

Key information

Name: Jack Sasser, Emelie Peine

Respective ages: 37, 40

Current Cabin: Cabin 79

Date of interview: March 4, 2017

Interviewer: Jessica Brady (Puget Sound)

Ethnographic Preface:

I met with Emelie and Jack in their home. We sat in the open kitchen and living room. I had set out to learn about the history of their cabin, and while we didn't discuss very many specific dates or names, they told me a lot about their experiences living in the community. We also discussed the planned future renovations of their cabin. Cabin #79 is known in the community as one of the last remaining traditional Salmon Beach cabins, so we talked about the significance of it to the community and some of the anticipated pushback against their plans to update the structure. We also delved into the process of renovating and the legal and illegal ways people have done so over the years, as well as the shifting nature of the city's response to such renovations.

Transcription:

JB: We're down here on Salmon Beach. Can you tell me a little about the general history of this cabin?

Sasser: I'm not a hundred percent familiar with the whole history of this cabin, but I do know that they say it was built in 1922. It was in fact built before that. I don't know if anyone is a hundred percent sure when it was built. It started off as a fishing shack, as all of these [cabins] did. It started out as just this part of the house, the kitchen and living room area.

[Jack indicates the kitchen where we're sitting, which runs the whole 20 foot width (approximately) of the house and is about 8 feet deep, and the open living room, which is off the kitchen and adds another 10 feet or so to the depth of the house. There is an additional room off the living room which is enclosed by walls, and is the bedroom that Jack speaks of next. From the kitchen, I can see the deck on the other side of the living room wall. It looks out over the waterfront.]

And it got slowly added on to, which is why we have very shallow angled roofs and low ceilings. So they started with this fairly normal height ceiling [in the kitchen] and then because they were adding on, they had to slowly angle it down, but then they just kept adding on so it got very low. You can see how they added on because you can see outer wall on the inside of our house. They added this little room over here, the bedroom first, and then they added on this section here, which runs over our couch, second. And then finally the area out third to our deck. I don't know when they added the back part. I have no idea how that relates to the rest of it. Part of me thinks it was a later addition just because of the interior of it. But the bathroom is the only thing here that's been remodeled with a permit.

When all those different additions happened – I don't know the dates for those unfortunately. I do know there's been at least five owners of this cabin. Rogers Edwards has got a timeline. Did Andrew give you Roger Edwards number?

JB: No, he didn't. I'd love to chat with him though.

Sasser: You should. He's got a timeline of who owned this [cabin] and when, dating back pretty far.

JB: Was he a previous owner?

Sasser: No, he's the guy who wrote this book.

[Jack goes to the bookshelf behind us and pulls out a copy of *Tacoma's Salmon Beach, Washington*, by Roger Cushman Edwards. Several places throughout the text are bookmarked. He brings it back to the table and flips through it as he continues talking.]

Sasser: It's a good reference. He's a good reference, too. He'll talk your ear off [chuckles] but he's got good information and he does have the owners and when they sold it for at least the last five.

JB: Does he have that information for every cabin? Was there a handful that he picked?

Sasser: He has it for almost all cabins, which is impressive. He did a lot of research.

[3:15: Emelie Peine and baby Sadie Kaye enter, introductions are made]

Emelie Peine: How far did you guys get?

Sasser: We were just starting. I was telling her that it's been added onto multiple times. We weren't sure when those additions happened.

Peine: One of these pictures in here where you can see where it's only half ... yeah.

[Peine flips open the text to a bookmarked page, where there's a double spread of black and white pictures. She indicates one of the photos. It depicts the house, which clearly doesn't have half the living room added yet, but does still have what is now the kitchen area and the front storage area.]

JB: So that's the front part over here, and - ?

Sasser: So that's this part here and the first part over the couch there.

JB: Where that support beam is?

Sasser: Exactly. It even says here [indicating the caption], the original front porch had been enclosed and then after this photograph another porch got extended and enclosed as well.

