A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

Rick:

Hi lady, how are you doing?

Sarahlily 0:08

So, okay, yeah, so hopefully the call will work this time and if not, we can always just, you know, keep trying again.

Rick 0:15

Yeah, yeah. No worries work in progress. So, yeah, just just a little background on me and how I came to being in Alaska. Yeah, we're so lucky to to have been raised in Alaska, Anchorage in particular, you know, because of the central, you know, setting. And that, of course, is a reason it was settled and made a hub for the railroad and, and not only a railroad but for horse packing out to the mining industry. So you know, the trapping, all that. I mean, it was just the hub for going a lot of different directions. People would boat from Anchorage, up the Turnagin Arm and take provisions and mail you know, to these different mining sites and and people's homestead so that was that was that was really quite a feat because of those huge tides You know, I'm the rip currents and, and so on. If you go along the highway there, there's these bolts that were embedded in the rock that had these big IR rings on there so that if the barges and boats that was taking goods up, needed a place to just more and not get swept out into, you know, the mud bars on a boat. You know, they would latch on to those eye pulls and those those are still there from way back in, in the 20s. But it was pretty wild.

Sarahlily 1:58

Wow.

Rick 2:01

Yeah. Yeah. And on the reverse. Yeah, go ahead.

Sarahlily 2:05

I was just gonna say, before we get too far into this, I just have to get your verbal consent to being recorded.

Rick 2:15

Oh, no, you can't record me. You have a terrible voice.

Sarahlily 2:19

Okay.

Rick 2:20

No, no, you can you can you can you can record me.

Sarahlily 2:23

Okay, cool. So there's two other things for the second one is, um, so since you are okay with being recorded, is that alright with you if I use some of these audio clips, and incorporate them into the map I make later on?

Rick 2:40

Oh, yeah, absolutely. No worries.

Sarahlily 2:42

Okay, cool. And is it okay with you if I use your first name in the map?

Rick2:47

Sure.

Sarahlily 2:48

All right. Awesome. Okay.

Rick 2:50

So that works. Now our legal yeah.

Sarahlily 2:53

Oh, yeah. The ethics board will be very pleased. So when did you live in anchorage? Like what years and how old were you?

Rick 3:06

I was living in Anchorage when I was five until... Yeah, on and off because I did travel around, but I mainly lived in Anchorage until like 1980. About 89.

Sarahlily 3:48

Okay, so, how old were you then?

Rick 3:55

Then... well, I'm 68 Now, okay, and so I was forty, 36...Yeah, so... yeah, yeah 36 or 40 bouncing back. I was there in the winters and down in Kachemak Bay in the summer so, yeah, so for you know, close to 40. 40.

Sarahlily 4:30

Okay, cool. I can just put down approximately. And so, while you live there, like maybe you could just walk me through, like what areas of the city did you live in at different times?

Rick 4:48

When when I was a young child, you know, I initially lived in what is known as downtown. Original downtown okay. And I live there until... just a second... six years... I lived there for a couple of years in downtown then moved out to Spenard.

Sarahlily 5:22

Okay.

Rick 5:23

Okay, and then from Spenard, I was in Spenard until 1964, and 1964 then I moved across to Mountain View. North mountain view. And then right after I moved there we had the big 64 earthquake. And then I've lived in every corner. Well, I live there in Mountain View, going to junior high and high school, and when I graduated, then I lived on and off in Anchorage. Every quarter of Anchorage until I moved here, so I've lived up hillside and and you know East Anchorage, West Anchorage.

Sarahlily 6:14

Okay, so you were really all over the city.

Rick 6:18

I was all over.

Sarahlily 6:20

Perfect. So were there any certain neighborhoods that you particularly liked or particularly disliked?

Rick 6:32

I found joy, I mean it, in almost every neighborhood. I really did. When I was a young kid over in the turnagain area, there was a creek that went through that area, and it had different ponds that were connected to it, which, you know, different fish, um trout, and then of course, there was also we would hunt and trap and, and bring home to mom's beauty salon and show her and the ladies. It was really a wonderful place to grow up during my childhood and grade school. Yeah.

Sarahlily 7:16

Sounds like so much fun.

Rick 7:18

It was fun. Oh, yeah. know, the thing is, is that across the street from my mom's establishment, you know, it was just about forested. So we had tree forts and we were out there, you know, having to dodge the moose when they came through. And occasionally there's bears and then you know, we're always catching rabbits and squirrels. That you know, it was funny cuz there was places in Anchorage when I was a kid to go hunting, like where the sears mall is. And, and so then that was before there was even a road through that area. You know, there was some kinds of some trail, but yeah, it's wild the way that it has changed and gotten developed, you know, that whole basin, anchorage bowl basin, as they call it, you know?

Sarahlily 8:11

So are there any, like you mentioned hunting in the area where the Sears mall is now Are there any other areas you can think of where, like, maybe they used to be much more forested or super different and now they're much more developed?

