

Person Interviewed: Ray Denend

Address: 5423 Ballard Ave Phone: 783-6360

Date of Birth: 1914

Family Contacts: Lowell & June Denend

Phone: 1-355-4783 100s of pictures of old Ba

Special Subject: Saloons/Taverns

Main Topic: Night life, musicians

Subtopics: Atkinson's place @ present-day St. Michele

Summer camping @ N. Beach

Family homes, depression observations

General observations: Interview @ Ray's Ballard Key Service, a small shop with just enough room for ~~the~~ display case, a counter and a cash register. The walls are lined with chrome, brass, colored keys waiting to be shaped. A calendar from watches over all, and pictures & momentos from years on the music circuit hold places of honor. The glass display opposite the counter proudly contains souvenirs of world travel.

Description of person: dark-tall-shell mandolins from ~~more~~ monaco, gaily-costumed dancers from exotic ports of call.

Ray is at ease and charming. Though not a tall man, he carries his years easily, appearing younger than his 75 years. He is at home in his shop, and carries the conversation easily. He worries over details he cannot remember.

Any problems?:

Suggestions for us?:

Follow up interview to cover specifics, retrieve pic

raised @ 1723 NW 64th

Denend family home

Interview 1725 NW 64th

Date 3/15/68

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND

Further verification is needed on those items in transcript designated with an asterisk. A list follows, with explanations given in parentheses.

Page 3 Ralph Norford? (sounds like Norford)

Page 9 I played down on the ____ (could be pier)

Page 21 Mean's Drugstore (verify spelling)

Page 23 Rotogroup Viewer (verify spelling - feature/column in P.I.)

Page 26 Selmer Wiggins (verify spelling)

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND

INTERVIEWED BY: Susan Cook

DATE: March 8, 1988

A: This yellow building across the street...

Q: Yes, that's...

A: It used to be a dance hall up there, we used to play up there.

Q: Oh, and what's there now?

A: That's that Ho's Restaurant.

Q: The Ho's, that's right. It used to be a dance hall?

A: Yes, upstairs. I imagine the floor is still there.

Q: Yes.

A: And that was back in the early Thirties.

Q: Do you know what they called it?

A: Yeah, I know what we called it... The Ballard Rat Race.

Q: (laughter) Is that right?

A: (laughter) The Ballard Rat Race. Twenty-five cents a couple. (laugh)

That was back in the early Thirties.

Q: Yes. That was after, previous or after prohibition ended?

A: Uh, prohibition ended, uh I think, uh liquor was legalized in 1933.

So, I can't, I think it was before liquor was legalized. Yes. In fact,
I think I was still in high school. Yes. And it was a strange thing too,
the admission was twenty-five cents a couple, but no matter how big the
crowd was, there was a gentleman at the door taking money, you know, I
don't know that we could afford to get tickets, but they took the money.

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) No matter what size the crowd was, our pay never varied.

Q: Never changed. (laughter)

A: Usually a dollar and a half for the whole night's work, you know, a piece, if we were lucky. A dollar and a half or a dollar and a quarter, whatever could, you know, people used to pay in nickels and dimes back in those days. But I always remember that, I asked him a couple of times, "Hey, how come we got a hundred and twenty-five people a night and last week we had fifty people and the money's the same?" Well some people couldn't 'em pay and we let 'em in free, you know." Well whatever. (laughter)

Q: Oh.

A: Whatever he said, but you know, we had no way of countin' it up so. That was, back in those days that was it, you played for the kitty, you know. In fact, my mother and dad had the orchestra over there. My dad played the violin, my mother played the piano, so it was their orchestra. And I was, well I was, I don't know, sixteen, seventeen, I don't know, eighteen years old maybe.

Q: So the three of you would play at the dance hall?

A: Yes. My brother was also a musician. He played in several places along the avenue here. That used to be Chet's Log Cabin, which was a very popular place. And the Looking Glass, which was also very popular. And of course the pizza place, which is no longer there, so...

Q: Now, the Log Cabin, where was that?

A: The Log Cabin, I'm not quite sure, but I think it's where that tavern on the street here is closed, you know. Did you notice that tavern that was closed?

Q: Oh, ah, yes, I remember...

A: I think Chet's Cabin was in there. I can't recall because they used

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) to move, somebody would move out of one building and then they'd move to a tavern nextdoor, so I can't actually say for a fact whether that's where Chet's was or not.

Q: Now that's right, the one right north of Vasa Sea Grill, right?

A: Uh? let's see. It's the one that's closed. It's got the padlock on the door.

Q: Yes. And where was the Looking Glass?

A: That was, the Looking Glass, let's see now. The pizza place was on the corner and I think the Looking Glass was next to pizza place, coming down this way and Chet's Log Cabin was the third one down this way.

Q: Right, just coming down from Market Street?

A: Coming from Market Street, south. And then there was also a tavern right on the end of the block here, where that building has been renovated now. There used to be a tavern in there and for the life of me I have been trying to think of that name... and I cannot think of that name. I know the fellow that owned it, Ralph Norford*, but I cannot think of the name of the tavern.

