

Donald Mitchell oral histories, Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage. Ralph Perdue interview, 1989 August 30. Transcript completed by Andrea Atkins. <https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. PERDUE: Ask the questions.

MR. MITCHELL: Sure.

MR. PERDUE: And maybe I can answer them. I might have to do some (indiscernible).

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, just for this particular tape, we're talking with Mr. Ralph Perdue and his grandson in -- at their home in Fairbanks and it's August 30th, 1989. And Mr. Perdue is one of the founders of the Fairbanks Native Association, and you were President of Tanana Chiefs at one point, too, right?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. I was president, I'm not sure, around '63 -- starting '63, for eight years.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. PERDUE: Until I quit. And -- reasons for business. In those days we were a chief -- we were elected chief, a traditional chief. There was no paying while (indiscernible) things considered. You were elected, you were to serve the people in this type of ruling. So after six or eight years, I had to get out to attend to my business, which was financing, you know, all these Native causes. I knew of some. But the final conclusion I came to was that it was mostly between White's and Indian because of a misunderstanding. One didn't understand the other and then neither one of them sat down to -- I was raised by white people. And the first ten years of my life, I lived out there on the Koyuk River with my parents, you know, so I knew that kind of life. It was a good life.

MR. MITCHELL: And then you came in and went to school in Fairbanks, then?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. In 1942, I went with the Perdues. They were white people; they were traders in Galena, and I worked for them after school, like a box-boy type, cutting wood, and so forth. And then they -- what -- he was draft age, 39, so he had to sell. And they wanted to take me and my little brother, Leo. But Dad wouldn't let both go, so I -- I chose to go to get a better education. But my father told me, he said, "You go with them. I can't afford it." If you want to, yeah, you -- I think I was ten years old.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, had you been going to school in the village up to that point or --

MR. PERDUE: Off and on. When Dad decided to go out -- out and trap, that's where he went. We got books from -- Nick and Jane books to take along. We read those. Learned to say ABCs from my foster -- stepmother.

MR. MITCHELL: And so, then when you were ten, then you came into the school system here in Fairbanks, or is that --

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MR. PERDUE: Well, yeah. I -- they -- when he left, I came, it was in December, and we went through here. And they were going out on vacation. My -- my foster parents, new adoptive parents. They were going to travel for a while and they -- they didn't think I should be out of school. So I was dropped off in Skagway Catholic Mission, and I stayed there, and I went to school there for a year and a half. And then I came back here, and we went over to Kotzebue some, lived over there while he was working for a mining company. And I went to school -- territorial school there. A very good school, excellent school. It's the type of schoolteacher who was dedicated, that gave you the basic learning, reading, writing, arithmetic, annunciate, pronunciate, and pass us on the right (indiscernible) and all this jazz. She was very strict and I -- I, she, and most of the kids that -- children that are living constantly that went to school there spoke very well -- good English --

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: -- because of that. But that was a territorial school. Then we came back over here in 1945 and have been living here since then.

MR. MITCHELL: So then, you were here for high school?

MR. PERDUE: Part of grade school and high school. Graduated from Fairbanks High School here in 1951.

MR. MITCHELL: All right. Now, what was it like growing up in Fairbanks? Was the Native community --

MR. PERDUE: There was no Native community. I think I was the only Native -- in fact, I was the only Native kid that was going to school, in the school system. There were no Natives living here.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, there must have been other Native families living in Fairbanks, weren't there?

MR. PERDUE: There was a few. But they didn't have any children. Most of them were working at the Eskimo village by the railroad yard. But most of them were -- some of them came from (indiscernible) but eventually, after I came, the Native children started -- Hydaburgs came in, and they went to school here. Trying to think who is -- Oh, Nottis, Emil Notti. Oh, not Emil, his -
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MR. MITCHELL: Fred.

MR. PERDUE: Fred, he went to school here.

MR. MITCHELL: Because I know Emil went to Edgecumbe, I think.

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MR. PERDUE: Yeah. He went to Edgecumbe and -- but anyway, there was some prejudice as far as -- like, I say -- but I know that, you know, it existed. But -- I heard about it, that Native people were marrying white girls at University and have to move out because, you know, the prejudice. I met some of them since then.

MR. MITCHELL: Did -- was it, like, as bad as it was in Juneau in those days? I mean, where there was --

MR. PERDUE: I don't think so.

MR. MITCHELL: -- where there was places they wouldn't serve you or things like that?

MR. PERDUE: I don't think so. And there was one time they wouldn't serve you, but -- you know, in a bar. More because here, either you're already inebriated and noisy -- but I know my stepfather was -- I mean foster father was a bartender. And he didn't have any animosity against Natives. Their money was just as good as anybody else. So, you know, he waited on them. And if they got out of hand, I suppose, well, just like anybody else, there's the door. So -- but there was some even in the -- in the school system. I'm not going to mention the prominent person that when I was in -- entered school in the system. That (indiscernible) person resented it, then -- anyway my foster parents, my mother especially, Eagle Scout Club, I guess, got -- they got into it. She told him, "That kid's got more brains than most of these kids that are here," meaning me.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: In other words, he just needs the opportunity, and people like you -- I'm paying taxes, you're paying taxes, and they need just as much opportunity as your children do.

MR. MITCHELL: But that was pretty much the only real problem that you had?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah -- well, yeah. They wouldn't let me swim in the swimming pool because I was is Native. The guy wouldn't admit it. My -- my dad -- my pop, he -- I went in the bar and asked for 50 cents, and I was with, you know, a group of boys. We -- just, like, a small community, there's always boys hanging around with each other, and I was in with the (indiscernible) and a few other families. We all paled around together. Barnett (phonetic), you know. Anyway, they -- they were going swimming, so I said, well -- so I stopped and got 50 cents, and they -- I wouldn't -- they wouldn't let me in. So I went back to the bar and threw the 50 cents on the -- on the bar. And my dad says, "What's the matter?" Well, I said, "I don't know if it's true or not." I said, "They wouldn't let me swim in there. But the boys said they won't let me swim because I'm a Native." Dad's -- Uncle Larry owned the bar then, told -- Dad, said, "You mind taking over and just give me the afternoon off? The boy's got a little problem. I want to take care of it." Uncle Larry says, "Hey, the hell we paying taxes for? Go take care of it. I'll take care of the bar for you." And so he went down, and Ernie Finn (phonetic) -- Ernie Findler (phonetic) owned the swimming pool. And he knew daddy. He said I didn't -- he says, "What's this my boy can't swim in here because he's an Indian?" And he says, "I didn't know that." And he says, "What difference does it make whether you know it or not? Whether it's my boy or