Rick 8:25

up on the hilltop, it's funny because as time went, you know, we, we would take the old Seward highway out of Anchorage. And you go, you know, pass what is known as the hillside where, you know, the farm developed now, but we would we would count up there say, Oh, well, look, there's like four lights up there now. And then the next year, they're like, oh, look it's another light, you know, so somebody else moved in, you know and they said, you know, you know, there was more and more and that's how you can actually watch the development of Anchorage, because the more that the hillside got developed, so did the rest of Anchorage, AK incrementally, you know, it just went from Central outward. When I was young, a young boy, you know, a day's adventure was to go home in Spenard. And we would travel over through Sand Lake area down these old you know, dirt trails, you know, with bushes rubbing up against the car on each side to get to, you know, one of the lakes to fish in. And yeah, there was no development it was it was quite fascinating to watch, you know, this city that had about 32,000 people in it when I was born. And now there's what is it… 280... 300... 300,000. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So it grew and leaps and bounds, you know, over the decades.

Sarahlily 10:04

So, like when you were living in Spenard, were the house was quite close together, were people living in apartments? How did that work?

Rick 10:13

Okay. We were on the very edge of a subdivision, which had been subdivided out of an old homestead. Okay. And my friend Kenny Coleman had - his family had - the main homestead site. And so they had like five acres, and we thought that was really cool because it was set up for all the barns and corrals and stuff for the critters and they had a lot of wild animals, like not wild animals, like domesticated animals there, you know. And so, but, but then, outside the lots were pretty standard and just mostly our single story. You know, the whole subdivision and wasn't a huge subdivision, you know, it's just a couple of blocks of homes. And they weren't really tightly spaced, they had comfortable lobbies. But then then we were right on the edge of that subdivision, and like I say, it was forested all around there. Just beautiful.

Sarahlily 11:23

Sounds so nice.

Rick 11:24

Yeah I was really pleased to grow up there. We had a wonderful time.

Sarahlily 11:29

And so when you were younger and living downtown, I don't know if you'd really remember it since you were so young when you moved but could you describe - if you remember - what that sort of setup was there in terms of housing?

Rick 11:42

I remember quite well actually. In downtown, you know, houses of course a little bit closer together. And you see back during the war, they subdivided anchorage and there was a lot of places in the original subdivide of that original area and the lots were a little closer, smaller of course, more conservative. And we - where we lived - was close to the green belt where they have trail system that goes through anchorage. Actually they saved that for, you know, people recreating and for the bike trails and cross country ski trails and so on. And so that was a wonderful place for us to go and lay down in that that area. And also, you know, there's creeks and we could fish out of there. And so when, when I would go to school, we would go by the cemetery, you know, and read the headstones, and it's funny what some of them are called that was one that was caught. You don't want to hear this if you're taping this. Okay, so you're editing some of this right?

Sarahlily 13:14

[laughing] Yeah, I can cut that out

Rick 13:17

Okay, so anyways there's one headstone said something like it was it wasn't Frankenstein bows like Freakenstein or something because I we got we wonder if these causes a Frankenstein you know, but it was so cool when it when it was in the winter when it got dark and we would come home in the afternoon and it would be getting dark. We would go into the... we would sneak through a hole on the fence into the cemetery and we would play Cowboy Indians and army guys and pretend like we're shooting while we're being protected by the headstone. Anyway.

Sarahlily 13:56

Do you happen to know like if I was to look for this cemetery on a map, do you know what its name would be or where I can find it?

Rick 14:02

I can find out and let you know it was right downtown. It was a downtown cemetery. I think it's probably the only one downtown. Okay. And the interesting thing is from school on the way home, we would go right by, well, we had to go way to go by Gilman bakery. They had all these fresh doughnuts and they always had a big bowl set aside for kids because we'd come by and harangue them for the [honor chinos]. And we're like, like, you know, kindergarten and first graders, but they would get a kick out of us begging for doughnuts.

Sarahlily 14:45

Man, I kind of wonder if they fed you like the day old doughnuts as a way of getting rid of the old stock?

Rick 14:50

Well, they might have given us day old, but man we were so hungry. We didn't know the difference, but I'll tell you that was one thing we really missed.

Rick 14:58

when we moved to the other side of town to Spenard was, you know, not having our own personal free donut bakery

Sarahlily 15:12

so how about um, let me see, in North Mountain View. How would you describe that neighborhood?

Rick 15:22

Mountainview was known to be a rough neighborhood on the... it would be the.... outside. Hold on, let me think about this.

Sarahlily 15:35

Sure, you take your time.

Rick 15:42

Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery.

Sarahlily 15:44

Okay, cool.