Q: Now that's the corner of Ballard Avenue and what is that street?

A: Uh, gee, but I don't know what that street is coming up from Shilshole,
you know that and I lived in...

0: It's just the next street after, the next block after...

A: It would be right on the end of this block, before they renovated that building down there.

O: The one that used to be a bank? Is that the one?

A: Pardon?

Q: The one that looks like an old bank? Is that the place you're talking about?

A. Well I can show it to you from here...if you want to walk outside.

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

Q: Hold on one second.

A: I can't...

Q: Yes, that's the brick building on the...

A: Well, it's on...

Q: The west side of 22nd and Ballard Avenue.

A: Yes. I'm try'in, it's, is that street coming up from Shilshole, is that also 22nd? I never did know.

Q: I believe it still says 22nd there.

A: But I've never looked to see what that street number was down there...

Q: (laughter)

A: ... and I was born and raised in Ballard.

Q: And that's the place that used to be the Buffalo but before that it changed hands many times.

A: Yes, many times. But back in the old days I cannot remember the name of that place...and I played there. Oh well. It was sometimes play one night here and one night there and one night there and never go back to those places... you either get fired or don't get paid, it ain't right. Give you no money. Well like I say (cough) excuse me, we used to play for the kitty, you know, if nobody got any money during the Depression. So we got seventy-five cents or a dollar, well we'd call it fortunate because they'd... most of the time I was too young to be in those places but they would allow me to drink free beer, so that was our pay. (laugh)

Q: Was that pretty common, kids coming in, under age as long as they were with an adult?

A: Well, uh, not, it wasn't so common but being a musician, you know, we kind of

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) got away with it, you know, they wanted music and what the heck it didn't cost'em anything. The customers would usually buy our beer and tip us. And it didn't cost the owner anything at all. So what could he say. And he got free music. That was pretty common back in those days. You walk into a place, it could be a strange bar, "Hey, I play the banjo and my friend plays the violin, you want some music?" "Sure, bring your stuff in," and that was it.

Q: And when you say you played for the kitty, that means for the hat? you'd put,

A: Yes, sometimes you'd have a little saucer out there, usually a saucer or a beer mug or something, you know. The good-hearted people would tip you, the rest of them would buy you beer because it was cheaper to buy a beer than tip you.

Q: (laughs)

A: (laughs) Beer was ten cents a glass.

Q: Is that right?

A: Yes, so, you know, if you got a tip it was at least, not at least but sometimes a quarter, a whole quarter, you get four of those quarters it's a whole dollar. That'd last you all week. (laughs)

Q: So what else did they serve, they served beer about a dime a glass, what else did they have?

A: Uh...used to be able to buy it by the gallon. We'd bring 'em a fifty gallon jug and buy it. I forget how much it was, if it be a whole, I can't, I just don't know... maybe fifty cents for a whole jug, of it, you know, a gallon of it. We used to carry empty jugs around with us too.

Q: Is that right?

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: Not, I mean it wasn't a common thing to, instead of goin' and gettin' a glass of beer, you'd have three or four people at your house, you'd go down and get a jug, you know. Now it's called six packs and so forth and so on. But we used to buy it by the jug. And, uh, let's see, what else? There was also some taverns further on down Ballard Avenue. And I can't remember the names of those things either, to save my soul. I don't think I ever got down that far when I was young. (laughs)

Q: You stayed mostly...

A: Stayed mostly in this area here. I was born on 62nd and 22nd.

Q: Oh, you were?

A: The house is still there. I go by it once and a while.

Q: What is the address of that house?

A: 2044 NW 62nd. The house is still there. It's painted kind of a battleship gray.

Q: It's on the north side of the street?

A: Yes, north side.

Q: I lived on 62nd for a year...

A: Oh you do, it's the third house from the corner, from 22nd.

Q: Kind of a narrow one with a recessed stairway

A: Yes, very narrow...

Q: ...recessed stairway...

A: kind of a battleship gray.

Q: Oh that's a nice house.

A: That's where I was born.

Q: Is that right. What year were you born?

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: 1914.

Q: Did you live there long?

A: I don't even remember livin' there, so I imagine my folks... they must have moved before I was old enough to even talk or maybe walk, I don't know. But the only, really the only reason I know that I was born there because it's on my birth certificate. So I had to look up my birth certificate when we went to Spain. That was, we went to Spain in, I think it was '73.

Q: So that was the only reason I did find out where I was actually born because I never bothered to ask my folks, you know I guess it's pretty common, you know. When you're kids, what the heck you care where you're

born. So, I'm so sorry now too that when my folks were both alive I didn't ask a few more questions. ^{you know} ^{well} But now that I'm older myself I wish I had. But the same thing now a days, kids don't ask their parents, "Well where were you born?" I don't suppose. And "What did you do for a living?"

Q: So then somebody totally unknown to you comes and asks.

A: Pardon?

Q: Then somebody totally unknown comes and asks you all these questions.

A: Yes.

