

Key Information:

Name: Robert "Uncle Bob" Reinhart

Age: 68

Current Cabin: 62

Date of Interview: February 16, 2017

Interviewer: Ilana Hertz (Puget Sound)

Ethnographic Preface:

I interviewed Bob in the middle of the afternoon on a gloomy day, at his cabin down on Salmon Beach. After he welcomed me in, we went immediately to a table that was in the middle of his first floor living room. Once during the interview Bob got up to point out specific parts of his kitchen. The kitchen consisted of an area surrounded by counters on three sides that opened directly into the living room. Another time, we both got up to look at the staircase that he built himself, from a log. Robert also showed a lot of photos throughout the interview that were from around the time that he built the house, back in the 1970's, as well as a couple more recent photos of birds, and the view from his house.

Bob gave a lot of detail about his building process, and the many additions he's made to his house over the years. He focused a lot on the 1970's when he first moved to Salmon Beach, as well as on what it is like now in terms of additions and payment. He outlined the overall process of renting, building, and buying from past to present.

Transcription:

RR: I'll try to keep my flippant jokes to a minimum

IH: No, you're good. So when did you move to Salmon Beach?

RR: I came to Salmon Beach October 2, 1972

IH: And where did you move from?

RR: I came from Silver Spring, Maryland. I came to visit a friend who was in the middle of building a house on Salmon Beach and I knew him when he lived in Camps Spring, Maryland. Both Silver Spring and Camps Springs were suburbs of Washington DC. I stayed with him for going on three months, and then I came to rent cabin 17, and in the spring of 1973, based on getting my income tax refund, I got a building permit for number 62 Salmon Beach which was empty and had two pilings. There had been a house here earlier that had gotten knocked down, well, the history doesn't matter that much, but there

was an empty space here that I was able to rent for \$60 a year, and the city of Tacoma granted me a building permit after I hand-drew some plans and brought them downtown to be approved. So I started building in ... uhh ... well, I actually got the approval for my building plans on my birthday, March 16th, 1973, which would have made me 25 years old. I'm now 68, and I'll be 69 in a month.

IH: Happy almost birthday!

RR: Thanks Ilana. I did run across some pictures from back then.

IH: Oh wow. So there was no house here at all?

RR: There was no house. This was my next door neighbors at 63 [looking at photo].

IH: Do they still live there?

RR: They do not. Rick and Maryland – they split up. Maryland kept the house for a while, and then she sold it to the current neighbor, Dan Anderson. And here is a collection of my building materials before building the house [takes out photo].

IH: That's awesome. Had you ever drawn up a house plan before?

B: Not in the detail to get a building permit, like a blueprint. No, I hadn't. I liked drawing and I did take some drafting classes in high school. I had some construction experience before I came here. I was handy enough with pencil and paper.

IH: And you mentioned that there was a house here before?

RR: Well, the earliest I know of a house here belonged to a long time resident of someone here at the beach who owned several houses, but he had an accident which burned down the house at 62, and someone else would have to tell you what year that was because I don't have that in my recollection. But it could have been around 1968 or 69 when the [previous] house burned down. Then another fellow came along, and he put up a platform in preparation to build a house. He built the house next door, which still stands. A landslide knocked down the platform that was here. And I guess that was 1970 or so. I don't know exactly. After that catastrophic happening nobody came along until I did.

IH: So this was just a vacant space for a while?

RR: This was a vacant space. There were two pilings and all these houses were built on pilings. Pilings are posts buried in the beach.

IH: So you've lived in this house... [Robert pulls out another picture]

RR: So these are pilings buried in the beach [holding photo of pilings] and then you join them with beams which are large – a smaller number of pieces, and then you put a larger number of smaller pieces on top of those beams and those are called floor joists. [points to picture of floor joist] That's a floor joist. And then this floor is nailed to the floor joists which we're walking around on. All wood framed houses are build with those basic elements

IH: So has it been on that post, in the picture, the whole time that you've lived here? Like this wood floor?

RR: I've lost track, but there are about 38 posts under this house that hold it up and some of them have been replaced over the years and some of them need replacing right as we speak, because they're 40 plus years old. But the only piling that was in the ground here when I came doesn't show up in this picture because they were right by the trail, and they are helping to hold up the back porch at the moment. This is the neighbor's cabin, number 63 [showing picture of their house].

IH: Is that the same cabin that is here now?