Rick 15:50

Okay, so let's see, but let me just get my bearings here. Sure, yeah. So North... South... South Mountain View. Okay, so I was on South Mountain View, which was just straight over, you know, a little highway away from being on North mountain. North Mountain View is known for being a more of a rough neighborhood. On the south side was their homestead that had been subdivided, and that's where we lived. And it was it was pretty for the average people that are there. And what was really cool is that we lived up on the east side... the east side of the south side of Mountain View, and across the street was a military reserve. And it was forested. And that's why I would go set my, my cross country ski trails. And I would go after school and snow showing the paths, you know, on fresh snow, after fresh snowfalls, and add a little trap line there, and it was just another little wonderland for me. You know, luckily I lived a lot when I was growing up on the edge of Anchorage, and I literally would get lost in playing in the woods, not literally lost, but I'd go lose, you know, humanity. And now, you know, I live here in Little Tutka Bay, because that's what I would do. If there was free time and I had always little sports, you know, I would go out there after after school, I'd come home and I was in junior high, and I'd come home and I grabbed my little knapsack and I had little canteen of water, and I had tea bags and a little pot. And I'd go up, now you know, like a pot to cook tea, and then I would go out into the woods, you know, crosscountry skiing or snowshoeing depending on the conditions and then I would find a little place along the trail, I would make a little fire and I took myself some tea and I'd always have, you know, a snack of, you know, peanutbutter bread or cookies or whatever you know, and I just that was my solace, and I did that every day. That's pretty cool. But But see the nice thing about anchorage when it was younger and there was still this raw land, you know, that wasn't developed, and being fortunate as a child you know, to live on the edges in in several of our moves, I was able to take advantage of the undeveloped, but now it's developed everywere, you know?

Sarahlily 18:51

Did you notice that happening more after you left Anchorage, or while you still live there you saw these places getting built up?

Rick 18:57

No, no, no, no. It was funny because as as, you know, the decades would come and go, you would just see bigger swaths of Anchorage, this being you know, developed, you know, from the center outward all directions. And it was it was such that, you knew that it was going to be, you know, totally, you know, developed up to the mountains. And then, you know, surrounded by water on two sides, so, you know, limited in what they call the anchorage bowl area, and then we saw where the land was becoming more expensive for people, you know, median income range, lower, and so then they were, they were building their homes out in the valley and having to commute and when people really started commuting, and then they started, you know, making the highway bigger used to be a two lane highway than it was a four lane, you know, and it was always getting improved and made bigger better. Then you knew that you knew that anchorage pretty much developed now because if you'd see the little towns of Palmer, Wasilla, now they're starting to blossom and get bigger, blend together. Palmer, well you know basically just connected with subdivisions. It's kind of like Portland you know, I remember Portland because my mom grew up down down in the States, and she had family in Portland, and and when I was a kid, we go down there and that was Portland and there was Gresham and there was you know, all these little, little towns. All of a sudden they got sucked into the Greater Portland area, you know, just like on continuum. So that's what happened was, with anchorage and beyond. Yeah.

Sarahlily 20:54

Wow. That's, that's so crazy to think about because like the anchorage that I've seen just sounds so different from the anchorage of your childhood.

Rick 21:04

It's night and day, seriously. You know, when you saw the first high rise go up, you know, which probably wasn't that big at the time. But then later on though, you know, the Captain Cook Hotel and the Sheraton and the Hilton and and then they go on to Oh, wow, that's really becoming a city city, you know, but then it got so, so developed, you know, in the main downtown region. And then the mid town started to get bigger, really developed and then beyond that, so, yeah, when you started seeing the Midtown and then beyond, you know, and you knew that there's no turning back, there would be no raw, raw wilderness left, as you know, right at your fingertips, you know, but the nice thing about the location of Anchorage is, as you know, and this was always a thing, it's like that this is this is this development. When I was a kid, you hear people say, you know, if one day, you know, all of the all of the Anchorage Bowl's gonna be developed. Yeah, we can see that coming. Yeah. But they say but you know, the good thing is, is that it only takes 15-20 minutes to just travel in any direction you'll be back in Alaska.

Sarahlily 22:17

Right.

RIck 22:18

You know, because they were saying like anchorage is like anywhere else. Any City America, you know, really you know, because you have all of your, you know, typical amenities you know, you have your Sears your Sears your Penny's, your Macy's, you have your McDonald's and Taco Bell, blah, blah, blah. So you know, starting to look like any any other, you know, American city, which you would expect, of course, but the nice thing was with it, yep, you could just go in any direction for a little short while and it gets can get pretty, wild wilderness pretty quick.

Sarahlily 22:54

That's funny. I like the expression you used, "it only takes 15 or 20 minutes to be back in Alaska.”

Rick 23:00

Yeah, right.

Sarahlily 23:01

So like, I mean, like definitely I felt when I was in Anchorage that it just feels like a completely different energy than the rest of Alaska that I saw.