Peine: Hence the gradual slope of the ceiling.

Sasser: But you can see the same windows are still in it from back then.

Peine: And then what's the year on that?

Sasser: It didn't say.

Peine: Well what section is this in? Because these [chapters] are all organized by date, or by era.

Sasser, reading from the chapter title: '49 to '58. Let's see what other pages are marked in here. This is a good resource, as is Roger Edwards.

Peine: This is the one that shows the landslide that took out the houses on either side of us.

Sasser: That's why we have open spots on either side of us.

Peine: In 1951 - oh wait no. Yeah, number 72...

JB: So did this cabin sustain any damage?

Sasser: No. So you can see, here's our cabin, and then a big landslide on this side of it, and big landslide on this side of it. And it damaged all these cabins, and the ones on the other side. Essentially that's why this is the only one that has space on both sides of it, because these cabins never got rebuilt for whatever reason. And now SBIC -

Peine: Salmon Beach Improvement Club

Sasser: It's sort of like our HOA [home owner's association]: they own the lots on either side and they can never be built on.

JB: Do you know why that is?

Sasser: When they bought all the land here they created an easement on either side of us. No one will ever build there, and also shoreline regulations will never allow anyone to build there.

[6:32 - I pause the recording to explain to Emelie the interview process and to obtain her signature on the recording agreement. The interview resumes.]

JB: So what kind of damage has this cabin sustained over the years? I know you said that landslide missed you guys.

Peine: I don't really know of anything.

Sasser: As far as we know it's never been flooded and its never had a landslide hit it. As far as we know no damage has been done to it.

Peine: They did rebuild this wall for some reason, and I don't know if that was because it wasn't insulated and this is the direction the weather all comes from.

Sasser: The south side wall.

Peine: And this kitchen window and the window in the bedroom were put in by the person who owned it before us, and I think it's because all the weather comes from that way, and so it gets pelted with rain and wind. The house is not very well insulated, but that wall is the one place that has any kind of real windows. She actually had a lot of work done on this place. She rebuilt the whole foundation in 2006, I think.

Sasser: She's the one who remodeled the bathroom.

Peine: And the kitchen.

JB: And what was her name?

Peine: Christine Hickey.

Sasser: She was the one who owned it before us, and she only owned it for - five years?

Peine: I think it was longer than that. And then the person before her was - I can't remember their name, and that person owned it for a really long time.

Sasser: It was a family. We'll give you Roger Edwards' phone number so you don't have to talk to him in person. Let him know you're with Andrew and he'll give you the names of everyone back.

JB: Can you tell me a little bit more maybe about what it's like, and especially with the new addition [indicating baby Sadie] down here? I know it's not a traditional neighborhood set-up.

Peine: Not at all! Everything is different. Well, not everything.

Sasser: You have to buy less groceries and do it more often. You have to get used to the stairs. You have to move in by boat, move out by boat. Any big purchases like a washing machine have to come in by boat.

Peine: Or by the stairs.

Sasser: Or by the stairs, if you're feeling sturdy.

Peine: Which you like to do.

Sasser: It's not that much of a lifestyle change, it just requires a little extra planning and awareness of the tides. But I would say overall our life hasn't changed all that much.

Peine: I would say there's some of little things. We drink a lot of beer in cans because we don't want to carry the glass back up the hill. We do cloth diapers with [Sadie]. Not when we're out and about, just when we're at home, so that we don't have to carry as many dirty diapers back up the hill. So stuff like that we think about in a way that other people probably don't. The move in was an experience, moving everything in by boat. And at that point we didn't know very many people back here so we were sort of depending on the kindness of relative strangers to help us out.

[Baby Sadie got chatty, so Emelie passed her over to Jack.]

Peine, continuing: It's definitely a very close knit neighborhood. Everybody knows everybody. Everybody knows what's going on with everybody.