RR: Yeah, I think that cabin was build around 1928, but I don't know for sure.

IH: So have you done a lot of remodels since first building?

RR: No, it's really a work in progress. This is a picture taken in the other direction from this picture [showing another picture of his house], and this is a current woodshed but in this picture it's where I slept while I was building my house in the summer of 1973. [looking through his photos] Here is a rolled up piece of foam for a sleeping pad. There are some pots and pans hanging up and there was a Coleman stove in there, and this picture also shows a shelf I build where spring water came out of the hill – and there is like a jar of peanut butter and maybe something else there that could be sealed up so that rats wouldn't get to it – but because there is cold water coming out of this little clay shelf it was a place that acted like a refrigerator.

IH: Wow, that is so cool.

RR: It worked for a while and this time stamp on this old print says May 1973.

IH: And that's the summer when you were building the house?

RR: May 1973 I started, like I said, I got my building permit in March 15, my birthday. Oh, look, there's a cat in that picture.

IH: Oh my gosh.

RR: There's a gray cat.

IH: That's so cute.

RR: I think that might be Figaro who moved with me from Maryland

IH: Did you always know, once you visited, that you wanted to move to Salmon Beach, or did it take you a while?

RR: Yeah, once I visited. Like I said, I came to visit in the Fall of 1972 and I immediately started looking around for ... scheming for how I could build my own house down here, because it had already been a plan of mine, or a dream of mine, to build my own house.

IH: That's awesome, that's like such a cool experience. How long did it take you to initially build the house?

RR: That is a very good question because like I said it's a work in progress, but I worked over the summer and I got to a point where I could use the house to sleep in. I didn't have to sleep in the woodshed anymore, but I think it is safe to say that I didn't really move in until I got a roof on the house. Just before Christmas I made a trip back east to visit family and friends, and a couple of days before I left a couple of neighbors helped me put a roof on the second story. So when I came back, traveling by car, it was like the day after Christmas that I really moved in. I could move into the house and actually have a roof over my head. That was still in 1973, and that was in that part of the house [pointing closer to front entrance]. This living room we're sitting in was added on years later. There used to be a wall, you'll notice – you might not remember when you walked in – you stepped down, there used to be a wall here. It wasn't until 1976, three years later, that there was a roof over this deck here

IH: So this was outside, this whole area?

RR: Yeah, so this was outside, this was the beach and the water for a while, and then more pilings went in and more beams and more floor joists and then the roof went on probably a year before there were any windows. Somewhere there is a picture of a homemade bench with some people on it and the roof but no walls or windows.

IH: So when did you build the roof over this part?

RR: I think, my memory may not be too precise, but 1976 is a good guess. In fact, I can try to narrow it down by the fact that I'm pretty sure my parents came to visit in 1976, and my girlfriend slept on this deck in a tent while my parents used my bed upstairs. They were here for about a week. And somewhere there is a picture of my dad holding a salmon! We went out on the neighbor's boat and my fishing luck has always been rather poor, but his one trip out here in the Narrows in a boat and he caught a fish! That was very fun. We also took a car tour of the Olympic Peninsula while they were here. But that was the only time that they visited, and they've both passed away now.

IH: Have you done all the renovations?

RR: Well, they're not renovations, its original

IH: Or the additions I guess.

RR: Yeah I've done all the original construction. Now, of course, with help from neighbors too – there are some things you just can't lift. I wish I had the picture of ... if you'll notice this beam is held up by what looks like a log. And there is another log over there. Well, a while after the picture you saw in 1973 of the building materials piled up on the platform, this floor was put in and these logs were laid on the deck and a makeshift beam put on between them. And then with the help of some neighbors and the neighbors stepdad we set up some rigging so that we could use some jacks and blocks and tackle and raise those two logs, and the beam was like a set of goal posts at a football field, because those two logs go up through the bedroom to the roof above the bedroom, so like I said, it's kinda like the field goal crossbeams at a football stadium.