Q: (laughs)

A: Well, it's kinda of nice to, you know, stir your memory bank a little but uh, it's kinda hard to do too. Let's see if there's anything else I can contribute. There used to be some dance halls. I think there was a dance hall I played at, uh, I must have been maybe fourteen, fifteen,

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) sixteen years old my, like I was telling you, my dad and mother had this orchestra, so usually when they had a dance job, somewhere they'd take me along. And when I was very young, I remember going out and playing for dances and they'd let me play until about 10:00 or 10:30 and we'd usually play, you know like what they call country dances and there'd would always be someone's home real near... so about 10:00 they'd say o.k. you got to go to bed now. (laugh) So off I'd go out in the bandstand and take my banjo with me and go to somebody's house and sleep for the rest of the night. So, it was, you know, and uh,^{oh} what the heck.

Q: How did that work out with you going to school?

A: Well, I went to school but after, this was when I was in grade school, mostly, when the old farm dances, like I say, there were two or three dance halls in Ballard and for the life of me I think there was one on 52nd or 56th between 20th and 22nd and that's the only one I remember too much about. Course, I started playing when I was eleven years old, see. And you know, when you're eleven, you, going, that's going back many many years, you know, and probably any reason why I should remember too much about it because I was still going to school and had my friends and playing little games and things, you know, like soccer and all that kinda of stuff back in those days, so. Music wasn't that big a thing until I got older and got in with another group of people, you know, my own age and formed our own orchestras and things. So...

Q: When did you do that, about what age did you break off on your own?

A: Uh, I think when I was in the eighth grade at Salmon Bay School, which is now where the Ballard Boys' Club is. See, Stanley Jameison and I started our

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) own little orchestra. He played the violin. Back in those days violin was very popular instrument... until saxophones eventually took over the violin's parts. And, uh, Stanley Jameison and I had our own little orchestra and that had to be back in about... thirty-one, thirty-two, something like that, maybe before, I'm not quite sure. And then I played, but you know, every, somebody would need a banjo player and so forth, so you know you'd play with many different groups, never anybody steady all the time but just you know, somebody would call you on the phone like they still do today, you know. "Ray, playin' Saturday night?" "No". "You wanna job?" "O.K." Maybe I never met the guy before. So that's the way it worked. But the word gets around he knows how to play, so, you know, that's the way you get your jobs.

Q: Did you play primarily in dance halls or in taverns that had like ...

A: Well, that, yes, well it was all dance halls before the taverns open, before taverns were legalized. It was all dance halls. And then after taverns become popular, well, I gee, I played down on the * * * for a while, and just anywhere, Greenwood all, just wherever they needed somebody you know, you'd either get a call or walk into a place that you're interested in the pay. (laugh) "You want somebody to play tonight?" And that's usually the way it happened. And I've got some sort of interesting stuff here. I don't know if you've ever heard of Eddie Peabody?

Q: I'm afraid I haven't.

A: He was a very very famous banjo player. And the most famous of them all, you know, just like he's the King Tut or somebody very... He was as famous, there's some pictures of him up there. And he's played, he has played all, course he's dead now, he's played all over the world in front of the

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) kings and queens and you name it.

Q: When was he the most popular?

A: Back in the Twenties and even in the Thirties andⁱⁿ the Forties, I mean, but back in the Twenties and Thirties were his biggest popularity, I believe. But he was really famous. I have some clippings and stuff up here.

Q: And you played with him?

A: That's a picture of he and I and a friend of mine in that picture there. That was back, taken in 1963. And that banjo, that banjo that I'm holding there, belonged to him at that time, so, before he left town I talked him out of the banjo...

Q: Yes...

A: So I know all about banjos...

A: So I've had that banjo for twenty-five years. And it's gold-plated. It's a beautiful instrument. That's the one, that's it right there.

A: So I've, whenever I play, of course, I play that banjo. It's got a nice, big beautiful autograph on the inside of it that will be there for the life of the banjo. So it was very interesting. So most of the stuff that I remember now is mostly, not so much the taverns in Ballard, as just me traveling around seeing...

Q: Let me get back to Ballard a little bit now, though. The places that you did play... was there one, aside from the dance halls, well the dance halls too, were there specific ones that you remember very clearly, cause what I'd like you to do is walk inside of one with me verbally. And kind of tell me

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

Q: (cont.) what you see, what it's like inside... what the crowd's like.

Are there any that you can think of that are very vivid for you to remember?

A: Well I do remember that women were not allowed at the bar. I do remember that, mostly. And, uh, oh I don't know...

Q: They weren't allowed, were they kicked out often or they didn't come in...

A: They were just not allowed to be at the bar. They could be seated, they didn't, they had to be seated but they were not allowed to sit at the bar... or stand at the bar either. So that was, then they changed that law, I don't know what year that law was changed. It used to be pretty old-fashioned type things, you know. Women were supposed, I imagine the idea was women was supposed to be at home not in the bar. I suppose that was the idea, but, so anyhow...

Q: Were there very many women in the crowd usually, in most places that you played in?

A: Sure. Women, there was just as many women as men out back in... sure. You know most men don't like to go out without a partner. And you don't especially want to go out with your buddies all the time. (laugh) Sure there were lots of women.

Q: And they served beer. Did they serve whiskey and wine and other sorts of things?