[11:00]

Sasser: There's also an assumption of risk down here that I don't think you have up the hill up at a house on the top. Obviously, we have a huge risk for landslides here, and there's really not much you can do to mitigate that, so you're sort of just waiting for that to happen. And it does happen fairly often down here, small ones, usually. And the whole community just turns out to help you clear it and repair your house, whatever needs to happen. And then big storms are the other thing that you sort of - it's an

assumption of risk, you know, you get a big tide in a big storm and all of a sudden you have waves touching your house -

Peine: - crashing up over the path over there -

Sasser: - moving your whole house, yeah, the whole trail will flood and you can't get out without waders on. But again, houses down here that have been built recently according to the new flood elevations have not flooded. They're usually above it by a foot or two at the very least, even with waves. But large logs are always floating around in the sound. They'll just come slamming into your house and they can actually take out your whole foundation if you're not careful with them. So that's another risk you have to be aware of. When you're not at home, you know, your neighbors are just sort of making sure a big log doesn't take out your house.

Peine: And they will come. Didn't our boat break free once when we were out of town? And our neighbors went out and got it for us and brought it back and put it back on our boat ramp. People definitely will do that kind of stuff for you if you're not around.

JB: When did you guys move in?

Peine: 2012. '13? This is gonna be our fifth summer, so the summer of 2012 I think. Yeah, because I moved here in 2009, I was here '10, '11. I moved here in August 2009, August 2010. You moved here in August 2011, and then we moved down here in August 2012, or July 2012.

Sasser: Yeah that makes sense.

[13:10 - baby Sadie wants to be included again, and babbles for a bit in the background.]

JB: Was the new baby, with the assumption of risk, a conversation at all?

Peine: Not really. I definitely think about it more, especially when Jack's not home. Last night there was all of a sudden this huge deluge of rain, and I would have thought about it anyway, but I definitely thought about it more because whenever it rains really really hard in a sustained way that's when landslides happen, so there's this little voice in the back of my mind that says, 'Okay, what's my plan if something really bad happens.' But I think I would have thought about that anyway.

Also there's a lot of people down here with kids, and so I think it made it easier for me. It was sort of like, okay - there are all these other people that are doing it, so how hard can it be? And so I think that made me more confident. There's one baby that's only 2 months older than [Sadie], so there was another woman down here who was pregnant at the same time as me, which was nice. There's two little girls who're exactly a year older than her. There's kind of a little posse of kids that are about her age, and there's another group that's about five, like kindergarten age, and then there's another group that's like middle school. There's a lot of kids down here. And it sort of goes through phases of when there are a lot of kids down here and when there are not so many, and I think we're definitely in - and the older folks who live down here will say that too that, that for a pretty long time there weren't very many kids, and now all of a sudden there are a ton, which will be awesome for her when she's old enough to go run down the beach to her friend's house and play. But just watching other people manage it was like, oh, well, it can't be that bad if all these other people are doing it.

Sasser: I would also say though that there was that thought that, when you go into labor, how are we going to get you up the stairs, you know, if you go into labor quickly, are we going to get a boat? You know, that kind of thing. One of our neighbors gave birth down here and she was very worried about it. She was committed to doing it but she was very worried about it. She had all of her medical friends on standby as a result. It went fine, but you know, if something goes wrong with a pregnancy down here, what do you do?

Peine: There's a boat ambulance that'll come, but it takes twenty minutes to get here - more than that, a half an hour to get here.

[16:18-16:34 - we paused our cabin talk briefly to admire baby Sadie's activity.]

JB: Well do you know anything about the woman who lived here before Ms. Hickey?

Peine: She just had this place as a little vacation cabin, she didn't live here full time, and I don't think anybody has lived full time in this house for a super long time, not until we moved in here. And it was actually on the market for a while - about six months when we bought it, and I think part of the reason is that ... I mean, there are no closets, there's one bedroom, there's not ...

Sasser: It's still essentially a fishing shack.