Rick 23:14

Which is crazy because, you know, people come to Alaska, you know, so that they can turn into Alaska and then they live in Anchorage and a lot of people, you know, even people that, you know, born and raised this, a lot of times they don't get out too often outside of the city or not for very long, you know, they might take a trip over to you know, I talked to so many people, Sarahlily, that says, you know, I've been to Portage glacier, but I'm damn beyond that. How long have you lived in Anchorage? Oh, you know, like, 10 years. What's the F? Are you serious? Yeah. I mean, listen to this, you know? Yeah, I mean, there's all this wonderful the Kenai Peninsula of Alaska, the "jewel of Alaska," you've got Denali and Denali's the jewel of the central Alaska. Under this, you know, all these wonderful places to go any direction you go and you find all these wonderful medicine, and they're stuck. And, you know, actually, people ask me, you know, I don't I would never live in a city again, you know, I it for me I as a guy that I love cities, you know, you have to understand I really appreciate and love cities because it's, it's like it's like a public zoo, it keeps most people kind of penned in there and together and it keeps them from going out and spoiling, you know, raw Mother Nature.

Sarahlily 24:34

Yeah.

Rick 24:37

I love cities.. Well, if only they could put you know, big fences [around them]. You know? You better not...

Sarahlily 24:46

[laughing] I can erase this from the recording.

Rick 24:49

Yeah, because, you know, it wouldn't take much to just put a big Trump you know, wall around any city and keep everybody in forever.

Sarahlily 24:57

Man, so how would you say like the attitudes of people living in Anchorage are different today than they were when you were growing up?

Rick 25:09

You know, when I was growing up, you know, people had? Well, I think you'll find this in a lot of places, you know, you would you would go and that has any age to it, you know, or some some history. And, you know, back when I was a kid and this is this typical for our culture, you know, people have more respect, you know, for each other for the most part, you know, and you know, the nice thing about Anchorage and Alaska, is, I was I was fortunate enough not to go live and experience racism. There was some racism but I mean, it was so minuscule is like, what's with that, you know, I mean because it was so rare to see any, any, any form of racism there probably would have would have experienced more if I was older and, and hanging with some of the older generation. But you know, like with my mom and family and my father, we didn't feel it you know, I mean people of color it was just you know that it was very eclectic, you know, anchorage was was so diverse, there's one of the most diverse, you know, the cultural and and and there's racial you know, cities because you had not only the the natives and natives from all these different corners of Alaska there. And so that had a lot of a lot of flavor because I mean, you know, when you have the Athabaskan you know, you could go, native Athabaskan, for sure what were called Eskimos, you know, but the Yupiks and, and, and that, you know, it was so diverse, it was wonderful, you know, but then you also had people from all over the world, you know, from South America and you had the had the Europeans and you know, you have Asians and they are mixed because, you know, it was a lot of people were brought in for, for working in the early days. At the canneries you had a lot of Asians and Hispanics. And you'd have also like, in the railroad, building the railroad, you know, you have quite a diversity and people that believe they came and they stayed and, and so it was wonderful, you know, to live in such a diverse cultural and racial mix and, and not have, you know, all of that racism that was felt, you know, especially, you know, during the 50s and 60s, you know, dark period of time, you know, Martin Luther King And so on. And it was it was just mind blowing to watch these people, you know, that have you know these racial bias and, and sad like man, you're missing out so much and of course we had friends of all walks of life all colors you know and from every corner of the world. So that was pretty nice.

Sarahlily 28:24

That's kind of surprising to me. I I just didn't really realize that so many people from all over had come to Anchorage. And like would you say that that aspect - like it being very diverse and there not being so much racism - do you think that has stayed mostly the same? Or has that changed in your opinion?

Rick 28:42

No, I think I think it's changed because more people came up that had racial bias, you know, I mean, when you come up, you know, and there isn't so much you tend to band a little bit you know. You tend to be to be more covert when you're your minority, but then when you get more people that have the same mindset and you feel more bold because to hold on to those racial bias, and I'm not saying that there wasn't, you know, a child, you know, and the for the most part, one of the one of the biggest racial bias that you would see when you would say it is those, you know, whites that would treat natives, you know, bad or think of them as being less intelligent, you know, and so on and so forth. But what they didn't realize - and I was fortunate as a young child to go out and, and live and visit and and experience these cultures and I mean, just these native in different villages and come from different cultures. And they, they, when you're in their worlds, you know, you're the minority and better they were people that grew up living, you know, by different names, you know? And so if, if they are saying that, you know, it's not a good time to go out in the water because they can read the weather by the clouds or the you know and the ways, you don't say well what you know and then and then go against that if you're smart. The ones that would go against the wisdom of the native you know, in their in their environment, then, you know, you were the lessor and you paid the price. I mean, literally, you'd see it time and again. Yeah. But, yeah know, wonderful people. I've met so many natives in every corner of the state. Made lifelong friends and, and they're just wonderful people, very wonderful people and, and you find that in all walks of life. There can be some nasty ones but you find that the in all cultures, right? That's rare, that's rare.