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anybody else's boy? "It's a public swimming pool. You pay to get in here, you swim here." He said, "We just won a world war fighting over this goddamn shit, and we pay the taxes and we risked our life, and you're still practicing prejudice." And that ended that after that. It opened up to Native (indiscernible) very many boys, you know, kids. But I mean, there was small instances like that. But I don't remember, you know, places being closed to Natives. I suppose during my father's time they did. But I know in Tanana, I heard that they wouldn't go -- allow, you know, Indians to go into the bar in Tanana. At the time, Tanana had bars. Or the liquor store, I guess. They had -- of course, the bar had the liquor store and the bar. We have these old people who laugh at me when they find out who my father was because he was half-breed and he was, you know, had hazel-blue eye -- sort of blue eyes, but kind of hazel. He worked on a steamboat in (indiscernible), Indiana. He was a deck hand. Indians working on there would -- you know, they would come into Tanana. Why? They would go down to the beach and they would go down and buy dad a suit, dress him up, white shirt, tie, you can go in the bar, have a few drinks and buy a bottle and buy all the booze he wanted. Now, they sit down there and have a ball, I guess.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, your real dad, then, grew up on the river, then?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. He was born and raised in Nulato. My mother is from Koyukuk. She's a Koyukuk Indian; my dad is Nulato Indian. The only true Nulato people left, the Crisica (phonetic) family and the Demoski (phonetic) family, the rest of the Nulato people were wiped out in 1851.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Right.

MR. PERDUE: And the others came from -- what's living there, from Kiu Flats (phonetic) or down river someplace else.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, now, after you got out of high school, obviously you, at some point, went in and started your own business?

MR. PERDUE: I -- I -- I had been working in a jewelry store during school, on the job training after -- you know, after school. That -- I -- after graduation, I worked at a jewelry store. But then, you know, we had to Korean conflict and draft. There was a draft. And then you were draft age, oh, hell. I put my name as eligible for draft as soon as possible. So I went into the service in '51, in October, and spent my two years as a company clerk (indiscernible) field.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh. So you -- you never got out of Alaska?

MR. PERDUE: No. You -- you can put in for it, and, you know, some didn't, you know, go. But most of the Native people that were, you know, in the draft, did it up here or, you know, (indiscernible) wouldn't let them out because they needed them up here for training, cold weather training for the new recruits and so forth. They wouldn't let you out. It would have been nice to have been some place else besides home. But --

MR. MITCHELL: Of course, that's probably better than Korea, though.

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MR. PERDUE: Yeah. It was comfortable. It's -- oh, I probably be -- would have (indiscernible) sergeant, but I remained a corporal because I had -- as a company clerk you had the choice. You know, who was -- I was eligible for -- you know, I -- I kept passing it up and said, "I want to get out. I don't" -- you know, "I'm not making a career out of it." I had things on my mind that I wanted to do in life. I had an education to -- to get after I got out of the service. And that, you know, time and money.

MR. MITCHELL: So then you got out of the service in about '53?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. October, '53.

MR. MITCHELL: And then when did you start your own business? Was that --

MR. PERDUE: I didn't -- I didn't -- I went to school, and I kind of settled all that around, you know, the winter, you know, from one (indiscernible) to the other. I worked -- (indiscernible) down to Polaris because I couldn't stand in line for unemployment for \$26 a week. Stand there for two hours for 26 bucks at a time, it was ridiculous as hell. So I took a job as a janitor down at the Polaris building now, for the winter. And then I -- for a while, until I got a job at Fort Wainwright as an apprentice painter or laborer on the job. I think I was at that for several years. And then I got a job after that. Shit, how the hell did -- I think I have the history -- my life history written down some place. And Dad worked around here. I went to work for Wayne's. I was saving money to go to vocational back east, vocational school, Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois. They had a vocational school, which was the best in the country, and I -- I applied for that, and I received the okay and what it was going to cost me per month and so forth. I went to work for Williams that summer, and I got -- that fall, September, I left and went to school. I stayed there for a year. The last six months I didn't stay there because it was -- it was a subject I wasn't interested in. This -- I took the (indiscernible). That was fine, that part. But the rest -- the other course, the six-month course was making parts, watch parts. When you got through school there, you should have been able to, you know, make the whole watch movement, inside, wheels and everything, mathematically, as well as mechanically. I wasn't interested in that. There was no money in it. It wasn't creative enough for me to be interested in. It was just like taking an engine apart, putting it back, cleaning, put it back together, the same repetitious things. So I -- I had to learn hand engraving, jewelry repair, manufacturing. The whole diamond appraisal, the whole system. I learned that. And then I was, you know, working at nights' putting myself through school. Folks didn't have any money. It was just -- not like -- not like we're living today. They -- they were both working, but they didn't have enough. They didn't have money to put me -- because I was over 21, so I didn't -- I got \$103 a month from the vets health, you know. But I -- I worked in a parking lot up until midnight marking cars for 75 cents an hour while I was going to school. And spending money, not much went for spending money, mostly for tuition and apartment rent. I got through about 1957, I guess, '56 -- '56, I guess. Yeah. Spring of '56, because in '57 I went home -- first time I went home to see my parents. Seven -- after 17 -- you know, being away for 17 years. And I worked in the jewelry stores in town after that. And, what the hell did I do? Back -- I went back to school for a while. Just mostly for diamond setting and just for practice -- practical practice, which I knew fairly well. It was a very easy course for me. But had

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not -- people didn't understand -- the stores didn't understand -- they didn't have the money to pay. \$350 couldn't get you anything in town, but you had to have an apartment. Apartment cost, what the heck, 200 bucks, \$250. Well, that was half. You need a car. You really don't have anything left. And that kind of money didn't last that long. Then we got -- what the hell did I do? I worked for -- yeah. That was after I got out of school. I went to work for H and S Warehouse.