A: You know, I've been trying to think if whiskey was legal, was legal, was legal to serve whiskey in the bars at that time or not. I just can't remember. It was beer and wines to my knowledge, but I, but whether they could were allowed to serve whiskey, it seemed like they were allowed for just a

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) short time but I'm not completely positive. Because I also played in some cocktail lounges where it was allowed, so I'm not too sure on that point.

Q: What about minors? Now you were a musician and^{as} you said you kind of got away with it because you were there to provide entertainment.

Q: Well, if they asked me how old I was, I imagine I was pretty truthful. I probably would have told 'em how old I was, you know, but they didn't bother to ask. (laugh)

Q: What about the customers, did you know that there were a lot of guys or coming here...

A: No, I don't, I feel that, being a musician I felt that I was probably the youngest one in these places. I always did feel that way, you know. Because, what the heck, most younger people didn't have any money to go out and drink in those days. You had to be old enough to have a job. And if you weren't married, back in those days if you weren't married it was hard for a single man to find a job. I know. It tried. I would go to a place, they'd say, "Ya married?" "No, I'm not married." "Well I wouldn't even give my brother a job if he wasn't married and had a family to support." Now this is true, some places, not all the places. So mostly younger people, I'd say younger people my age, didn't have enough money to go out and blow on havin' fun, you know. So mostly, not old people but people above twenty-one years of age.

Q: Were any of the places you worked kind of rough places?

A: Naaah, not really.

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

Q: (laughs) You smiled.

A: It's sort of like today. You can go in a tavern now and you'll, usually if you sit there long enough there'll be one person that's a little out of line. It was pretty much, I think it was a little rougher, yes. Because there were a lot more fights, if I remember. People seemed to want to fight more back in those days. Maybe because they were so disgusted with life, being broke all the time, I don't know. Yes, there used to be a lot of fights.

Q: You pretty much can look back and notice that that seemed the attitude during the Depression, that things were rougher?

A: Well, people, I think people were more willing to help each other. A lot more than they are now. A lot more. You know, you'd go say, somebody needed their house painted. "O.k. I need a ditch dug, I'll go up and paint your house, you dig my ditches!" You know, that was that kind of thing back in those days. You'd, everybody was helping each other. Money was, you know, you'd go out and make like a, being a musician, if I hadn't have been a musician, I think I'd have spent the first twenty-five years of my life broke. Absolutely penniless.

Q: Is that right.

A: (quiet laugh) I was born during a bad time, you know. I was going to school when that depression hit and boy that was, bthat was bad, bad, bad. They talked about the depression at Boeing's and things a few years ago but that was... ahhh... that was nothing. I can understand it was something if you had a job and lost it, you were still broke. But back in the Depression, everybody I knew was broke. Everybody. Somebody had to

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) be makin' a few dollars, of course, to pay, you know, ^people like me goin' in and getting a free beer here and there, from people, but a, where they got their money I don't know.

Q: What ways can you think of that it affected you directly? Things that you did without, because of the Depression?

A: Oh, it made me a lot more cautious about money. Tremendous. You know, now when I have to buy something, I don't even have a charge card. If I can't afford it, I don't buy it. That taught me that. Don't go into debt. Back in those days I couldn't go into debt because I didn't have anything to go into debt for, you know. You didn't have a job, you can't get a, you know you can't charge anything if you don't have a job. So it taught me to be a lot more cautious. A lot more. So now, even today, if I can't afford it I just don't buy it. So I do without a lot of things I'd like to have, but... I think older people are more that way too, you know. I don't think you could find anybody my age today that wouldn't feel the same way, pretty much. Unless they happened to be born into a rich family.

And I don't know anybody that never was. None of my friends come from rich people. So...

Q: Well now, if you and your friends didn't have any money to go out and do things, what'd you do for fun?

A: We made our own fun. We'd chip in, see. We'd drink back in those days, and we'd, well after, too, was legal, of course like I say, I wasn't always old enough to buy it but... Maybe there'd be five of us and we'd chip ten or fifteen or twenty cents a piece and buy a jug or buy a this or buy a that, you know, It'd take four or five people to do it. But we'd all get together

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) and share the profits and share the losses. So...

(A break while someone came in to do business)

Q: Well, let's see.

A: I wish I knew a little bit more, I wish I could remember back a little better but... like I say, the taverns, yes, they might have been just a little bit wilder because back in those days there were a lot of fishermen that would live in Ballard and spend all winter in Ballard. And oh, they'd be kind of antsy after being on the boats all summer. So there were, there were, yes I think there were.

Q: Now was it, it was fishermen, what about, when did the mills stop being a real concentration of men?

A: Well, I worked at the Seattle Cedar. And I quit there in 1951 to get into the locksmithing business. And I think the Seattle Cedar, I think they closed up about ten... around 1970, something like that. I'm not completely sure. That was about twelve, fifteen years ago. Maybe more. I'm not sure.

Q: Was that the last of the mills that made big money?

A: Pardon?

Q: Was that the last big mill that was operating in Ballard?