Peine: Yeah. It's not very well insulated, there're a lot of minuses for this to be a full-time residence, and I think it's one of the only remaining cabins that hasn't been substantially remodeled. People think of this cabin as kind of the last remaining traditional Salmon Beach cabin, and there are a few other ones that are really small, but I think this is the only one that's still the original shape and the original style. I think a lot of the houses down here used to look a lot like this one, and now you can see what has happened on either side of us.

When we came and looked at it, all of this paneling, we painted it, so it was just like really cheap wood paneling, a linoleum floor, the bed in the bedroom was just a little metal cot. It was not set up to be a home, it was set up to be a crash pad. It took some creative vision to see it as a place that we could live full time. When we first had her, people were like, 'How are you going to have a baby in a place that small?' If it was any other country there would be three generations living in this house. We sort of take for granted in this country that we need all this space, but you don't really. And it's been great for us.

The only thing is that our crib is on wheels so we can wheel her out here in the middle of the night if she gets fussy or something, so the other person can sleep.

I thought Christine's family was involved in this place somehow. Was that not right?

[19:00]

Sasser: I cannot remember the exact timeline of people here before us.

Peine: Do we still have that letter that she wrote us, and does it say anything in that letter? The woman who we bought this place from, when we finally came to move in, she had left us this fifteen-page letter that was about all the quirks.

Sasser: It was mostly like, 'If this goes wrong, here's how you deal with it.'

Peine: I don't know if you've seen the oven, but it's from the sixties or something, and it runs about seventy-five degrees hotter than what the dial says. Stuff like that that we would have had to figure out the hard way. So she left us this really long letter. She still has a lot friends down here and she still comes down every once in a while. Like our next door neighbors have a three-year-old, and when they had a baby shower for him ... oh yeah, here it is.

Sasser: They also left one of the original boards from the very first cabin, one of the original side boards. They kept it and put a little plaque on it.

Peine: Yeah, let's see. This is all the water heater! The sewer!

JB: A guide on how to live here, kind of?

Sasser: Yeah. I think it's the end where she makes her plea.

Peine: Logs can sometimes get underneath the house. The oven is approximately a hundred degrees too hot. [Chuckles]. FYI I had 16 trick-or-treaters last year on Halloween. Let's see. Spiders. Oh! Okay, she says:

I lived in cabin 68 when I was a child here in the 1950s. I came back here years later and bought cabin 79. I love this little cabin and know you will too. I wish there was some way to persuade you to not change its outside appearance. I have worked hard to preserve it and keep it looking as close to how it has always looked - a little cabin by the sea - as I could. However, selling it to you means I have no control over that. My wish, though, is that you would keep it the same on the outside, improve and enhance it on the inside, and love it, love it, love it.

So we're planning to do a big remodel of this place, and I think when that happens, there's probably going to be a lot of people on the Beach who are gonna be sad and maybe even a little mad at us for doing it, because this is one of the last of the really original cabins. But it's easy to say you shouldn't change your house when you don't have to live in it. Especially with a little baby. So we have plans to remodel it, but for now we're making it work.

JB: Can you tell me a little bit about the remodel?

Peine: There are really really tight restrictions on what we're allowed to do. We can't actually put on a second story or anything like that. All of the stuff that's happened around us has either been not permitted or it happened in an era when they were a lot more permissive. So we're gonna take a lot of this back deck, because we don't use a lot of that back deck area, and close it in and make that a part of the house in order to try to squeeze in an extra bedroom so she can have her own little space. A crib in our room is working for now, but in a year or two it's not gonna be - 'I don't wanna sleep in your room anymore.'

JB: You've lived here for about five years now. About how long do you think most of the people end up staying where they're at?

Peine: It varies a lot. There are some people who have been staying down here since the fifties. And then there are some people who really come and go or some people who are just down here for a

season and then leave. I would say right now there are – would you say there are a lot fewer renters here than when we ... ?

Sasser: I would say there are a *lot* fewer renters. When we first got here it was more renters than owners.