Sarahlily 31:10

So when you were in school, were, like were the school is totally integrated or were there, you know, specific schools for, like different ethnicities or specific ones for native kids, or hoe did that work?

Rick 31:22

They're, they're totally mixed. Totally mixed, there was none of that at all.

[tangent about a racist incident in Portland]

Sarahlily 38:23

Would you say that that has changed at all, like the racial makeup of Anchorage? Would you say that it's still as diverse, or maybe different groups are more dominant now?

Rick 38:36

Well you know, it's interesting because I think it's just a diverse You know, when you go and you go to any place of industry or even shopping, you know, you will see the the same diversity probably you see anywhere else, you know, because all of America's getting more diverse with Latinos, and people of all colors

[he has to take a call from his daughter in law and promises to call back in a few minutes. The recording ends]

[Recording 2 begins]

Rick 0:06

Sorry for that interruption.

Sarahlily

Yeah, no problem. So just switching gears a little bit, I was wondering if you wanted to talk a little about your mom's beauty shop. So I guess my first question is which neighborhood was that?

Rick 0:32

That was in Turnagain. The Turnagain Beauty Salon.

Sarahlily 0:35

Turnagain Beauty Salon. And do you know what's there today, is that building still there?

Rick 0:43

You know, that buildings still there. It was a house and garage, family room adjacent to the main living room. The bedroom was turned into a beauty salon.

Sarahlily 1:00

That's cool. And so you spent a lot of, you know, time playing around in there and bothering your mom while you're growing up, right?

Rick 1:10

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Several years. We lived there for, Gosh.You know, probably six years. Seven years, six years, six years. Went to kindergarten, first grade to sixth grade. Yeah, six years.

Sarahlily 1:35

So for this part of the project, I think it'd be cool to show the spot where the beauty salon was, and so that people could see what's there now. Do you happen to know the address or like roughly where I would find it on a map?

Rick 2:00

Yeah, justa second, I'll google the area. When you get there, are you familiar with Google Maps?

Sarahlily 2:29

Yep.

Rick 2:31

Okay, so when you go there... just a second... You're so patient. I wish you were here. It's just been wonderful weather, it's been a great time, you know

Sarahlily 3:18

Ah, that's so nice

Rick 3:19

We've been gathering the sea vegetables and then Dorla's doing a community garden over at Sandy's, making a big plot for growing our own food during the pandemic.

Sarahlily 3:32

Oh, man, that sounds so wonderful. I wish I could be there for that.

Rick 3:35

Yeah, yeah, you'd fit right into that for sure.

Sarahlily 3:39

Man, people here are really into like trading plants for various things. Like the other day I traded, I made some sourdough with the starter you guys gave me, and I traded it for a bunch of oregano seedlings.

Rick 3:53

Oh nice. You can do a lot with that. You can do a lot with that sourdough, especially when all it takes is some flour and water. Yeah, we did blueberry pancakes and had all the family and kids here because they just went to town and the kids needed to be fed, so then the other family came back up, so we had a house full.

Sarahlily 4:20

Oh wow.

Rick 4:22

And so that was a lot of fun.

Sarahlily 4:24

Sounds like so much fun.

Rick 4:53

Turnagain Boulevard East. Let me see, that was the street and I should know the address. But come on, you know how long it's been, right? Off of Northern Lights and Turnagain Boulevard.

Sarahlily 5:09

Okay, awesome. Cool.

Rick 5:13

Right down that corner. I don't know, can you find that I get it?

Sarahlily 5:17

Yeah, I can see it. There.

Rick 5:20

Can you?

Sarahlily 5:21

Yeah, I think I see that on the map

Rick 5:23

Man, you can do it that fast. I wish I could because I can show you right across the street, all of that, it was all forested, and it was just wonderful little playground. And then if I went through our subdivision, you know, it's just like, two blocks away. Then there was, you know, that Creek drainage, you know, as a green belt, and it still is and it was just wonderful like Huckleberry Fin down there. I had a raft and it would we had a tree fort, and we would go down there sometimes we would't come back for a day or two, to my mom, we would always tell my mom pretty much, you know. Yeah. It was a wonderful place for kids to grow up.

Sarahlily 6:28

And do you want to, if you'd like, I think it'd be really cool if you could tell the horse in the beauty salon story and then I could have that recorded and play alongside the spot where it shows up on the map.

Rick 6:43

Oh my gosh, are you serious?

Sarahlily 6:45

Yeah, I mean only if you want to tell it.

Rick 6:50

Okay, so where do I begin...

Sarahlily 6:58

Maybe with where the the horse came from, how you guys found a horse.