When I built this deck here I decided that it wouldn't be strong enough to hang a roof on – that the beam wouldn't be strong enough – so I went and got this beam from a salvage yard and changed it out. That is called a hip rafter, and this over here is another hip rafter. Those two, held together, were the original beam that was here. So I was able to float this beam in from a salvage yard on a boat, and I put some jacks under that floor there, to be able to remove these two, which aren't nearly as big as this, and then use blocks and tackle to raise this beam with the help of some friends and push it into place. I put a couple of nice hefty bolts through it, so it's not going anywhere. And then I was able to use those to frame up the hip roof, and so besides those there are other rafters that are cut to varying lengths, because as you can see, the distance between this front wall and the beam here is different than the distance back here. So there's different length rafters all along here, every 16 inches. There are rafters to attach this sheet rock ceiling to, and to end the answer to your question – it's really not renovations because it's original construction, and I did it, but not totally alone.

IH: So did it just start with both levels of that part?

RR: Yeah, I did sleep in the kitchen for a while, on a small bed that was next to a wood cookstove – not a wood stove, but a wood-fired cast-iron cookstove that's vintage from the 1930's. And it was here for quite a while, it's what I cooked on. There is a patch here now that wasn't there when the metal chimney pipe went through that floor and through the bedroom and through the roof upstairs. So there was the cast-iron woodstove that was about 50 inches – a little more than 4 feet wide – and I slept on a little cot here, and that was ... I couldn't tell you how long that lasted, because I can't remember, but that was when I first moved in, on the day before Christmas in 1973. I slept there for a while, and I used a ladder. The staircase wasn't there: there was just a hole in the floor, and I used a ladder that I still have outside, a metal ladder to go up and down. I finished off the upstairs, because the upstairs was really unfinished – it was just that roof that we put on a couple of days before I'd left on my trip back to Maryland. That started keeping the place dry.

IH: So when did you put the staircase in? Was that also a while ago?

RR: I'm trying to recall when I put the staircase in, it could have been 1974 – 1974 or 1975, you know, circa 1974. Around 1974. That is carved from a log, a cedar log. Very important to building this house was a mentor – he was a fellow who is a few years older than me who owns cabin 64, and he was actually out of town more than once while I was building my house, and one day I was over there to borrow a tool and I felt something bump into the house, and I walked out front – this was on his front deck, and there was this log, a cedar log, which I managed to corral and float over to my house. And another friend came up with the idea – why don't you build a log staircase? So this is about half of that cedar log that I found. I cut it in half, and the smaller end I split into boards, and the stair treads that you see there are split from the same log. They're about an inch or an inch and a half thick, and once I dragged the log in here and used the block and tackle off the ridge pole of the house and lifted the log into place, you can see some bolts that are helping to hold it. I fired up my chainsaw and with the help of a framing square and a really thick lead pencil, drew marks on the log. I went ahead and used the chainsaw to carve the notches to hold the hand-split wood boards, for the treads. It was very smokey in here, and remember this part of the house wasn't here, so it was just that part of the house. And there was no sheet rock on the walls, it was just the open framing. And I could open windows and doors to let the smoke out easily enough, and hopefully the smell of the oily smoke doesn't linger to this day. I'm pretty sure it's gone now.

IH: So it stayed for a while?

RR: I don't remember. I can't even remember when I built it, but I'm kind of proud of it. It works for a staircase.

IH: It looks really cool too.

RR: Yeah it looks pretty good and the stairs are ... you can check it out. The stairs are pretty much the same distance apart, and that's what's important in a staircase. The most important thing in a staircase is how far you lift your foot. If it's uneven, it's a real problem, and even this staircase, as good a job as I did ... if you're new here it takes a little getting used to. One thing for sure is it's sturdy.

IH: Did you have any issues with nature destroying the house at all or making it difficult to build?

RR: Storms and, well, let's see now, there had been some landslides. This place is kind of famous for landslides, and there have been a couple of times that this trail has been broken and beaten down by landslides inundated with mud. The back porch has not been really damaged, though. The trail has been damaged, and there has been some mud on the back porch, but it's survived pretty well. There have been times when the trail is so bad that we had to put up signs and direct people through the wood shed across the front of the house to the neighbors, across the front of his house and then back to the trail, for a few days at a time, because the trail couldn't get repaired that fast.

IH: Does that have anything to do with the wooden planks that are out front.