MR. MITCHELL: That was here in Fairbanks?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. Furniture moving. I worked eight months, I think. And I -- I was going to cut and go back to school. At some other -- some other things in mind was maybe I would learn some of the diamond trade and merchandising, merchandising the jewelry store. It's kind of a build up to what I have today. But I didn't go -- not working -- you didn't -- in a jewelry store, you want to learn the basic things, but not quite like you would in a diamond jewelry store back East, New York. I thought I'd go out there for a year and see how they did it. And not only that, financing a jewelry store was -- financing and -- it was -- was the biggest problem. Where are we going to go? There isn't a bank (indiscernible). You need 100,000, and then you might have to know what to do, how to manage the store. You know, and all these things to think about. But in the meantime, while we were -- I was working for H and S, I met Dorothy working for H and S. And then, I think -- I don't know, we didn't get married until 1959. Went together for a while. And I think it was around 19- -- let's see, '59, '60. Maybe it was 1961, I think, downtown and opened up a little shop, a repair shop, you know, something like 12 by 12. I had a few watches, some jewelry, and a repair shop. And then we had -- did have a lot of customer, so that's how it started, in a hotel lobby for several years, until I moved and borrowed some more money, and moved into Foodland over there, that section. What do they call it, that sticks out, this one? And then it didn't turn out too good there. Traffic was going the opposite direction up from my place, and then we -- I moved, and then we were having trouble with the rent because the traffic was -- economy kind of dropped at that time, so we had to move out of there. And then we went and rented another place down on Noble street. We were there -- while we were there, we did pretty well; we stayed above ground. We never went into debt that we couldn't take care of. Then we moved -- then we moved to where our present location is, and we've been there since.

MR. MITCHELL: All right. Well, now, where in all of this along the way did you first meet Howard Rock (phonetic)?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. Let me think back now. I was in Nordale at the time and this friend of mine that got me started in the jewelry store came up; that's the Brown family, David Brown family. They had a store here. And Dave Brown (phonetic), you know, introduced me to, you know -- Howard came up that summer, that spring, and Dave Brown had introduced me to him, and Dave had moved up -- he sold out all his business, and he couldn't go to business for -- I don't know, one of those times. So he was in canvas work and then he somehow got (indiscernible), and we were going to go into business together and -- but to -- I had too many friends in town who said, "Don't do it." Part of me said, "It's no good," you know, "You'll end up" -- "you'll be the loser. People that have been in business with him," so -- I -- I -- well, I just broke up the relationship. Anyway, in the meantime, Howard, I don't remember, maybe it was in

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May, came up, he was going to Point Barrow (indiscernible), and Dave brought him in and introduced me.

MR. MITCHELL: So then May of '61, then?

MR. PERDUE: May of '61 or '60 -- maybe it was '61.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, it was -- that was the first time he had gone back to Point Hope at that time.

MR. PERDUE: Yeah, that was --

MR. MITCHELL: In June of '61.

MR. PERDUE: I had the store then at -- in 1961. Because I had, you know, that repair shop then. He went to Point Hope for that summer. Letters are -- Dorothy keeps those things. He sent me a painting around September, and -- not a painting, a picture. I didn't know he did that kind of, you know, painting. I -- I -- it looked good. I -- I had a friend that was -- knew how to make a picture, and he taught me that and said, "Looks good." He says, "There's only one thing wrong with that and (indiscernible) fix it." I said, "What's that?" "The colors don't blend perfectly." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Come here," so I had held it and you can -- you hold -- you hold the painting in front of him, you look into -- see, how was it? You look into the mirror anyway, you look into the mirror, if the colors don't blend, it sticks out like a 3-D. So -- he said, "I didn't know that. Maybe you're right." I said, "Look at yourself. That red it just sticks out like that." So (indiscernible) and I -- at that time, well, he came back. I sent him money, you know, to come into town and have a -- I put a show on for him at the Travelers. But that was, you know, late -- when was it? December, I think. I had to do all the -- he -- I kept him there (indiscernible) nip once in a while, tried a whistle but he made up to \$2,000, 2500, quite a bit. And --

MR. MITCHELL: Was --

MR. PERDUE: Which relived my pocket, because I was paying his rent at the Alaska Motel and food. I didn't mind that part. But I said, "Howard, you're going to have to get some" -- "do something else, you know, for your beer money because I can't afford it. I've got a wife and a kid to feed." He understood that. So anyway, that show relieved both of us for a while.

MR. MITCHELL: That's great. Well, now, that would have been, then, in the winter of '61, '62?

MR. PERDUE: That was -- yeah. Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: And then I know that he was involved --

MR. PERDUE: That spring.

MR. MITCHELL: -- that spring.

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MR. PERDUE: '62.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Were you -- I know that you attended that '62 meeting down in Tanana. Were you involved in planning that at all or how --

MR. PERDUE: No. I was -- I was against it. I think that's where we differed in opinion with Howard because Madigan -- back East, Howard and I were getting -- got along real good together. But he had -- he had his ambition, which, I wasn't sure. You know, but (indiscernible) "It's your life and do what you want to do." I says, "It's" -- "it's a tough world. I don't" -- I'm not sure how far I wanted to go with it. I don't understand things that I -- the people that started Tanana, you know, rekindled the Tanana Chief. I read about it, and I disagreed with it, in the method that -- you know, that was being planned out, which was, you know -- I didn't know how far I wanted to go with it. I -- and I -- I resented, you know, the fact that this is my land. I'm an Indian. But I've got an outsider telling -- putting words in somebody else's mouth and coming out of mine, and nobody does that. I saw that happening. You know, and this is how they got together was Madigan and Al Kessler, that group, they were financing it. And there was another one, Forbes.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: Okay. Anyway, they were the -- I didn't mind their intent of -- but I didn't want anyone putting words in my mouth. I wanted to say what -- what is right and what is legal, and I want that applied. I don't want to cause anyone discomfort. But if this is true -- so I studied. But anyway, I guess I got in that fight with them and William Paul --

MR. MITCHELL: Well, let me back you up just a second.