Rick 7:02

How I found the horse... Well, every year, the Shriners have a little carnival. And so they would bring, you know, some other little ponies from the valley. And they would have these little carnival rides and games and, you know, big vegetables, growing contests and so on. So they had a little, a little, you know, fun thing for the kids and families to do in the summertime. And so, the, one of the ponies from the valley that they gave kid rides with, you know, at this Carnival, it has a little colt. So the colt stayed at my friend's house, Kenny Coleman who, who had the homestead, main homestead house there and corral so so they would bring it in the evenings to Kenny's place so it can spend the night, nurse the colt. And then he would come again the next morning, pick up the mare and go go have to give kids rides all day, right? So anyways, he drops off the horse, the pony, and all of us kids are there at Kenny Coleman's, you know. And the owner leaves the horses at the fair. Well, after the colt nursed, you know we have Kenny, Kenny, you think that we could ride the pony you could share? why not? So we got the halter out on the mare, and and so we all took turns you know riding the pony. Esther's been giving his rides all day, right? Getting double begged, you know? So we rode the pony. My older sister got on the horse, Sandy, and and Sandy says 'Hey, could I take it to the shop and show my mom?' You know? So Kenny goes, 'Why not?' So here we are, you know, all these you know little neighborhood kids and this pony, my sister on there with the colt, you know walking beside it. It looked like a Norman Rockwell picture, literally, and we're just a bunch of ragamuffins, all headed off to my mom's beauty salon. Well we get there, and my mom had a picture window that was about chest high at the bottom sill, and you can see my sister Sandy sitting on the horse from inside the beauty salon, you know, but the women couldn't see the pony. And my mom says 'Oh look, there's Sandy on a pony.' And the women say, 'we can't see the horse.' And my mother says, ' bring your horse, Sandy.' So Sandy rides the whole horse into the beauty salon and all the women are just giggling and laughing. I mean where except in Alaska do you do that? Well anyways, my mom had been doing permanent waves that day, and permanent wave solution smells just like horse piss. And so the horse put its nose in the air, takes a couple of these big whiffs, spreads its hind legs, and then starts peeing all over the floor. This funny older, you know, raspy voice real estate lady grabs this this little bucket, garbage bucket, and fits it underneath the horse and and is giggling and laughing, and she says, 'well it shows you what a damn horse think about a beauty salon.' And right around then, my brother and I were holding the colt outside because we're going, you know, we got to hold on this horse, you know, when the mare went in because there's just not a lot of room in there with all these women and people in there getting their hair cut. So we're holding the colt, like it's already pretty crowded in there, and the colt is really getting nervous, and it just bolts out of our arms, and it runs into the beauty salon and it hits the slick linoleum, it gets waxed once a week, and we're the ones that have to do the mopping. It slips on the linoleum and it falls down. It hits the legs of the mare, knocks down the mare, my sister Julia Nelson gets hit and she swings around and the bucket gets thrown over on the women sitting underneath the the dryer, now they got horse piss all over, you know, and it's just mayhem. My brother and I are outside the picture window looking and then we looked at each other. One of us said, 'Let's get out of here or we're gonna have to clean it up!' and we bolted for the pond. Oh yeah. And so this one lady when she got done and she's leaving it was funny because my mom said to her, 'If you need your hair tweaked, just let me know, you can come back if I need to trim it up a little bit for your,' or whatever. And she says she says,' You know, Ma'am, I come to the beauty salon to relax.' and my mom looked at her straight in the eye and says, 'Ma'am, you came to the wrong beauty salon.' It was her last probably, last customer for that moment, but that was hilarious. Yeah, that wasn't the only thing, there are lots of those stories that are strange and interesting and true.

Sarahlily 13:01

Man, it just seems like something out of a sitcom, you know?

Rick 13:04

It really is, god I could tell you some stories, you know. Oh, I think I probably did when you were here, but you know there's so many more, and and it would be fun to write a book. We started on it now that we're almost semi retired maybe we can do it this summer. Yeah we've always been so busy, you know, started in the spring, summer fall and and that just has you know. Some of the other changes too in Anchorage was the Fur Rendezvous. You know, it started out as just a gathering place for the trappers, miners, fishermen, and just people you know, who lived outside of Anchorage and even people from from Anchorage, you know, to get together and have a party, you know, to curb the cabin fever and that was something that you could really see the growth of Anchorage because the growth of the Fur Rendezvous Carnival and and gathering also grew. You know, it became quite a quite a happening and even now they they it's something to experience when you, when, you weren't here in the winter, were you?

Sarahlily 14:19

No, the latest I've been was mid-November

Rick 14:23

Yeah if you ever get a chance, come out of during the Fur Rendevous in February, and, you know the ice sculpture contest and of course the sled dog races, you know, right down the Main Street, they haul in a lot of snow and just pave the streets with with a trail of snow for the dogs. Yeah, it's, it's quite exciting. There's lots of teams. And they go for three days a day, right. Yeah, there's all sorts of, you know, things to do. There's actually they have a fur auction that they've done that's the traditional. It's sad for some it's kind of sad to go there because they don't don't like to see, you know, dead animal skins. But they still you know are out selling and auctioning enough you know from the trappers and that's how it was originally started from the trappers and miners. In fact, they started what they call the Trapper Combiner Ball that became quite popular and and you can see how it grew over the the ages.