RR: Well, when I came here there was a wooden boardwalk trail back in 1972/1973, and as far as I know it's been a wooden boardwalk forever. My directions to you were when you get to the wooden boardwalk you're there, but this isn't the only house with it. If you go out and look in that direction, it's wooden boardwalk for three more houses, so I'm not sure why some people have bulkheads that hold back the earth to make a dirt trail. But that is the case, here, right here, and we could go outside and look at it. There are some clay banks that are kind of holding up the hill. [showing pictures] This poor kingfisher flew into the window, probably seeing it's own reflection thinking it was a rival, and killed itself. And I just had to take another picture of it, so I picked it up. I like birds. There is a young man who is now grown and runs a nonprofit in Seattle. These are pictures from the end of the annual Fourth of July rowboat race. This is down by cabin number 1. Here are some neighbors [showing pictures]. That's me, that's me, that's me, and at the time my new sweetheart Katherine, who is now my wife, and these pictures aren't taken at this house. Some of these envelopes of pictures are just an eclectic collection, they're not really themed.

IH: Did you take a lot of photos when you were in the building process?

RR: I did take a lot of photos, and many, many of them are in the form of color slides, and so I have a large collection of color slides which are not so easy to show off. I have a rather unorganized collection, at the moment. Let's see if there is anything here that shows any pictures ... this is our house, this is our old friend Ariel, who lived here several years, she's long gone. These look like they're mostly taken on a trip to see my dad. There's a picture, not mine.

IH: You have a great view of the bridge, though.

RR: Yeah, and we watched the new bridge, there was a second bridge constructed several years ago, and we got to watch it go up. There is picture of a helicopter bringing a utility pole to be placed, when they replace utility poles they have a challenge to get them here and get them in place.

IH: How did you get all this stuff down here to build the house?

RR: Well a lot of the lumber came from salvage yards, I started on a very low budget, like a four hundred income tax refund, and going to salvage yards – there used to be more salvage yards around Tacoma than there are now. In the 1970's when I was doing this there was a lot of urban renewal going on all across the United States, and Tacoma wasn't immune. There were buildings coming down to make way for parking garages in downtown Tacoma, and I don't know if you're familiar with Engine House Tavern. I don't know if you're old enough to go to taverns!

A couple of fellas who worked at the News Tribune had invested in a tavern downtown, and the city or the powers at be said all these business have to go to make room for a parking garage, so they were kicked out. They were compensated, I'm sure. And they went looking around – where can we have a new tavern business? And so they got a loan from the small businesses administration and the Engine House Number 9, the former fire hall, had been sitting empty for a number of years, and so they made a deal to pay I think a dollar for the Engine House building, but they had to a lot of renovation and upgrading to reinforce the building – an old brick building. Mortar tends to deteriorate after a while, and it can be dangerous, especially in the shaking earth, so they had to do a lot of reinforcing – huge steel rods and metal plates on the outside of the building, and you can see if you go by there.

So anyway, things were coming down, buildings were coming down. Across the street from the post office there were two houses, and one house in the back was taken down, there's lumber in that room there, to make the frame of these walls from that house. And then the house in front of that came down a couple years later to make room for a dentist's office, which is across the street from the post office at Proctor. And this floor right here, we can walk on and see, it came out of that house. The Schuster Parkway wasn't built yet, but there's lumber in this house that came from an old flour mill that was coming down – that was being disassembled over there. My kitchen sink came from a house that was being torn down on Ruston Way. That bathroom door came from that same house, some windows came from that same house. There was a lot of change going on in Tacoma in the middle 1970's, and there were a lot of salvage yards. I mean, bathroom fixtures, all kinds of stuff, and it was really great for somebody like me. I wasn't the only one building in Salmon Beach.

IH: Were there a lot of other people who were doing the same thing?

RR: When I came here in October 1972, there were about 30 full-time residents, because most of the houses were second homes for people in Tacoma, and they just used them in the summertime, and they

might rent them out in the winter, or they might rent them out all year long if they weren't using it. And so, like I said, there were about 30 full time residents. Well, in the next two years, all of a sudden there were 80 full time residents, because there were people in my age group, my generation, discovering the place, and buying houses for 2500 dollars, 4500 dollars, and remodeling them, and just moving in.

So at that time we didn't have a lot of security for how long we could be here, because we didn't own the land. Somebody else owned the land, and was our landlord, and we leased it on just a year to year basis. That was one reason I could rent this space for 60 dollars a year, because the neighbors association had made a deal with the landlord for 1 year leases. And the next year you had to renew the lease, and the next year you had to renew the lease, and then the landlords would like to raise the rent, so I think it was 1978 when we made a deal to buy the land, and so all of a sudden properties were worth a lot more. If you owned the land, you didn't have to renew a lease every December, and so people started building bigger houses putting more money into them, and the houses started going for higher prices. Have you ever been to Wright Park where there is a Conservatory?