A: That was, that was the last cedar mill and I'm not sure about that one over by the bridge. I think it was uh... what year they went down?... It wasn't a cedar mill, it was... What the check did they have over there? Ah phooey! I can't believe I can't remember the names.

(Brief exchange with customer)

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) I can't remember the name of that doggone mill... Seattle Cedar was the last cedar mill. And then, of course, there was Stimson's down here, which, you knew Stimson's?

Q: Yes, I knew about Stimson's. When did they close down?

A: Uh, they closed down before the Seattle Cedar, I'd say twenty-five years ago. That's a guess. It could be... I'll show you something.

(sounds while he sorts through boxes) I don't know where I happened to get all this junk.

Q: You've got boxes of it.

A: Oh, I've got so much stuff I was gonna leave this, I don't know how come I drug this stuff down here. I think I thought there was something else in it. Well, I'll put that there. Here's my old high school book, 1930.

Q: Oh. This is Ballard High School?

A: Ballard High.

Q: The Shingle, 1930. (long pause) Is that the year you graduated?

A: No, I graduated in...well I didn't I actually didn't graduate. I went until 1931. I wanted to go out and make a dollar for myself. So that's when I really started playin' music. I didn't have enough money to go to school. I got tired of bein' poor. So I went out...

Q: Oh, there's some nice pictures in here.

A: Yes. (pause) But you're askin' me about Stimson's. O.k. He built a beautiful home. This is out here, out where that St. Michelle Winery is.

Q: Oh, that's Stimson's place out there.

A: That's Stimson's place and back in the thirties... I think it was 1933, they changed it into a club, well, what the heck do you wanna call it, roadhouse or clubhouse

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) or whatever, for private parties. And we played out there.

Q: Oh you did.

A: In 1933.

Q: Was that a pretty nice place?

A: Oh was it! (laugh) We lived there. We lived up above the carriage room.

Q: Oh you did.

A: Four of us, three of us musicians. And that was fun! We had a tennis court, we were just like we were millionaires. We were all broke but we were livin' just like we were millionaires.

Q: I bet.

A: (Shuffling through papers) Somewhere here, oh he here it is. Couldn't figure out which is...

Q: Oh! And this is in the "PACIFIC", May 12th, 1985, "N.W. Living." Stimson's place...

A: Yes, and I went out there and I told 'em, you know, I played out there in 1933. And I remember we were never allowed upstairs. I used to wonder, you know, these older gentlemen would come up with these younger women and I thought, what the heck, what does these guys doin' with these younger women, you know. I was, oh man I was..(laughs)

Q: You were naive?

A: I was, (laugh) unbelievable. And that's what the rooms up there were for, see.

Q: Is that right.

A: And so, of course we had our own place, of course, as I told you, up in the carriage house or whatever you call that thing. Oh we had it pretty nice too. We had our own, they, we stayed right there. We lived there. So that's what I say we were just like, oh boy, rolling in wealth but we didn't have

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) a dime. And we had a cook. He'd cook for us. And had our own quarters. Had our own parties. And it was fun.

Q: So you had the run of the place more or less, as long as you stayed out of the customer's quarters?

A: Well, we could, yes, we could, we done pretty much as we pleased. We'd play just in the evenings, of course. The rest of the day we could do anything we'd want. There was a little stream down there. And we used to go fishin' or play tennis or ... now I know what it feels like to be rich... without money. Ah, it was great. This Black man, he would take care of our clothing for us and press our suits and stuff and cook for us, and gee we were... oh...

Q: Like kings!

A: It was unbelievable! I wish I could live that way today.

Q: And that was high class folks came there, lots of money, huh?

A: It was called the Club Lido.

Q: The Club?

A: Club Lido. L-I-D-O. L-I-D-O.

Q: Ah, Lido, o.k.

A: And it was for the people who had a few dollars. That was 1933, which was a real tough year for most people.

Q: Did a lot of politicians and Seattle folks go there?

A: I honestly don't know because all we were supposed to do was get up there and play, so we didn't get to mill around with anybody you know. But this, as I remember, the biggest tip I ever got in my life up until that time... somebody put a five dollar bill into our collection plate.

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

Q: Is that right?

A: A whole five dollar bill! We'd never seen anybody that big before. (laughs)

Q: And this was in the thirties?

A: That was back in '33. Back in 1933.

Q: Isn't that something.

A: I was nineteen years old. That's what I say. I was playing in many of these places when I wasn't, you know, wouldn't have been allowed to go in. I got all kinds of... I get so mixed-up I don't know what to tell ya. I can't find my school picture but there's my brother. He was a year and a half younger than I. That was in 1927. That's Salmon Bay School.

Q: Salmon Bay School.

A: That's no longer there.

Q: Yes. That's where the boys and girls' club is, is that right?

A: Yes. It's a strange thing. All of my brothers, including myself, went to that school and my dad also went to that school. And the same janitor was there when my dad went as when I graduated. The janitor, he must have been there for forty, or fifty years I suppose. His name was Mr. King.

Q: Now when did that school close? Do you remember?

A: Oh golly. I know during the Depression they turned it into a place where you used to be able to go in and get a sack full of groceries and stuff, what the heck they call...not a foodbank, well the same thing as a foodbank now, but what the heck they call those things back in those days. I remember I went over there and worked a half a day a week for, I was still livin' with my folks. I wasn't married yet...