Sarahlily 15:37

So this is something that you used to go to?

Rick 15:42

Yeah, yeah. When we lived in Anchorage, and then also we've gone there a couple of times since we moved down here on the peninsula. You know, mainly to visit friends and then if there's something you know, fun, exciting to do, they want to see something and then we go and we'll see start of a dog race. So, you know, something, you know, some event. You know there's tons of events you can't see it all you know that they provide you won't be able to see it you know in time that's given. It's pretty, pretty cool. And many amazing museums. TheAnchorage Museum is worth going to.

Sarahlily 16:28

So what ultimately made you decide to move away from Anchorage?

Rick 16:35

Well, I always planned on moving when I was a kid, I could never see myself always living in a city, you know. My mom, every, every chance she had free time, she would pack us kids up and we would go out on you know, some adventure, hunting fishing, gold panning, you know, climbing some mountain, you know, trenching up some stream, but you know, I got to see so many different parts of Alaska and this was always one of the most special places I've ever experienced here in Kachemak Bay, and it just kept bringing me back here you know. I got to spend a lot of time on the Prince William Sound and the interior and other coastal areas, but nothing really compared to you know, this region [Kachemak Bay], it's so diverse. And, and bio diverse, you know, a lot of Kachemak Bay countries, this region here, has a lot of all of what Alaska has to offer, except some of the more such as as special species that are only comfined to those reasons like you have the polar bears, you know, up north in the Arctic and of course, the muskox, you know, are only in one region of Alaska but you know for you know for all the species that are spread throughout that you know you find it all here and and yeah, it's just incredible. That's one of the reasons why I'm here but yeah I love this being away from humanity. And species, you know, cuz you never get enough of those guys different animals

Sarahlily 18:38

so,

Rick 18:39

so

Sarahlily 18:40

sorry What were you gonna say?

Rick 18:43

Well what were you gonna say?

Sarahlily 18:44

I was just gonna say: So now that you live outside of Anchorage, what are things that you like or dislike about anchorage?

Rick 19:01

Well, you know, it's interesting because, you know, like any place that has a major city, you know, there's, you know, the pollution factor. And I'll never forget my younger son, who's now thirty... four-ish? He was like, six years old, maybe five years, driving, you know, on the potter flats, just before you get into Anchorage. And he said, you know, nobody, nobody talks about it. And he just said, You know, 'I can smell the city,' you know, you know, it's kind of a scrunched up nose like an elf, you know. Thecity, you know, and it was true, you know, it's funny that you know, kids have real sensitive, you know, noses and so that was something that you could really relate to because he's, he is, you know, lives in a place that doesn't have that pollution factory. So that was one thing watching the city grow also meant that you got the, you know, the pollution factor and that's one one thing that I really am blessed and cherish not living in a city is, you know, all the particulates that you breathe all of the pollution and the noise pollution, you know. And water you know, water systems and entities are so treated the water you know, you just can't get good raw fresh wateron the water. It's like fresh air and it's wetter as a fact. And so, you know, you've tasted our waterfall water here and it's like, oh my gosh, why would why would you not want to just move someplace where you have waters that fresh, it doesn't have to be treated, you know to make it clean and clean enough to drink right out of the stream like like we used to all day back before we had cities. I appreciate cities, you know, I mean, the commerce, jobs, things like that, I appreciate that they keep a lot of humans contained. But then again, you know, they wouldn't be there if we didn't have this burgeoning not to the sizes that they have and have grown. Because just in my lifetime, you know, 70, pushing on towards 70 years old, you know, those few decades, you know, to see the huge diversity of, of population explosion, you know, how many more cities have been formed out a little towns and have grown to get hundreds of thousands, if not multi millions, you know, which we've never heard of, you know, a couple of years ago, you know, now we're looking at, you know, a huge curve, you know, the graph is just, you know, and it's scary, we really need to get hold of that. You can't really appreciate it to the degree one can when you live outside the box. Thank goodness we do.

Sarahlily 22:08

Do you think that anchorage is representative of Alaska?

Rick 22:18

In some ways it is, you know, because it tries to protect in and ways it's, you know, the cultural diversity you know, through its museum and Alaska Native Heritage Center you know, in anchorage, you know, that's there. You know, the tradition of the dog sled races. I mean, that was born out of natives, you know, mushing dogs before the white man did. So you know, in some cases like that, you know, you can say yes. But also you say that, you know, in so many ways, just if you were planted there and didn't know where you were, you wouldn't know if you were in, you know, were near the Rockies or a city down in the States it, you know, city down in the States near the Rockies or any other mountainous area, because they do have mountains on the east side of Anchorage, but it just looks like an all American city. In fact, I think it's nickname is an All American City.