IH: Yes, I have.

RR: Well I had to take this picture because one of their plants bloomed. They call them a century plant because they only bloom like once every hundred years. So they had to remove glass to let the plant grow.

IH: That is so cool.

RR: That's kind of a fun picture. That's me! Weird, huh? Somebody said, "we have to have pictures of your beard." Maybe I was getting ready to cut it.

IH: Again, it's so cool that you have so many photos. I love photos.

RR: And nowadays it's all on the iPhone, ya know? Very few get printed. I had a digital camera. I still have a digital camera that I don't use anymore, that doesn't work that well anymore, and I used to put all those pictures on my computer, but now ya know, these little, we keep calling them phones, but they're really a pocket computer. Phone is only one of their functions, and so there's 3,000 pictures on this or something like that. I do like to take pictures. We might as well look at a couple of recent pictures because I take pictures here quite often.

IH: So how much did you buy the house, or the area for, when you finally did?

RR: When we bought the land, it's kind of complicated to explain because the original surveys were done by the government at the time that they were giving away land to the railroads, so you know there's a railroad track down here that disappears into a tunnel at the end of Salmon Beach, and it

comes out over by the former smelter at Commencement Bay. It's a mile and a quarter long. It was built in 1912 and 1913. Well, when they did that surveying they said that there were three large lots here and they call them government lot 1, government lot 2, and government lot 3. The ownership – I couldn't tell you all the history of the ownership – but when we made the deal for the land we bought it from the guy who owned government lot 2 and government lot 3. Government lot 1 had somehow become property of the metropolitan park district, and it was not for sale. So we paid, we might have paid, \$485,000 dollars, or somewhere in that neighborhood, for about 3.5 acres, and most of it is that hill that you came down. So I think probably the price of my space here was around \$6200-6500 dollars, which doesn't seem bad nowadays, but it took some doing to raise the money from everybody and we all – all of us here at the time – signed the real estate contract. The real estate contract was only 8 years long, and so we started making monthly payments, and then about two or three years down the line we had to make something called a balloon payment, which was a larger part. It was something like a third of the whole contract, so it was something like \$120,000 dollars that we had to raise for that balloon payment.

Cormorants, double crested cormorants they love to spend time out of the water. They're not a duck, but they are in the water all the time. In fact, there's one right now. And they get very wet, and they dive for their food – they're fishers, they're fishermen and women, and they live basically all over the world. The one's we have here are called double crested, up in the Straits of Juan de Fuca. They have double crested and Brandt's cormorants. Brandt was some biologist that has his name on some animals, but they love to get out of the water occasionally and you'll see them doing this. With their wings spread to dry, we think, and they're also gathering energy from the sun, but this is a picture from yesterday.

IH: Do you see a lot of sea animals?

RR: We see whales now and then and dolphins, rarely, and killer whales, rarely. Killer whales are the larger dolphins, you may not know that – the largest dolphin.

IH: I didn't know that

RR: Yeah, killer whales are dolphins. Of course they're also known as orcas. I love to take pictures of sunsets. And there are a lot of them here. And there are a lot of beautiful sunsets, the bridge is in that one. I market it a little bit.

IH: Is it beautiful every night like that, usually?

RR: This is using the panorama feature. No it totally varies, from one end of the spectrum to the other, what the sunsets are like. You know, we have lots of grey days

IH: True, very true.

RR: These are called goldeneyes. The males are more brightly colored and the females are less brightly colored, and then we have two kinds here. Mostly we have one called Barrows Goldeneye, and a Common Goldeneye and the Barrows Goldeneye are really very similar. They're a little hard to tell apart. You've heard of Barrow, Alaska, the farthest point north of the United States? Well this is the same name. B-A-R-R-O-W. Well, um, I wish you could add some pictures to your recording about what pilings are like, just my descriptions are not enough ... but that's the boat on the front deck.

IH: Do you go out on the boat a lot?

RR: Not a lot really, we use it to bring home firewood.

IH: Is that how you mostly get stuff, because I know the stairs are steep?