Q: Is that the same as a bread line, is that the same kind of place, or...

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: Well, sort of but you'd go over there and you know, you'd work maybe a half a day or day a week for, then you would get groceries for it. You wouldn't get paid, you'd get groceries for it. Like oranges and apples and bread and oatmeal, you know, everything to subsist on. So you actually weren't handed it outright, but you would maybe work a half a day or so. So I forget what the heck they call that. Well, it's sort of like the food-banks today, you know. Pretty much the same thing. Roosevelt was the one that inaugurated that type thing, , and I think for him that a lot of us are still alive today. Otherwise we'd starved, I think.

You know where North Beach is?

Q: Yes.

A: O.k. We used to pitch our tents down there.

now
Q: And^Awhy don't you tell me where North Beach is because I have a vague idea.

A: Right at the foot of 24th, if you go all the way down. It's fenced in right now. You can't get in there. But back in those days my folks used to pitch their tents besides, a lot of several other families.

Q: So which one are you?

A: Well that's a good question.

Q: You're one of the little ones there, huh?

A: Let's see... that's my older brother, let's see... I'm probably the smallest one there.

Q: So you look like you were probably about three or four?

A: I... maybe two or three, I'd say. And that's either taken down at Golden Gardens or North Beach. I can't remember which. We used to have big family picnics out there. Here's another picture taken down there when we used to camp down at the beach. And that was one of the boats my dad was fisherman

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) on.

Q: Oh, so now he was a fisherman as well as a musician?

A: Yes. Well he was a fisherman and a housemover and whatever he could find to do. This was taken just below 65th and 20th.

Q: Oh. What place is this?

A: Uhh... it used to be a barber shop in there, I think. This is when I was in the Salmon Bay School. We had a parade one day. And that was probably taken back in 1928 or 1930 or something.

Q: Wow. I see a sign in the window says, "Haircuts - children's haircuts twenty-five cents."

A: Yes. That's where I used to get my hair cut. It's just below 65th and 20th. I think part of the building's still there, I think.

Q: Oh, o.k. On the east side of the street, the west side of the street...

A: It would be on the east, east.

Q: The east side of the street. How 'bout that.

A: And there used to be a drug store on the corner. Was Mean's* drug store.

Q: Is that right.

A: Yes. Here's a big picture. That's me.

Q: Oh. A goat and a cart, uhuh.

A: That used to be common.

Q: Was that common?

A: Yes. Very common. They'd send a fellow around with a, the goat and the cart, and...

Q: And he'd give kids rides for money, is that what you mean? or...

A: Well, I imagine my folks had to pay for it. How much it cost, maybe back

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) in those days a whole dime or fifteen cents, I suppose. And that was, yes, I remember that house. That house is gone. That was 1723 N.W. 64th. The house is torn down now and it's a duplex in there now. And, this is also my older brother, my brother in between and myself. And now where this was taken, I was probably, what, six months old? I guess, I don't know.

Q: And a wooden sidewalk out in front. A wooden walk.

A: It's possible that could have been taken up at that house on 2044, but I don't know. I have no way of knowing because I must have been very young little guy there. And that's my grandparents. They owned the family home up there on 1725 N.W. 64th. Now whether that picture was taken up there around their house...

Q: Boy, they're standing in front of a lot of forest.

A: Yes, now where that...

Q: It's partially cleared.

A: It could have been taken somewhere in Ballard because back in those days, Ballard was, you know, not like it is now. There were trees and dogs and cats and cows and pigs and horses and everything else. I can remember some of that. Here's another one taken out at North Beach.

Q: A lot of families went and camped at North Beach in the summer?

A: Yes. Well, I wouldn't say a whole bunch of 'em. But so many people that I knew were out there.

Q: And they didn't just go for the day, they camped. Was it easy to get to?

A: We camped out there for the summer. When school was out, then we'd go out.

Q: Oh I see. It was taken before school for most of us. My dad had this great...

A: When school was out, then we'd go out there. This was taken before school for most of us. My dad had this great...

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) ... I told him, I think I told him later on in life it looked like a big 'ol circus tent. Where he got it I don't know.

Q: And what did the grown-ups do out there at North Beach, did they...

A: (laughter)

A: I don't know.

Q: Did they collect, do beachcombing, dig oysters or clams...

A: No, I think they all had their jobs, you know, and then us kids would, you know, build our own rafts and things and go out there.

Q: So the parents would commute and the kids would...

A: Yes, I guess, I imagine the women would stay with the kids and the men would go out and do the jobs, if they had a job.

This is Ballard High School, 1932.

Q: Oh, wrestling team or acrobatics?

A: No, gym class. That's me, back there.

Q: Oh there you are, huh.

A: 1932.

Q: How 'bout that. That paper's in pretty good shape.

A: That was in the old, what'd they call that part of the P.I., uhhh, Roto, Rotogroup*, Rotogroup Viewer, how can you pronounce that? How do you pronounce that, Rotogladior, Rotoglodior?