MR. PERDUE: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Did -- then that was sort of your -- I've read some of those -- some of the early stuff about that. That was sort of your view that LaVerne Madigan was basically sort of running all that behind the scenes?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. I mean, I -- I challenged him in Tanana. Morris Thompson's mother sat next to me and, "Oh, my poor ribs. Do something." They don't even ask us what we think. Well, what was transpiring, is they -- Bureau of Indian Affairs brought up sentients (sic) from Metlakatla some from Apache Nation about -- about the life, you know, on the reservation, the beautiful homes, you know, at this time.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, was this '62 or '63?

MR. PERDUE: No. This was the '61 fight down in Tanana.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Right. But the very first year that they went?

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MR. PERDUE: Yeah. That was the first year we had it --

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: -- there. I've got some pictures of some of that in there. But, any way, that's, you know, how it started. And Howard had, you know, these letters, and they were -- what they were trying to infer, to us, is, you know, you can get a Reservation. All we've got to do is write a letter and request it from -- and so forth. When everyone -- and the Secretary of Interior -- well, nobody wanted to get -- nobody down river wanted the reservation. We want (indiscernible). We want to make a reservation, let's make the whole damn state a reservation. Let's get that -- let's get some -- something straight here. We don't want to be pushed around. We want -- if the Bureau of Indian Affairs is going to be here, we want to tell them what to do. And the fact is that the -- the reservation -- and a reserve. Metlakatla is a reserve. That reserve -- they were Canadian nationals that came over here, and that land was given to them by the federal government of the United States as a treaty, but it's a reserve. And what you're requesting is a reservation. They were right back to where we started. The Bureau of Indian Affairs does this, does that, without even asking us.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Now, was Maddening (phonetic) going around --

MR. PERDUE: She was there.

MR. MITCHELL: -- informally, talking about this, or how did it all come up?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. She -- she had -- well, more or less, she was there.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: And I -- I -- Howard showed me the letter, what she wrote, in that effect, and then I -- and then -- so ANB was there. I can't think what his name was. Anyway, I -- it ended up that I was -- son -- son of a bitch fighting a whole damn bunch. You know, A and B, Madigan, Kessler. In fact, Kessler, wanted me out of there -- you know, out of the convention. I said, "I can't leave." I said, "You people up there" -- I said, "We're demanding" -- you know, "who the hell is running this damn thing? Is it you or her? And we're going to sit here until we find" -- well, Gruening was sitting there. He got -- everybody got kicked out. Last I saw Gruening, he was sitting in the back on a tailgate of a pickup out to the airport. So I fought them for two hours, you know -- well, it was closed door then.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: I just want what these people want. And they said, "Who are you representing?" I said, "Well, geeze, I'm an Indian. Is that enough?" I said, "I'm not" -- I said, "I'm representing" -- I said, "Whoa, I'm representing Alice -- Alice Thompson." She's going (indiscernible) and she wants to know what she -- we don't want nobody out in the reservation. I guess we finally

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(indiscernible). I said, "Oh, well," I says, "I don't have any objection as to where we're getting the money to have a meeting, except that I want to make it clear that we are running it. We want to tell them what we want; we want" -- "we want to tell them how we want it done, who they're seeing and so forth. "I don't want anybody telling me how I can do things. I want" -- "I can do it effectively, efficiently, and probably a hell of a lot better than" -- I said, "We've been fighting the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Public Health Service all these years. Nobody" -- "nobody" -- "always somebody said, "Oh, they must have changed the law." Now, here we have a chance that we can say, "I'm not getting taken advantage of by the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the Public Health Service." So anyway, that's kind of a long dance. So I --

MR. MITCHELL: Well, now --

MR. PERDUE: Year -- a year later, I -- I ran for the office, so I guess that's why --

MR. MITCHELL: All right. Well, now, what was -- what was Howard's view about this reservation business when all this started?

MR. PERDUE: Well, he was kind of locked in with Ms. Madigan, so he was -- he didn't -- he didn't think much of it. But then when Howard -- I said, "I don't blame you, Howard. You know, you don't have a job. They're paying your way. It's like a dog biting the hand that feeds you," you know? So I don't -- I'm not -- but I just -- I just want to let you know -- I said, "That's the only difference between you and I, the only disagreement." I said, "We'll never agree on that part. You know, (indiscernible) until, you know, you're on your own." That was where I (indiscernible). We got along; we didn't -- outside of that.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, now, that was the summer of '62. And then, when did the Fairbanks Native Association get started?

MR. PERDUE: Oh, that was -- that started in '61, after this -- after this fight because they wanted to know who I represented. I didn't really -- I said I didn't represent anyone except the people that wanted -- that stood up, but they weren't delegates. So I had -- I came back to Fairbanks. I -- I -- well, at the convention I said, "Well, I have" -- well, out of the corner, I said, "I represent the few Fairbanks Natives Association." And I never even dreamt -- we didn't even have an association. And then they go, "Well, who does it belong to?" I said, "Well, there's Paul Carlo, Bill Carlo, Bill English," and I named -- "(indiscernible) Burk," and the -- and we hadn't even formed anything then. Anyway, it shut him up. Kessler was the main one. But they wanted to throw me out. And I -- if there's anybody in here big enough to throw me out, that's fine. In the meantime, I'm staying here, but they're going to have a hell of a job showing me out of here.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, did you get down there because Howard invited you or how did you get there?

MR. PERDUE: No. I was -- I -- I went down there as more or less an observer, on my own. Like I said, we all paid our own way, except those guys, Tanana Chief. They were members of delegates that were there, the Madigan outfit. You know, American Association of the Indian --

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MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: -- something like that -- paid their way.

MR. MITCHELL: Well --

MR. PERDUE: Air transportation and so forth.

MR. MITCHELL: All right. So then, you came back after that and then --

MR. PERDUE: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: -- that's when the Fairbanks Native Association formed?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. I -- yeah it was '61 or '62, I guess.

MR. MITCHELL: It was '62.