RR: Large pieces of furniture and appliances should come by boat. The great thing about building with wood, like that, is you just throw it in the water. Same thing with the pilings. You put a rope on them and you can tow them anywhere. When I got the rafters for this ceiling here, there was a big pile of them in the woods, and someone had taken a house apart over by Key Center, which is miles from here, over the bridge, and it took me about eight hours to tow them home. Starting in the late afternoon and finishing just before midnight, something like that. Bundle them up on the beach, when you can walk on the beach at low tide, and then the tide comes in and floats the lumber, and you drive the boat. Now in those days I didn't have a 25 horsepower double hulled boat. I had a little 7 horsepower aluminum boat. It took a long time to get those.

These herons are around here all the time, year round. Even if they migrate, I mean maybe the herons that live here go south and the herrings that live farther north come south. And they live all over the world I mean you can be crossing the country in your car and you're in Nebraska and you'll see them, a great blue heron in a ditch. In a ditch with water flowing, looking for fish to eat, because they're all over the place. They look kind of like pterodactyl, and they're really old – they've been around a long long time. This is the lifting gear that gets the boat in and out of the water, there's a winch and there's another heron hanging out.

IH: So many birds

RR: Yeah, and there are generally more birds here in the winter than the summer, but I've noticed changes over the years. There is a bird called the Western Grebe that is a bit like the Cormorant we pointed out. They have a large body, they have a longer neck than the Cormorant, their necks are not as long as the Great Blue Heron, but they're long, like this. There is your body and they fish, and they're indigenous to Puget Sound, and there are a lot of them around, and they migrate. Years ago in the winter time you could see what we call a raft, you could see a hundred western grebe's in a flock, on

the water, every other day, and you don't see that anymore. I think it's largely because there are a lot less herring, there's a lot less food in the water than there used to be. So many people are crowding around Puget Sound. I'm afraid the water isn't as clean as it used to be, and there are a lot less herring.

IH: Is it hard to get permits to add additions to the house or is it pretty easy?

RR: Well, I haven't gotten a permit in a long, long time. That might be a better question for another one of my neighbors. I do know that there are certain dollar amounts if you cross a threshold – if \$2,000 dollars is what your renovations are going to be – you're supposed to go get a permit. And there are times when people just wave their hand and say I'm not going to bother with a permit and they do some work on their house. Well, recently there's been a case that stepped over the bounds of those rules. It got the owner in big trouble because he added a second story to his house, in that direction here on the beach, and the city said "hey, you're violating our rules," and he said, "let me apply for a permit." And he paid fines and he paid extra money for a permit after the fact, and they still denied it, and now they're demanding he take the second story off his house. Which is trouble, and in fact, I just learned in the last couple of days that the city has fined our neighborhood association because he hasn't complied with their request yet. We got a fine as a nuisance, and so we're trying to convince the city that we are not responsible for this member's violation of their rules

IH: Yeah, it seems crazy to fine the whole.

RR: Yeah, well maybe they're thinking that they'll have better luck getting money out of a big neighborhood association than out of one home owner. I don't know what their thinking is, but we're in Dutch as we used to say – we're in trouble. It's an old expression from my parents' generation. We're in dutch now.

IH: So what was the last addition that you added?

RR: That sun room. For many years I had the idea that I wanted to add some kind of greenhouse, a sun room on that side of the house. That's the most southerly side of the house, so about three years ago my new wife said, "when are you going to get going on that?" That's not really how she talks. So I did get going on it, and so instead of my dream of growing papaya trees in there now it's her jewelry workshop. She calls it her room and I try to claim that it's the sunroom that belongs to both of us, so it's not really any great dispute but I do get to needle her about how much in disarray it is. After I did that, the city, they weren't complaining about the permit, but I think they, as far as our real estate taxes are concerned it's largely based on square footage of your house, how many bedrooms you have, and that sort of thing, how many bedrooms, how many baths, you have in your house and how much square footage. You can find out what they have as information for your house online, you can go online to the county assessor's office and they had this house at more square feet than I had, and more bedrooms than I actually have, and I went back to them and said, blah blah blah, you got this wrong, and they sent a