Q: I have no idea. (laughs) Can't help you with that. I came across a name when I was doing some research, Bonnie Denend, who graduated from Ballard High School, 1907.

A: Who?

Q: Bonnie was the name.

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: Bonnie Denend?

Q: Yes. I wondered if that was an aunt...

A: It had to be a relative.

Q: Must of been.

A: Because all the Denends are relatives, you know relations.

Q: She'd be about a contemporary of your dad, probably, if she graduated in

1907.

Hmm...

A: (quietly) Bonnie Denend? (pause) ^ Bonnie. I don't remember any of my aunts by that name. Well, however. But here's that a...

Q: Oh, the Stimson house, yes, o.k.

A: Oh, let's see what we got here... oh that's a picture of, no that's when we were down in, I was playin' out of Utah.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: Yes, 'Frisco, I guess, but I don't know what this stuff is, I'm not sure, let's see... about the opinion you've written.

Q: You must have a lot of, a lot of memorabilia from when you were playing.

A: I've got so many clippings, you know that... Well here's something I'm very proud of.

Q: What's this?

A: You know who Emmett Watson is, don't you?

Q: Oh yes. (long pause) Oh... this is describing when Eddie Peabody, when you met, when you were with him and he gave him, you his guitar... or his banjo, I'm sorry. Isn't that something.

A: I'm very proud of that. And this Eddie Peabody, I became fairly well acquainted with him, so I asked him one time, when I'm down and seen him, "Why don't you drop in at the Blue Banjo one of these nights, it's..."

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) "Oh gee, Ray," he says, "I'm quite busy. I says, "Oh yes, I know." And I'd forgotten it. So one night I was down there at the Blue Banjo playin' away and somebody says, "Hey, Ray!" And gee, I looked at the door here was Eddie Peabody, and I... oh I, just like Ronald Reagan walkin' in here and spittin' out his... "Say,," "Ray how are 'ya?" You know, I just about dropped.

Q: Now the Blue Banjo, is that down in Seattle?

A: It used to be down in Pi...

Q: Pioneer Square.

A: Yes. It was very famous. It's called Doc Maynard's now.

Q: Oh, uh huh.

A: The same place. That was very famous.

Q: Isn't that something.

A: I played there for a long time. That was in the Ballard News, I think.

Q: And this is about you opening your key service.

A: 1963.

Q: So you worked at a downtown locksmith's shop for twelve years,

A: Yes.

Q: And you lived in Ballard for forty-nine years at this point. When was this?

A: Well, forty-nine...

Q: Well yes you were born... you were born in... around October 1877 and they said

A: I'm seventy-three.

Q: You were born in Ballard, so, yes.

A: Let's see. Oh gee...

Q: And it said you were playing banjo three nights, yes three nights a week at the Blue Banjo, at that time.

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: Well, I've got so many clippings on me, that...

Q: Did you get to know very many of the folks around the Ballard places?

Now you started playing downtown and you did a lot of traveling but when
you were in Ballard did you get to know bartenders...

A: You know, actually...

Q: Other entertainers, very closely?

A: Actually, it's crazy enough, I can't remember the names of the fellas that
owned the taverns. Because it wasn't as, you know it was just here and there
and jumpin' around from one place to another and it, just almost like going
to a different party every night, is what it amounted to.

Q: Sure. So were there any specific ones that you know gave you a real good
shake a few times or ones that were just mean as all get out and you
didn't like to work for?

A: Well... sound like Ronald Reagan, "Well!.."

Q: (laughs) Or maybe some of the regulars that you remember that were real
characters, that are...

A: (laughs)

Q: Maybe there were a few of those, huh?

(laughter)

A: Hmm, let's see. Well I remember a good friend of my brother's, my brother's
name was Lowell, and this friend of his was named Selmer Wiggins* and they used
to sing, my brother played the piano and Selmer used to sing, at Chet's Log
Cabin. And this Selmer Wiggins had a beautiful voice. And he used to sing,
what the heck was that song... oh phooey. It wasn't "Home on the Range" it
was something similar to that. And I can remember those two playin' that

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) song. And that's the only song I can remember of the whole doggone thing.

(telephone rings)

Q: Is that right.

(tape turned off and on again)

Q: Oh good, good. You know, I think we will, perhaps, want to have a second opportunity, as you were saying, that you will remember things as soon as I leave.

A: Yes, I can't...

Q: So...

A: I, as far as names, I think it's a dead issue there.

Q: Well that's fine, that's fine. As I said, I'm using you kind of like a camera, to tell me what you remember, characters that can fill out the picture for someone who wasn't really there. Let's see, some of these, the places you worked in... did they still have sawdust on the floor and spitoons and rails at the bar?

A: The only, yes, they used to have rails at the bar, sure. Almost, I think they all did back in those days. And at the Blue Banjo they had sawdust on the floor. But of course that was, you know, fairly recent. Yes, it used to be rails and spitoons and things. And where Hattie's Hat now, that just, is no they used to call that the Old Home.

Q: Oh that's the Old Home.

A: That's the Old Home.

Q: O.k. O.k.