[24:06]

Peine: And there hadn't been a house sold down here in at least three or four years when we moved down here. And *since* we've moved down here I'd say there's been at least six or seven houses sold and a lot more people are living down here full-time than when we first moved down here. I feel like there are a lot more people now who are staying for a long time. Our neighbors on either side of us were UPS students and they moved down here when they were in college, and they're our age. They moved down here in the late 90's and just never left. And they've all lived in a bunch of different cabins down here. That happens a lot. People will rent down here and they'll sort of move around to the different cabins that are available, and then a lot of the times they'll try and find a way to buy a place down here.

Sasser: And most of the cabins down here don't go on the real estate market – they just get sold by word of mouth.

Peine: Ours was an official real estate sale.

Sasser: But many of our neighbors looked at this place before we even bought it, before it was even put on the market, because they heard it was gonna be for sale.

Peine: We're lucky that no one snapped it up.

JB: Is that a weird feeling, that half the neighborhood has been through your house?

Peine: Well after we realized that we were like, 'Well why didn't anyone else buy it? Is there something that we should be worried about?' And there's one guy, who was a good friend of our next door neighbor, who's an architect, and he really wanted to buy it and do kind of what we were planning to do, but he just couldn't get the cash together at the time, and I think he's a little sad. Every time he comes down he's sort of like, 'Ugh.' But obviously we're psyched that we had the fortune of finding it.

JB: Can you speak a little bit about the community?

Peine: Yeah, it's amazing. Since Jack works at the hospital, we can't really travel over the holidays to go see family because he usually has to work either on Christmas or the day before or after, so the first three Christmases that we spent down here, we had Christmas dinner with our next door neighbors. The *first* year that we lived down here we had Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner with them. So that, to me, was, they all sort of celebrated the holidays together and they just included us in their crew right off the bat, which has been really awesome.

We watch each other's dogs. In this little stretch right here, we're all around the same age. Our next-door neighbors here have young kids. Two houses down that way there's another family with two little kids. We just have a lot in common. It was just sort of a weird serendipitous feeling that we kind of found

our people when we moved in here. And even like the people who we don't see all the time, there's a couple big parties every year like the Fourth of July, New Year's Eve, where everyone who lives down here all gets together, and even the people that we don't see that much, like - Jack, you should tell the story about getting the wood stove in the house.

[27:35 - Emelie and Jack switch places so Emelie can sit with Sadie and Jack can be near the recording device.]

Sasser: I would say that the community is incredibly supportive even if you're brand new. Even if you don't know the person, it doesn't matter, they're still a part of the community. We're all living down here under this assumption of risk. If there's a landslide, even if you've never met the person whose house it's behind, which is generally rare down here, but it happens, you're down there helping to clear the trail, repair their house, whatever needs to be done.

When we brought down this wood stove, we had decided we needed a wood stove, because you can feel wind coming through the walls in this place.

Peine: Well, there was a wood stove in here that I think had been here for a really long time. But the inspector who came looked at it was, like, 'No.' The firebricks inside it were cracked, and it wasn't sealed, so we decided to go for it and buy a brand new one.

Sasser: So we bought a brand new one and it's small for a new stove, but it's extremely heavy and the tides and the weather - the weather is a big factor - were just not cooperating.

Peine: It's like three hundred fifty pounds?

Sasser: Yeah, something like that, maybe more than that, I can't even remember. The tides and the weather were not cooperating. If there's winds out there, pretty much no boats can be out in the waves that occur. We were unable to get it down, and there's no storage up there, as you saw, so there's no place to store this stove, so we decided to bring it down the stairs. This was very early on in our Salmon Beach time, and we recruited some of our friends to help bring it down the stairs, and they showed up one evening to help us bring it down.

At the top of the stairs, we were trying to figure out how to get it on the dolly, how to start the dolly down the stairs without losing control of it, that kind of thing, and these four older gentlemen, who have been living down here forever, most of their lives, they all finished in the Peace Corps together and have been living here since. They showed up at the top of the hill, and they had been out drinking a little bit.