MR. PERDUE: Or something. I -- I (indiscernible) I got to do something about it. They had -- you know, they had problems. There was always the carnival in the winter time, in March, and dog racing. And the only time the Natives got recognition was when there was a dog race, and that was it. The only other entertainment that they had, which was Second Avenue, not everybody that came to town wanted to go down and sit in the bar and so forth. So I guess -- how in the heck did I -- anyway, no -- I -- I went to Paul Dean -- Paul Dean and Bill Carlo. I got -- I got -- I said, "What do you think?" It was that spring after that. And I talked to them. Paul Dean, "Hey, it won't work. You know how the people are." I says, "Yeah. I know how the people are. You've got to -- got to give them something." "Well, I suppose." About that time, Nick Gray showed up and had -- and he wanted the -- you know, he wanted a statewide organization. And (indiscernible) and talking to me about a statewide organization. We're having trouble putting this -- just the village -- you know, Fairbanks together. And I don't know, something (indiscernible) I got -- working the business, working as a janitor at the hotel, you know, feeding the family.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: We stopped in the quad for a coffee break where Nick came along, "Hey, I want to talk to you." "Well, don't take too much time," I said. "I've got lots of work to do." We went down to a co-op, he was talking about the AFN. (Indiscernible), "That's nice." But I said, you know, "You get to Anchorage," I said, "that's all Eskimo people down there. Here it might not be so bad." I said, "Even that," I said, "the Indian's are -- they have to prove it to them." I said, "Once you prove it to them, it's good." And I said, "I got to get them together." I know somewhere, a long time, January -- January, we had one or two months -- we didn't have much time. I said, "You know what, Nick? You want to see a bunch of people together? I know how to get them together." It finally dawned on him. He said, "Get them together. I need your help." So

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I -- I called Paul Dean and -- and I -- well, I -- I told him, he said, "How?" I said, "We're going to have a potlatch during the dog race; I'm going to have a potlatch for Native people only." I said, "What's the admission? They've got to bring something to the potlatch, for the potlatch." "You think you can pull that off?" I said, "Yeah. Let me" -- so that's where I went to Paul Dean. "Paul Dean," I says, "will you call a bunch of people, you know, a lot of prominent people? I'd like to have a meeting with them. I'm going to put on -- I'm going to call and have a potlatch, the first" -- before -- you know, "during the dog races, and I want to talk to you about what I think we should have." Well, I says, "It's very easy, what we're doing in the village." "Okay. Sounds good." So anyway, they start (indiscernible). So I appointed (indiscernible) women to take care of the food. I mean, different dishes and stuff. Invitations to the different villages, invitations to the dancers, maybe dancers. It's all taken care of and time spent (indiscernible) first -- you know, we only had one performance. Then it came to the bill. I -- I had the -- I -- the community was very cooperative with it. I thought we didn't have any money, but I said, "We're going to collect the money." I said, "I hope you'll -- you can trust me." So -- "Yeah. Okay, as long as you're handling it." They gave me a credit line for food and dishes and whatever we needed. We -- we made money. We only paid -- we charged them, I think, a couple bucks a piece, besides the food.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

MR. PERDUE: You know, just -- all we want to do is cover the expenses. When -- we had a few bucks left over -- (Brief interruption.)

MR. PERDUE: -- I says -- they had their people there they hadn't seen for years and they walked down the street like they didn't know anybody. And they had -- I think we stayed there until closing time, Tom Brower (phonetic) (indiscernible) 500 bucks. That's 500 bucks that was well worth it. (Indiscernible) and (indiscernible) and hell, maybe next year we'll have it again. "Oh, yeah. We'll have it again next year because now we're an established village. We've been" -- you know, "we've been told" -- "we've never been told, but Bureau of Indian Affairs recognizes the village." I said -- and the chief, I said, "I'm allowed one potlatch a year. What it means is I share my wealth with my friends." So anyway, that's how Fairbanks Native Association kept on going and --

MR. MITCHELL: Now, had you known Nick Gray before all this came up? Where did you first run into Nick?

MR. PERDUE: He just stumbled in, I think. I -- he worked over at Music Mart, and he goes by the store all the time. Then he saw me doing all this fighting and started stopping in. And so that's where I met Nick Gray, Jeeskamo (phonetic).

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. That's what he used to call himself I hear. Well, then, what kind of -- after that somewhat informal start, then did you eventually have elections and there were officers of --

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. After that, in the fall time, we kind of let it -- you know, because it took time to -- the paperwork and all that. So I think there was -- I think it was after the potlatch at --

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we sat down and we had to write -- to do the preamble and all that stuff. And we went into the -- to the election process, secretary, so forth. I, naturally, was elected, you know, president. I ran for quite a while. I had to get off (indiscernible). I became so damn popular, I had, you know, two many handles between the community and the Native (indiscernible) -- but it's been a worthwhile, you know, project. The satellite, I was on a commission to put those things up, telecommunication with a federal and state communication system.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, what -- what other kinds of things did FNA get involved in? Were you involved in education or health stuff?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. That was their -- they were -- they took on that project, the education. Of course, the basic reason for FNA was part of what I already explained.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: But also to -- to help Native people move into town, transition period. Getting them to know where Native people are in the community. That was one -- so they picked one basic state project, while (indiscernible) and, you know, all those that gone (indiscernible) it's deplorable. I said, "Well, what do you think we should do about it? "We can't move the people." "Anybody can be moved if you put enough pressure on them, you know, properly. You got to know how to do it." He said, "Well, at this point it's" -- "the state constitution says the governor is responsible for education for everybody in the state." There's -- there's where the problem lies. He's neglecting it and passing it on to the Bureau of Indian Affairs because he's not (indiscernible) anything because we don't know the difference. It's partly our fault for not knowing, and it's -- and I said, "We're letting him go." But I said, "If you want to, then bust it up. We'll make the change. We'll just tell the governor that he is responsible and that" -- "that children need to be educated in this state as close to their home as possible, if not at their home." I said, "I'm not" -- "I'm only conveying the message because this is the message that's passed on to me by, you know, members of the delegation of the Tanana Chief. This is what they want. They want their kids educated at home." I said, "I" -- "we went for reasonable concept, but they insist, we want them home." They said, "Well, fine. That's what you want. We're only here to serve you. We want to do what you want. It's not our kids." I said, "My kids are" -- "I'm paying for my kids' education, and they're getting the best that I can afford in the state." He says, "That's what you want? You want them" -- "you want" -- I realize -- I mean, I -- I really -- I said, "You deserve to have your children at home, educate them at home, because then you have control over them. You don't see them for nine months." You know, I said, "That's a shame." And I said, "They're not getting an education. They're" -- "they're coming back complaining about it." So that was one thing lead to another and we ended up -- and then the peace corp came along or whatever you want to call them --

MR. MITCHELL: Oh (indiscernible).