A: So I don't think I ever played there. I don't even know if they ever had music there.

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

Q: Did it have a reputation?

A: (laughs)

Q: What kind, you laughed, what kind of reputation did it have?

A: Well, I don't know. It wasn't too bad but they, I know a lot of the old timers, as I thought they were old timers back in those days, used to have a card room back there and there used to be a lot of gambling, however whether it was legal or not I don't know. But they used to play a lot of cards in the back room.

Q: When was this, was this in the thirties?

A: Late twenties and thirties, yes.

Q: Now that would have been during Prohibition. What kind of business did they do, was...

A: I think it was a restaurant.

Q: I see. Did most of the places turn into restaurants at the, when Prohibition started, what happened to the places that were open at that time?

A: Uhh... well I imagine so many of 'em tried to get a liquor license and if they couldn't get a liquor license maybe, you know, they just couldn't make it. I don't know.

Q: There weren't any liquor licenses during the Prohibition, were there?

A: No, uh-uh. It was illegal, see, you weren't, if you got caught selling booze you went to the penitentiary.

Q: O.k. So maybe, do you think a lot of 'em turned into a restaurant like the Old Home did, or?

A: Yes. And cocktail lounges, see. Many of these places along here, I imagine, at one time back in those days were flat out restaurants, you know, because

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) you weren't allowed to serve any booze at all. Course there was a lot, I can tell you where there were a couple bootlegging places but you don't want to know that. (cough) I imagine the houses are gone now anyhow. There used to be a lot of bootlegging.

Q: I, my great grandmother used to bootleg, too. (laugh) I guess there were a lot...

A: Back in those days it wasn't anything disgraceful, you know, what the heck. You had to make a living one way or another. And uh, Ieuh, let's see, I know quite a few of the cab drivers were selling liquor.

Q: Is that right.

A: Sure. Tell ya where to get it and they'd go get it for ya or vice versa, you know. You'd give them the money or go with 'em, whatever.

Q: What kind of liquor were they selling, what was it made out of?

A: A lot of it was good stuff that would come in from Canada. They had what they called "rum runners," see. They'd bring it down by boat. You know, they'd try to slip past the Coast Guard, of course. Once in a while they'd get nailed. But sure, it was good booze. Course there was a lot of moonshine back in those days.

Q: What was that like?

A: Oooo... Awful! (laughs)

Q: Is that right. (laughs)

A: Oh boy. Whew. If you've ever been sick. (laughs)

Q: Oh... And what did people make it out of?

A: Well they made it out of grain, sometimes they made it out of potatoes and lot of home brew back in those days, too. I remember my dad used to make

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: (cont.) lots of home brew. Not too bad.

Q: Did people when they made home brew, did most people look to sell it or was it just for their own use?

A: Most of 'em, for their own benefit but if they were selling moonshine they were probably selling beer also. So I think it was two bits, let's see, beer was twenty-five cents for a quart.

Q: From a home brewer?

A: Home brewer. Some of it was good, some was bad, just like a cook, you know, you can get a good piece of meat and one cook will make it taste good and the other cook, you can't stand to eat it. Same thing with makin' booze and beer, I imagine. So there was a lot of moonshine in Ballard. Lot of bootleggers, I know that for a fact. And a lot of drinkin' too. So, I imagine back in those days, now I remember what we used to call a Mickey.

a
It used to be kind of a small bottle you'd put in your hip pocket and carry that around. So I imagine when you went out to a restaurant and stuff, you'd carry your own little Mickey with you, you know to have a drink.

Course, I, back in those days I was quite young, I wasn't doin' all that much drinkin'. In fact, I probably didn't drink at all until I started playin' in these taverns and things. But it was, I don't know what to say about that bootlegging stuff.

Q: Was it, were people, it was common knowledge, pretty much everybody knew who was doing it, and where they could get some if they wanted some?

A: It had to be that way because the bootleggers had to have a pretty steady flow too. I think moonshine was fifty cents a pint. Good or bad... fifty-cents a pint.

(laughter)

INTERVIEW WITH RAY DENEND (cont.)

A: You'd take your chances. And uh, yes; most of the bootleggers that I, I could name three of 'em but I'm not going to.

Q: O.k. (laughs) that's fine...

A: Remember... I REMEMBER THEIR NAMES (laughs).

Q: Why do you remember them above the others?

A: Because they, some of 'em were my friends. They were older than I were but they liked me and I liked them, so, what the heck, and uh...

Q: Was there a real effort to shut down the bootlegging and the moonshine or was it, kind of, did the police turn their back on it and let it go to a certain extent?

A: No they got what they call the Feds, the Federals, back in those days, you know. They'd nail 'em once in a while and send 'em to jail or send 'em to prison, whatever, you know. They couldn't get them all because there was so much of it going on. Just like dope dealing today, you know. They can't get 'em all. So, but there was enough of 'em around, that it was always available if you wanted one, you know, a bottle. And like I say, some was good and some was bad but it was too late to find out after you bought it, you know. So, and I was thinkin' too, let's see...nah, I didn't know any bootleggers on this side...

(cut off tape)

END OF SIDE ONE/END OF TAPE