Sarahlily 23:29

That's really interesting. Yeah, that is a really good point. Because when, like, at least I felt when I had visited and obviously I haven't spent that much time there. But it seems to me like a lot of the identity was sort of external in the area where a lot of tourists go, you know, like a lot of stuffed moose and bears and stuff. But in other neighborhoods, like when I was walking around in the Spenard neighborhood, yeah, it really could have been anywhere in America.

Rick 23:58

Oh, well. Wow, that's the bottom line is that representative of Alaska we out you know, you do have you know, some of that wildlife and and the different industries, I mean between all the fishing and trapping you know brought in, you can see you know that this is Alaska, but you know the, the streets look like any other business district, you know, subdivisions felt like that. But there's a lot of people that do live in Anchorage to get out that's true, you know, because, like when I was when I live in Anchorage at all and I was older, I had a plane, so we could just jump on the plane and we'd be, you know, flying out you know. Be in the wild in Alaska's real quick, so that's something. And something else, in Alaska you see alot of float planes and small planes as well for private pilot's you know, in per capita. I got my ground school for my flying planes in my senior year high school.

Sarahlily 25:33

Was that pretty common?

Rick 25:36

They had a class. Well, I think our type school that was, so you could get your license. Something that you know you could actually do and achieve and that was the way to get around that was on a road going couple directions and roads, per se and Alaska and that's how I got it. I you know, I could access more of Alaska.

Sarahlily 26:38

So cool. Okay, so I just have one last question. And that is what do you think Alaskans who don't live in Anchorage think of Anchorage and people from Anchorage?

Rick 26:58

I think a lot people outside of Anchorage, you know, there were a lot the way I described some people, you know, will badmouth it more. But they they look at that as, as a hub, because if they're coming in and out of Alaska, you know, to travel elsewhere, they're going to go to Anchorage International Airport of course. But like I mentioned it's a hub, so you can go in any direction. It's a place to go get provisions and that's what it was all set up in the beginning. You know, it was it was the start of the Alaska railroad. So access interior, and a lot of that was born out of the push for Alaska to get to, to their sovereignty. You know, when Alaska became a territory when Alaska was purchased from the Russians. One of the biggest things that One of the biggest pushes that the government wanted to have was to get people to come and occupy because if you occupy then you have sovereignty and if you don't occupy your territory, your land can be taken quite easily, you know, whether they say possessions possessions, nine tenths of the law, even if you don't own it. I think people appreciate you know, that aspect, you know, making the Costco runs and shopping and a thing and they can go there for entertainment too, you know, we have people from from here and elsewhere that that go into into Anchorage, you know, for the Performing Arts, you know, and special occasions like for rendezvous or for the Iditarod begins, you know, in Anchorage, you know, and, and so on. So, there's those aspects, you know, people go there for experience. They love getting back out to Alaska. That's where they're, you know, once you move out of Anchorage, if you've been there for a while, you know, it's, it's harder to move back and people do but I find more people love to be, you know, living in a smaller community.

And yeah, I you know, I mean, Homer is just a wonderful place, you get to know everybody, you know, and, and it's so it's so diverse and its art, you know, the performing arts, the creative arts, you know, and, and so on. And so, people share, it's easy to, you know, find, find friends and make friends and, and learn a lot, you know, and I could be I could live in Anchorage, some friends that I've known, you know, I wouldn't see for the longest time because you lose people in a big city. They move and they take the phone every day. Hey, man, I couldn't get ahold of you what he did, I just found it.

And that was one thing when it was a smaller. When it was small when the city was smaller,I literally, you would go to the theater and he would see all these people that you knew, right? The city grows and you see less people that you know. But it was like you couldn't go to theater without knowing somebody that you know, somebody or somebody you know, different people you, you know, show up like that you'd see ten of your friends, but as time grew, you know that you'd see less and less of your friends, you know, at any gatherings anymore.

Sarahlily 30:49

That's a really interesting point. Okay, so that this was great. Thank you so much for helping me with this. Rick.

Sarahlily 31:00

Well, I was glad to help you out and if there's any follow up just call me anytime. so wonderful to hear your voice and chat with you and and we really want to see your smiley face here. Dorla says she's sorry that she hung up on you.

Rick 31:16

Tell her I forgive her.

[Dorla in the background] 31:17

I did not hang up on you

Sarahlily 31:22

Thanks Dorla.

Dorla 31:23

Well, it's good to hear from you and good luck with what you're doing and stay in touch.

Sarahlily 31:30

Yes, I will. It's so good to hear your guys's voices.

[Rick then told me in detail about a recipe for banana smoothies]

Rick 33:54

Okay, young lady. Well, you take care be safe. We love you. We miss you. And we look forward to seeing you.

Sarahlily 34:00

Yes, back at you

Rick 34:03

We'll get around the curve here.

Sarahlily 34:04

Yeah, have a good summer.

Rick 34:06

Bye

Sarahlily 34:08

bye