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. They screwed up Molly (indiscernible). There was a case that she didn't understand what was going on. They -- Roy Christianson (phonetic) is still -- I'm sorry, but we didn't know a thing. I mean, it was -- we had nothing to do with it. But this guy just talked her

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into it, and she said, "I guess" -- and she -- and then he says, "She doesn't even live here. She's down in Arizona." Anyway, she's back now, living -- but I don't know what ever happened to her. But nevertheless --

MR. MITCHELL: Now, in -- that was sort of -- '62 was the first meeting, which is where all this -- all this argument --

MR. PERDUE: (Indiscernible). Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And then -- and then over the course of the winter, there's this potlatch and -- and FNA gets started. And then in 1963, there's the next meeting down at Tanana. Now, was that --

MR. PERDUE: I think it was here.

MR. MITCHELL: No.

MR. PERDUE: Because after I got elected, I --

MR. MITCHELL: No. There was -- then it was --

MR. PERDUE: Maybe it was -- I can't remember it all.

MR. MITCHELL: There were two Tanana meetings in a row. And then in 1964 there was a statewide meeting here in Fairbanks.

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. That was -- that was the one that we put together, too.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. That was apparently Howard's --

MR. PERDUE: Federation.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Right. Now, what about William Paul, Sr.? When did you first meet him? Do you remember?

MR. PERDUE: Oh, when in the heck was it? It was around '62 or '63, around that neighborhood, he came up. And he was down in Ordale. He -- I took him over to -- he came up here for something.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, he was invited up for the 1963 Tanana meeting. I know that. That's the first time --

MR. PERDUE: Anyway, he became very good friends of mine, you know, after that -- that fight. He handed me a book, and I told him, Indian Law (indiscernible). Was it Marshall? Chief Justice John Marshall. I read that about two or three times. I -- I -- because William Paul was talking to

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me about it. He says, "What you need to do, young man, you got the energy and you got the brains, you need to" -- "this land, tie up this land before it's all gone. State -- state is ignoring it. You need to lay a blanket claim. That's your hunting rights from one (indiscernible)." I -- I said, "Well, gee, I -- I'm a little bit -- you know, I don't understand. (Indiscernible) gave me that book and you'll understand when you get through reading this. If you don't, read it again. (Indiscernible)." It's been handed down from my grandfather, my great-great-grandfather, my grandfather were both chiefs. My last one, Grandpa Criska (phonetic), was a Tanana Chief and he left it to us. So I -- we took a project every year, I think, while I was in the office anyway. Ten members -- the delegation of ten and chief. I think we need to -- I said, "I've studied the law." And I said, "William Paul has been advising me as to lay a blanket claim. Do you understand what a blanket claim means? Well, let me explain it to you." And so I explain it to them. And it means, "You live right here. So your trap lines, for your winter, for your summer. (Indiscernible) from mountain top to mountain top, as far down and far up the river as you" -- "that is your blanket claim for your village." I said, "No. I can't do it for you." So I said, "This is what we have to do. The state is already a state, they have not consulted you." And I said, "I want to have" -- I said, "I'm not going to sleep until I do this. As long as I'm president," I said, "I'll do it." "Well, what about the legal (indiscernible)?" I said, "Well, there's a man sitting right there from Bureau of Indian Affairs. He's going to do what I tell him." And -- Dean Williams.

MR. MITCHELL: He was the BIA guy?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. That was that spring, and by January, I think, sometime in the winter, anyway, Bureau of Indian Affairs went out and actually went to the village and got it all to the villages and helped them. So, I said, "Okay. What are you waiting for? Go file it." Final register and blanket things and the Canadian border to (indiscernible) 42 villages, go file it, you know, and sign it. And that was the beginning of land -- needing land claims. Now, all the heads you got today -- well, Morris Thompson was a young man and still going to school. But the rest of them, I call them -- they just sit up there today in the ivory white tower, and I tell them that to their face. And I say, wouldn't -- they wouldn't even be recognized as a Native until they snubbed the money. And most of the good people got kicked out, or pushed out somehow. Don -- Don Wright never did anything wrong. He got blackmailed, and I can prove that.

MR. MITCHELL: In terms of why they --

MR. PERDUE: Now --

MR. MITCHELL: -- kicked him out of AFN, I mean, how that worked?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. They -- they -- they blackmailed him. In fact, the guy that did what he got accused of committed suicide. (Indiscernible) it was a dirty trick, and they claimed that he took money from AFN. He didn't. The controller did. He couldn't stand the pressure. About a week or so -- and later, he committed suicide.

MR. MITCHELL: Was he a white guy?

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MR. PERDUE: Yeah. He was married to Harry Carter's sister, Billie. But he was all -- he was all -- John Sacket -- John Sacket was the head guy. I didn't know what was going on because I was vice president under John Sacket for Tanana Chief. And John wasn't there. He sent me down there to attend what they were trying to do, this AFN. And Hensley, Borbridge, Hobson, Corey Elkinof (phonetic), I thought -- there was six of them. I call them the dirty dozen. Anyway, they were all in for (indiscernible). But they were forming coalition to control the whole state. I intercepted letters who -- who created the (indiscernible). It was between Don and John Sacket and Willie Hensley. But anyway -- and I didn't know that until afterwards. But I never let Don down because he did -- if anyone gets credit for the Native Land Claims, he's the one that should get a true recognition. He did all the lobbying that Sacket, Hensley, Warbridge, all those got credit for. I know, and it was out of his pocket. He happened to have a few dollars then. After the (indiscernible) a little bit -- the hell with the phone -- Don came to me. He wanted me to -- I think that was a year later, after (indiscernible). He wanted me to get him elected to the AFN. I said "What" -- "I know you're" -- "what your brother said about you, and" -- but I said, "That's a family deal. But I'm going to District (indiscernible) but just tell me what you're going to do for the Native people, your people. I want to know. "Because you" -- "you want to be president," I said, "I" -- "I can't have anything bad -- (indiscernible) somebody coming to me and say" -- "but I want you to tell me why, and" -- "you know, why you want to be president. What you can do for the people? What you're doing to do when," and so forth. I think he took two hours telling me that. I said, "Okay." And at the time, I had control of the whole state as far as Native votes were concerned. So I said, "You think you can do it?" And I said, "Well, I can count the Tanana Chiefs." I said, "I'm in good with Ray Christianson." I said, "(Indiscernible)," because Ray Christianson, alone, carried the bulk of it, the way they had the votes. But I didn't -- that was in the summertime, when the AFN came along and said, "Well, how" -- because I was living up here, "How does it look?" I said, "Well, it looks good." I said, "I" -- "I haven't talked to them." I did talk to Ray Christianson and say, "Yeah. You've done good. There's just no reason for me to" -- but he said, "I've got to talk to both, but you can take my word for it. So I'll go along with the Tanana Chief." You know, Bethlotte --