Peine: The car pulls into the parking lot, with the windows down and with music blaring, and we're all thinking it's teenagers pulling into the parking lot, and then they get out and it's all these sixty-five-year-old dudes who had been out at the bar playing cards or something.

[30:00]

Sasser: And so they come over and they're like, 'Well, what are you doing? Do you want our help?' And we're like 'Sure, we want your help!' And they just sort of took over. So we have these sixty five year old dudes helping us move this huge stove down step by step, really slowly. And the whole way down they're just telling stories of when so-and-so's refrigerator tumbled down the stairs and the house

damage from the last time the washing machine rolled down, and that kind of thing. The whole way down we're just hearing these stories, while these older gentlemen, who are mostly drunk, are helping us move this incredibly heavy stove down the stairs step by step.

But that was the kind of community thing where, you know, they show up at the top of the hill, they've been having a good time, but they're still like, 'Wow, let's spend forty-five minutes helping these people that we don't really know yet move this stove down the hill.'

Peine: When [Sadie] was born, there's this big tradition of bringing meals when people have kids down here, and we had people who we barely knew bringing us food. Somebody put a note up at the top of the stairs that she had been born. We finally counted it up, and some of these were from friends up the hill too, but we had about thirty-five days of people bringing us food. It was incredible. And most of that was people from down here.

JB: Do you think there's more of a sense of that because of the challenges of grocery shopping?

Peine: Yes. I think that's definitely why. I think there's a big sense of community down here because of the challenges of living down here. We all gotta help each other out.

Sasser: We gotta band together. And obviously it's a little bit isolated too. Any time you walk the trail you're going to run into somebody, and say hello, and have a short conversation. I think that you're forced to run into each other constantly and that sort of helps with a sense of community too. It's essentially like when you're in college, right? You're forced to live with a bunch of people and you make the best friends of your life.

JB: With the remodel, are you guys going to be insulating more?

Sasser: Yeah, it's going to be a lot more air tight. It's not going to be much bigger. The actual size of the roof won't be any bigger. It'll just be reoriented. We're just enclosing some storage cabinets back there and making them bedrooms instead. The walls will be redone, re-insulated, raised up a little bit, not too much, but a little bit, not quite this high [*Here, Sasser indicates the highest point of the kitchen ceiling*] but close. We're just bringing this place up to code – that's what the city wants us to do, which is the only reason we're allowed to remodel at all is because they want this place up to code.

JB: How many of the remodels would you say are because of the city coming in and saying you have to be within policy, you have to be within building code?

Sasser: Zero. Zero. There's *one* house down here that got the whole remodel permitted all the way through the process, and we are going to be the second, *if* it happens. All the other houses, either the city does not know about, or the city has penalized, or the city is still in litigation with. We're not on the building department's good list.

JB: How does that get dealt with then?

Sasser: On a case by case basis. The place next door, a while ago, the owner raised the height way above what was supposed to be the maximum. The city found out about it and I think they just fined the person who did it and then let it stay. There's somebody who added on a second story down the beach a ways who did it, what, I think about a year and a half ago? Lincoln? And the city found out about it

and said, 'No, you have to tear it off.' He has the resources to hire many lawyers, and did so, and still has lost. As it stands now he has to tear off the second story of his house that he just put on because he didn't get permits. And right now, the Shoreline -

Peine: They're cracking down on people.

Sasser: Yeah, they're cracking down.

JB: Do you think people see it as just an additional cost?

Peine: I think originally that was how people saw it. They were like, 'We'll just risk it, if they slap us with a fine, they slap us with a fine.' But now that they're telling people that they have to tear down the work that they've done, it's become a totally different thing and so now there's actually a bill in the legislature to create an exception for Salmon Beach to the State Shoreline Plan because there was a lobbyist who lived in the - I don't know if you know, in Lake Union in Seattle, there's a bunch of house boats? And they were under the same restrictions. There was a woman who lived there who was a lawyer and a lobbyist and she basically lobbied the state legislature to create an exception for the floating homes for these expansion rules and got it passed.

