIEWER: Major factors affecting variation in
205 your subsistence harvests?

206 ALBER WILSON: Well, living by myself I can't eat too
207 much and now I'm moving here in town I can't—I don't need that
208 much, my subsistence is very small now compared to what it was
209 because my lifestyle has changed and I don't need to eat that much and
210 I don't do it because I can get it from somebody else. The little bit I
211 need I can—somebody else can give me some and it's enough to get
212 me by.

213 INTERVIEWER: Ahuh, that's the way it's supposed to
214 work. You helped people before and now they help you.

215 ALBERT WILSON: Yeah.

216 INTERVIEWER: Okay, comments, how has Seldovia
217 changed in your lifetime?

218 ALBERT WILSON: Well, there's been an awful lot of
219 change actually, there's most everything that I've seen when I was a kid
220 has got killed off, I mean to a certain extent it's getting less and less all
221 the time, it has not—there is nothing that's seemed to have come back
222 like it was before, once it's gone it never shows up like it was before.
223 It's like when we had the oil spill was the worst of all, it's going to take
224 a long time before it gets back to normal, if it ever—I don't think it ever
225 will.

226 INTERVIEWER: Okay, any comments on the youth in
227 the community?

228 ALBERT WILSON: What's that?

229 INTERVIEWER: Any comments on the youth, on the
230 kids, in the community?

231 ALBERT WILSON: Oh, oh, yeah, well, the young
232 generation now is—everything is for the sport of it, it's not for
233 subsistence as much as it is just to go out and be able to catch it, I mean
234 the youths' generation, they like to fish, they like to get out and do
235 things, but they don't store it away, I mean they take it home and let

236 their mother take care of it, but to them, they're not interested in
237 learning how to process the food like we used to have to do.

238 INTERVIEWER: Okay, I guess as parents we don't push
239 it, huh?

240 ALBERT WILSON: (Laughing.)

241 INTERVIEWER: Are they—well, I guess you kind of
242 answered the question here, are they learning subsistence skills?

243 ALBERT WILSON: Not that I know of, I mean the kids
244 that I seen around here---

245 INTERVIEWER: There might be a few?

246 ALBERT WILSON: Yeah, I've seen a few all right, yeah.
247 There should be.

248 INTERVIEWER: Okay, anything else you want to say,
249 Albert, because we got your recording and this will be history?

250 ALBERT WILSON: Yeah, well, I say that everything
251 that's been in my lifestyle—my lifetime, is getting less and less all the
252 time, I mean there is nothing improving, improvement of fishing or
253 hunting is getting—it's harder to come by, you have to travel further for
254 your subsistence food now than you ever have to—did before. And it's

255 not going to be able to improve because there's so much pollution, I
256 mean it's not only the water pollution, but it's the sound pollution, I
257 mean airplanes scare things away, and construction scares the moose
258 away.

259 I experienced that when Bradley Lake was being built
260 the moose got scared and came down here, I've seen it when the
261 geologists, when they called it exploring for oil, they set off a dynamite
262 charge in the water and that year that they did that in the Kachemak
263 Bay all the fish from the other side came over this way, the Halibut
264 came over this way, and there was a lot of Halibut on this side because
265 of that shock in the water drove them out of there. And I noticed that
266 the way the animals travel and the way the fish travel is to get away
267 from that noise, if there's any kind of noise to any extent they go the
268 other way, they just migrate to different areas.

269 And the whales also, I think that's why we don't see
270 any of the whales around here anymore either, because it's getting too
271 much traffic for them, they're trying to get away where they can get a
272 place where it's quiet. And now the people are—they take tourists out
273 to see the whales and see the animals, they're flying over them or
274 getting too close to them, and these animals or fish, they try to get
275 away from that. And that's why they're disappearing to other areas.

276 INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay Albert, I guess that's it and
277 we thank you, and when we find out what the results are from this,
278 we'll let you see them or let you listen to them.

279 ALBERT WILSON: Okay.

280 (End of Disc.)

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