guy down and he said "you're right, you only have one bedroom," but you've got more space out here now so it probably offset the fact that I didn't have ... I think they had me down for two bathrooms as well, I don't remember the details now, but I just got the new tax bill for this year and it has nothing to do with that room now. Our story goes beyond that room now, but my complaint is, for your recording, that my tax bill went up 20%. I think that's an inordinate amount for the bill to go up in one year, but I doubt that I'm going to be appealing it. There is an appeals process. I doubt that I'm going to be appealing it, because they recently changed the rules that your appeal has to be based on comparable sales, no other criteria, and they seem to be better at finding comparable sales than we are. A year ago we did appeal the evaluation. We pay taxes in two different ways, because since we're a neighborhood association that owns the land, and since we're homeowners that own the improvements, they're called improvements on the land. We pay real estate taxes on the improvements, individually, but as a group we pay real estate taxes on the land. And we recently found ourselves appealing the new evaluation that they put on the land. I told you we paid something like \$485,000 dollars for it in 1978. Well, the latest evaluation that they came out with was something like \$4.4 million dollars. So we complained that, hey, we're still a bunch of rotting wooden boxes at the bottom of a landslide-prone hill, subject to storms of ever increasing intensity with the way that the global climate is moving. We don't think that this is prime waterfront property, like some of these people up the hill have these beautiful views but they have concrete foundations ... blah blah blah ... and the board of equalization is the outfit that hears your appeal and makes a ruling. And they did lower it. I couldn't tell you the exact number, but something under \$4 million dollars – they took about a third off the top, or 25% off the top, of what the county wanted. So we got a bit of a break there, but only because we worked for it: we assembled evidence, and so forth, and went through the appeals process. I'm sort of coming to the end of my wind of this talking on your recording, but ask me more questions if you have them.

IH: Is there anything else you want to tell me about house, past or present of it? Or the building process?

RR: Well, I think we've covered just about everything, we're built on pilings, we heat with both electricity and wood. That's kind of important. A couple of these windows – these front windows that have such nice views – need replacing, because they're old. They're double paned, and they lose their seal. They get moisture between the panes and they start fogging up. It's a big expense, and it's a chore to get them made, to get them on a truck, to get them on the boat. I'm probably going to build some sort of framework to fit in the boat. I can set the windows on it, and hopefully not tip the boat over on the trip home. Then I'll have to get neighbors to help me pull 450 pounds of glass out of the boat, and have all the framing ready to go, and replace these windows.

I built some of the furniture in the house. I built that couch that turns into a bed, I built Katherine's' desk area, and an area upstairs for her sewing. I had my hand in building other houses on the beach – notably Andrew's house, number 92. My friend George bought 92 and tore it down, and a bunch of us built a brand new house there. It was a lot of work. It's bigger than this – it's got two full bedrooms and two full baths. Well maybe they aren't full baths, but I like living here.

Everybody chips in when you need them – to shovel out landslides and so forth. I couldn't count how many landslides there have been in the 40 years I've been here, 40 plus years. There have probably been 40 plus landslides, and they tend to come in groups. We've had some small slides here this year. There had been a long of rain in the last three weeks, so that's important. We had a fire – ironically, we talked earlier about the fire that burned a house down here at 62. Well, the same owner had his house burned down at 54, back in 1995, and we didn't have phone service for weeks because it burnt the wires. We ended up running our own wires, and not everybody had a phone, but I was part of running our own wires. It turned out we had several party lines going and I don't know if you know what a party line is. In the old days, when phones were new, and in fact in the 70's when I first got my phone, I shared the line with one of my neighbors. It's called a party line. You might pick it up and they'd be talking on the phone and you'd have to wait before you'd get a dial tone, and so we had party lines for a while, and we were complaining to the phone company every day – get down here and fix this! So we've learned to manage with some roadblocks or hurdles, some stuff like that, but we figure ... I say "we" because I'm speaking for a group of us ... we think we have a good community. We help each other out, and just having the hill in common makes this sort of a common denominator, it puts everyone in the same boat so to speak, so that's the start of it. And we of course develop our own individual friendships too. I'm still very close friends with the woman who lived next door, that I showed you the picture of. She lives up near Stevens and 34th now. Her two grown sons call me Uncle Bob. I'm not their blood uncle, but the idea that she wanted somebody close by that her sons could call uncle and count on kinda spread, so there are several other people that call me uncle, and now they're having kids. So on our phone list it says Uncle Bob. I don't have any real nieces or nephews because my sister doesn't have children, but I married into a family. My sweetheart, my wife Katherine, has four children, and five grandchildren, and a sixth one on the way, and so I'm now step-everything. Step-dad, step-granddad, that kind of thing. But this has been too much about me.