Our leadership contacted her and said, 'Do you think you could do the same thing for us?' And she said she would look into it. And so there is a bill on the state legislature right now that would basically create an exception for Salmon Beach because we're on the state historic registry. And basically the rationale was that the state law - the way it restricts us from being able to add on to our houses - basically prevents us from making our cabins habitable.

A lot of people felt like it was kind of a private property right violation or that it is going to impact the resale value of our houses. If we had looked at this place and somebody had said, 'You can buy this but you can't ever do anything to it ever,' there's no way we would have bought this house. I think when we bought it, we were assuming that we were going to remodel it at some point. I think the value of a lot of people's houses down here would be impacted by the lack of the ability to remodel them.

It's moving through the legislature and it looks like it's probably going to pass at this point, which will be too late for our project, because we're just going to move ahead anyway because we don't want to risk a super long delay or the fact that it doesn't go through. We really want to get going on it so we're going to do it anyways. But it could make a big difference for everybody else who lives down here if they want to do work on their house.

The feeling down here is that the city would rather Salmon Beach did not exist because of the landslide risk and the flood risk and all of that kind of stuff, and just the general feeling that the shoreline should be reserved to either go back to nature or used for industry, but not used for residential purposes. I think that's what the department of ecology's position is. And in principle I totally agree. I feel like we should limit development on the waterfront, but I also feel like it gets to a point where it's not rational. What we would be proposing to do would not actually have any ecological impact, so you're always going to be wrestling with that.

JB: Do you think there's a feeling that the Salmon Beach way of living is at risk?

[39:00]

Peine: I feel like a hundred years from now this place is not going to be here anymore, just because of climate change. I don't know how you feel, but I feel like sea levels are going to rise and at some point these cabins are not going to be viable anymore but I think it's a ways away at this point. I don't know. What do you think, Jack? Or do you think people down here will just adapt? Because people down here are sort of scrappy and would kind of make it work.

Sasser: I think that's what the real driver behind us feeling like the city is kind of against us is that people down here have always ... like you don't buy a house down here if you don't want to make your life harder and a little crazier.

Peine: And if you don't want to sort of do things on the DL and off the radar.

Sasser: Right, it attracts a certain kind of person that doesn't want rules around them that much.

Peine: People chafe even more than maybe they would otherwise when the city is like, 'You can't do these things.'

Sasser: The mentality down here is like, 'We're gonna go out and do whatever we want around here,' and we really love that mentality. It's very freeing, in a way, to be like, 'You know what, I'm just gonna do this and I'm not gonna worry about it until the cops come.' And I think that's the mentality of a lot of people down here. New rules cause serious chafing, but I think that people are more worried about not being able to free-wheel and do what they want and make stuff work. This place has always been about adapting, making things work, and doing what you want. There's so many stories about the cops that will occasionally do raids down here or try to increase their presence.

Peine: The legend is that in the seventies down here a lot of people were growing marijuana down here.

Sasser: I don't think that's a legend!

Peine: I only say that because we weren't down here. But the story is that there was a raid and that everybody threw their marijuana plants off their decks into the water, and that this Craig apparently, who grew up down here and lived down here until very recently, he's our age, he and his buddy went out in their boat, because there's an eddy and everything floats down that direction, so they got in their boat and they went down to the end of the row of all the houses and just scooped up all of the pot plants that had been thrown overboard. That's the kind of community that this was and in certain ways that kind of remains.

Sasser: That encapsulates the mentality down here.

Peine: Not an outlaw community, but -

Sasser: But it's not far off from that.

Peine: Yeah. There's a bit of an outlaw vibe.

JB: Do you know of any other raids at all? Is that a contemporary thing as well?