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: -- that's 10,000 people; it's a nice block. And we had -- and he said, "You got any others?" I said, "I just need one more." He said, "Well, you can have Kenai." I said, "Well, that's all I need." That first round, there was, you know -- Bethel was hedging. You know, so I went to Ray Christians- -- no, just leave me alone. There was this one young guy that was raising hell, from my understanding. So they had a caucus to add (indiscernible). And Ray came up to me and said, "Come on. I'm having a problem with this goddamn kid." He didn't say goddamn, he never -- Ray never say -- he said, "Doggone." He says, "I'm having trouble with this doggone kid." And I said, "What's the matter? What's" -- I says, "Don' you want to control that?" He said, "I'll tell you what about those other guys." And then I said, "Don promised me," I said, "I can hold him to that." And I said, "You and the Tanana Chief, Kenai," I said, "we have the votes if you -- you go in there as a block." So I was going there, you know. I got one dissention, that's -- but that's -- I expect that. I'm not (indiscernible) that. And I says, "You got the whole" -- "you can" -- "you can control the state. This is something that you've never experienced before. And you can control the state and you can control who you can elect. You guys are complaining about Borbrige

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holding that up there and you're not getting nothing. Everything's going to southeastern land." I says, "That's normal. I knew that was going to happen, but you wouldn't listen. Now you have a chance to get rid of it correctly." So they -- they went back and (indiscernible).

MR. MITCHELL: You guys earned back about 13, 15 votes, right?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: That's pretty -- that's pretty close.

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. So anyway, that was -- yeah, was AFN, the beginning of AFN.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, let me go back again for a second to William Paul, Sr., because I think, like Don Wright, I think he is somebody that really has not gotten the recognition.

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. He -- he does -- I don't know -- I mean, that's immaterial for me, why he (indiscernible) he did tell me that -- you know, one of those things that -- oh, yeah. That was fine. I heard it but I don't remember what it was, why (indiscernible). You know, people were saying things, and they would say the worst things. They'll concoct it. So I'm just not going to say anything. Well, who hasn't made a mistake in life? And who wants to hear it and -- in different context from somebody else who heard it from somebody else? They say he came up -- he stayed at my house.

MR. MITCHELL: He was getting on in years by then, wasn't he --

MR. PERDUE: Oh, yeah. He was 70-something years old then. I've got some paintings his wife gave me, a present. But he doesn't -- he does deserve more recognition than his own people give him.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, did he -- when he was up here, did he -- first of all, I guess, how often did he come up in those days?

MR. PERDUE: Once or twice a year. He always came up -- you know, whether he was invited or not, he always come for Tanana Chief and whenever there was a function, he showed up.

MR. MITCHELL: How was he -- do you know how he was paying for all that? He -- I mean, was he down in Seattle at this point?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. He lives in Seattle. Oh, I -- I don't remember now, how -- some of it was paid by him. Most of it. Of course, when he came here, it didn't cost him anything to stay here.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. PERDUE: I think some of it was -- had to do with the university. So they -- they tried to coordinate there once or twice.

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MR. MITCHELL: So then pretty much, then, from '63 on, he'd come into town once or twice a year then?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. For a while there. Then he kind of (indiscernible) you know, after (indiscernible) then he got involved in the Southeastern Alaska. I -- I went -- I went down and -- in pretty good standing with ANB. I think first time I met, I was invited as a guest speaker at an ANB convention at Kaik. At -- and it was at that time I spoke needing -- the educational system of our young is far below. Of course, ANB, boy, the directors are all Bureau of Indian Affairs employees, son (indiscernible). So I wasn't -- except the people, the convention people, knew that, that I could -- that I could stand up and speak about the Bureau of Indian Affairs that way in front of them. Which they don't seem to be able to do themselves. So anyway, I spoke to them about this case and we need their support, and they pass a resolution that -- their system was fine. I mean, their -- their kids were being educated in their school, but it does not apply here. So they gave us, you know, a full endorsement to help us.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, did -- did William Paul, Sr. ever talk to you guys about the whole reservation thing or say how he felt about that or --

MR. PERDUE: Oh, he -- no. He -- he never got along with the bureaucracy, never (indiscernible) reservation. That's when -- that's why (indiscernible) we can administer it. We can administer a hell of a lot of better than the Bureau of Indian Affairs. And, you know, we stick together and work -- you know, we can work things out, these things out. There's no big deal to (indiscernible). Bureau -- Bureau of Land Management can keep all the statistics, won't cost us anything. But then, now we've got (indiscernible), you've got BLN, you've got Doyon (phonetic), you got Tanana Chief, and then you got their village. I don't pay any attention to any of it except the BLN. If I've got any Native allotment up the Kayaka River, well, I go to BLN. I don't bother the rest of them.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, was -- was William Paul, Sr., even that old, was he still pretty optimistic about all this stuff or was he soured by then or --

MR. PERDUE: No. He -- I was surprised, you know, how optimistic he was, you know, about the whole process, that I could pick it up and make a -- to -- how you said, to get it started. You know, he said, "I can't get those people down at Southeastern to do it." He said, "They -- they" -- he said, "They're fighting like cats and dogs." Well, I don't -- like I said, I don't know reasons why. There was mistrust for some reason. Anyway, they wouldn't do it. They got me to do it. They got me to do it, and then the Arctic Slope, and then -- you know, the other -- they all, just, like -- well, it's just like the bureaucracy we had, you know, got that all going. That's one thing about it, the one good thing that the Bureau of Indian Affairs did; they got going. And I reminded them that the -- the royalty (indiscernible) I said, "Do this but do it good because you're not going to be here very long." Because the bureaucracy is, again, it's not -- you're only here as a token, but if you start doing too good, they're going to transfer you, I guarantee you. And that was it. We went to all that. And then last I heard, I saw -- I should have -- I saved it, but I don't know where it's at, he was in Montana someplace. White Fish?

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MR. MITCHELL: White Fish Lake?

MR. PERDUE: The reservation up there.

MR. MITCHELL: Flathead maybe.

MR. PERDUE: Maybe it was Flathead. Anyway, he was up there as something -- anyway, he was -- he's been getting the Fairbanks paper, and I think it was last year, around Perdue and what happened throughout Perdue that started all this and wrote a nice long letter that -- there were -- there were -- that was just the way the bureaucracy worked. One of them started doing good, I says, "You're not going to last long, but make it good." We got the electricity going in the villages. We got one going and the -- of course, he was new from Rochester, I think, Newark, someplace, anyway. He just got out of college. And he knew -- and he was -- I should just -- you know, just bumping heads, and I said, "You're not going to last long." So what -- what does he want to do? And he says, "These people wanted electricity. And" -- "and I don't have any money." He said, "They tell them that we got money but then says" -- I -- "I go to them and say, 'We don't have any -- we don't have any funds.'" "So I'll tell you what you want to do. You go in there and select me and I'm going to" -- you know, "I want to borrow 100,000 bucks, and I'm going to get it from SPA. "And I get" -- "that's all you got to do, is go down to the village and counsel and you show them how to get the money, how to put the electricity in." I said, "Once you done that, they're going to get rid of you, so just do a good job." He got electricity -- you know, villages got electricity that way, Golden Valley. He went down to help them put the poles in. You know -- so, that's how the rural Avak got started.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, now, I guess the -- the last thing to ask you about this afternoon is -- is what you remember about that first AFN statewide meeting, where you mentioned it was -- Nick Gray was involved in that. Or how did all that --

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. Well, she -- after that, the Tanana Chiefs and so forth, I told them I didn't -- I wasn't that, you know, ambitious. I had my hands full with the Fairbanks community and the Red Cross and the president, for one, at the College Rotary. I was -- you know, and I just -- I -- I didn't need all that, that I -- I wasn't -- but I would help them, you know.

MR. MITCHELL: Had he -- had Nick moved to Anchorage by this time?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah, for that, yeah. The first year he got -- called me and says, "I think I got it together." And he says -- he says, "Everybody's coming here from my" -- and I say, "Well, that's good." So he said, "I want you there." He says, "Albert Kaloa, they were financing quite a bit of it, and they held a convention up in the Kaloa building. The building is above that first store, and it's still there.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Over there on Fourth Avenue.

MR. PERDUE: Yeah.

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MR. MITCHELL: And Emil was there and -- well, Emil got elected anyway, nominated, Emil.

MR. PERDUE: And then, you know, I --

MR. MITCHELL: Now, was it your impression that -- that Nick Gray had sort of gone to Albert Kaloa and then sort of got Kaloa interested in all this?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: I know they had -- Tyonek paid a lot of the money.

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. Yeah. I think that's where he got his -- Nick got his money. I didn't -- I didn't know Albert at all, you know, up until, you know, I heard about the \$16 million that they got somehow. And I think -- well, I know that, you know, he got -- Nick got -- you know, got Kaloa to help him. I met Kaloa afterwards, went around, had drinks here and there. Spent an evening convincing him about what it amounted to. And business was done for the day. I'm trying to think -- well, what do we -- more or less, what do you think the future is, you know, of what's been going on? I said, "The future is only as bright as you can make it." I said, "If you're just going to dream, it's going to die by the wayside. But if you're going to make" -- "if you start out to do something, you have to do it yourself. You have to see it through until, you know, you get to where you can afford to get out. You can't" -- "you commit yourself up to that point." And -- and those days we had, you know, we had to scrape the bottom of the barrel to find those Native leaders. You know, of course, when the money came, you got all kinds of them.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. It's amazing how that happens.

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. I -- I mentioned that at the last potlatch, Tanana Chiefs meeting, you know, saw a lot of -- there's a few of them, you know, that's passed away. Well, I recognized the people that were responsible for the way the Natives are living today, in harmony with everything around them. (Indiscernible) because understanding one another, understanding people you, you know, live with, or (indiscernible). Yeah, people that were really responsible was out there at the convention for it, the old standbys, and I mentioned a lot of them. I didn't name all of them, down at the -- speaking off the cuff, I can't remember all of them. But mostly, it's the old AFN, Fairbanks Native Association, and Tanana Chief members. Some of them are still around now, although they're there just as a token because they got elected, but they don't say much. You can ask my uncle; he's still on there. (Indiscernible) you don't say nothing. He just likes the trips, Frank, Franklin Mondrose (phonetic).

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, I sort of -- I need to go do some more homework, but maybe if I'm back up the spring or summer, if you have some time to talk, I want to -- I want to, at that point, go talk to Don Wright because I know -- I agree with you that in his administration at AFN it was -- was really critical in getting a lot of things done that those other guys didn't.

MR. PERDUE: You'll have -- you'll have to talk to him.

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MR. MITCHELL: Right. I was going to drop him a line, but --

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. He got -- he got your letter.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, he did?

MR. PERDUE: Yeah. That -- see, it's like all the books that's been written. And -- and why I didn't answer your letter -- and he's the same way -- is the foundation that -- the book was written, that there -- I was on the board of the foundation and I approved it. But I was mislead and -- and, you know, I believe that that -- what I'm telling you here is supposed to have been in that book, but it didn't come out that way. Willie -- Willie and Bob Arnold were in that office all the time, so you -- you know -- and Don has that feeling that when he got your letter, well, hell, you know, you already got 900 pages in the (indiscernible). That's the basic reason, why, you know, I didn't -- it was -- it's on a -- it's in front of me every day when I'm working on it. And I didn't throw it away. But I mean -- I said, "Well, you can" -- you can call and ask him and call him Don and just tell him you talked to me and get what it's for, but he'll be apprehensive because the only true book that ever came out is that one that the Judge wrote, you know, who's Judge Brueger (phonetic).

MR. MITCHELL: Right. All right. Well, the difference is -- actually, I don't need this on here. (End of audio recording.)