Sasser: Even now occasionally, the Tacoma police – there's not really animosity or anything like that and I don't think that the Tacoma police think of Salmon Beach as a place they need to monitor anymore – but even now in the summers, specifically, every couple years, you'll see cops doing a walk through, a patrol down here. They just start including it in their patrol for a month or two. And they'll stop and talk to you and say, 'We're just trying to make our presence known down here.' They're very honest about why they're walking around down here. And then you won't see them again for another two years. And then you'll see them for two weeks every day. And it may just be part of their cycle, it may just be something they do in every community, I don't know.

JB: Any other stories about the house? The previous owners?

Peine: Did you show her the little chunk of the wall here?

Sasser: Oh yeah, I can show it to you. This is how you know that your house has been added onto in an odd way.

[43:57 - The wood stove is set up where the kitchen meets the living room, alongside the wall of the bedroom. Behind it, there's a sizable patch - probably about 1-2 square feet - of drywall missing, revealing the old wooden siding underneath.]

Peine: That used to be exterior wall.

Sasser: This is original outside of the wall right here, and this was an addition but this still wasn't enclosed when this little part got built.

Peine: This little middle part where the wood stove is used to be the original deck. When we bought it we think they had left that on purpose so you could see where the original wall was. When we painted everything we left that unpainted because we kind of thought it was cool that you could see where the original external wall was of the house. So that little part of the kitchen where the kitchen is is the original cabin. It was just that big. Not even a house, a shack.

Sasser: There was, when we first bought this place, there was a hole right over there all the way through to the pilings underneath, straight air, and they had just shoved a stick in it.

Peine, laughing: 'How do we plug the hole in this floor? We'll just put a stick in it.'

[45:00]

Sasser: That's the kind of house that we were moving into.

Peine: This cabin is definitely known as being the only one down here that has empty space on both sides, and for being one of the last remaining original cabins.

Sasser: When we remodel we're going to try to keep some of these original windows and just kind of incorporate them into the new-ish house. We're not going to expand it too much, so it'll hopefully still have a cabin feel, but with walls that don't leak and a roof that doesn't leak.

Peine: And a living room where if you're more than six feet tall you can actually stand up straight. The architect that wanted to buy this place and then didn't is about six foot three, and one of the reasons

he didn't buy it was because he couldn't stand up straight in the living room. He was like, 'I can't buy a house where I can't stand up in, that's dumb.' I totally get that. I'd probably feel the same way.

JB: Beyond the original windows, do you have any plans to incorporate some of the original workings? Obviously you're not tearing down entirely.

Peine: The deck is going to be the same, and the exterior walls. I think we're going to keep the cedar shakes on the outside.

Sasser: Try to reuse as many as we can. As far as the original stuff, I think the windows are the main reusable part.

Peine: As you can see, it's not like this paneling is historic. This is from about 1972, cheap-ass paneling.

Sasser: These beams are sagging.

[Jack indicates the support beams across the ceiling of the living room, where each successive addition to the house was made.]

Peine: Structurally there's actually not much that's salvageable about this house. We're lucky that the foundation is still in really good shape so we don't really have to do anything there.

JB: And it was the previous owner who had rebuilt the foundation, right?

Peine: Yeah.

JB: Anything else that comes to mind that might be of use? You guys have given me a lot to work with.

Sasser: Unfortunately we just don't know that much about the strict history. But I'll give you Roger Edwards' number, and you can give him a call. It's definitely worth getting at least the names and dates [of the previous owners].

Peine: Because I think the people who owned it before Christine owned it for a super long time. And I know that, Chris and Scooter and Willi would at least have their names. I can just text them right now.

[48:13 - Jack gives me Roger Edward's contact information, referring me to him to get more specific information on the previous owners of cabin 79 and the exact dates. In the background, Emelie dictates a text via Siri.]

Sasser: So Roger's phone number is XXX-XXX-XXXX, and he's in #46, and is home most of the time.

JB: Alright.

Sasser: He also refers to himself as the Salmon Beach Historical Society.

Peine: He wrote that book.

Sasser: If you refer to that and ask for some information, he will provide you with way more than you want.

JB: Awesome! Thanks so much, this was fantastic, I really appreciate it.

[end]