

Call number: 74-07

Tanana-Yukon Historical Society meeting

April 23rd, 1970 at Pioneer's Hall.

Summary created by: Varpu Lotvonen

Date of summary's creation: 10/29/13

Series: Tanana Yukon Historical Society tapes

Notes: Original on 7-inch tape, master copy on CD

A man's voice [sounds like Bill Cashen] introduces the recording and says that they are going to talk about street names. Clara Rust has submitted a paper with quite a number of names "as she recalls" of the individuals after whom the streets were named.

The speaker is going to read it on the tape, after which the people who are present can make their own suggestions.

Cushman Street is named after Mr. F. M. [Francis W.] Cushman who was a member of Congress in the State of Washington. He was a personal friend of James Wickersham. He came to Valdez in 1903 at Wickersham's request to act as a lawyer in court tangles that involved the Kennecott Copper holdings. The speaker says he must have come to Fairbanks later.

Wickersham Street is in honor of Judge [James] Wickersham who came down from Eagle to be the first law in Fairbanks in 1903. He settled many arguments over claims, was the judge, the juror and the recorder. He was one in the group that decided to name Fairbanks after Vice President [Charles Warren] Fairbanks.

Cleary [street] is named after Frank Cleary who was a first full-time recorder in Fairbanks. He was one of the first to stake ground on the discoveries made by Felix Pedro. He did extensive mining on Cleary Creek and the community of Cleary was a thriving mining-town. Cashen [?] asks where Cleary Street is now [and a woman's voice says something unclear in reply.]

Dunkel Street was named after Bill Dunkel who was a recorder following Cleary. The office of a recorder was important in court since they recorded the mining claims.

Bonnifield was named for Sam Bonnifield who was an early day miner and prospector. Mining and hunting country also carries his name. There is a Bonnifield District. Bonnifield also started a bank and was a big shareholder in 1st National [Bank]. [Someone says something unclear.]

Badger Street is named after Harry M. Badger who was the 4th town recorder and who served in the Territorial Legislature. He was a champion of agricultural development and was best known as the Strawberry King of the Tanana Valley. He also was a past president of the Pioneers of Alaska. Badger Road is named after Harry since he broke the first trail along the Thirtymile Slough to his homestead and berry farm. Cashen asks if he just died a few years ago. [Unclear talking.] He died at the Pioneers Home in Sitka, only three or four years ago.

Hall Street bears the name of one of the first doctors, F. M. Hall, whose office stood on Turner Street, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues.

Blanchfield, the little street between Cushman and Lacey [Streets] honors the first Fairbanks youth killed in 1st World War. Being small and crippled, he was rejected by the U.S. Army, but enlisted in Canadian forces and distinguished himself in the air forces until he was shot down. Percy Blanchfield graduated from the little red school that stood where [unclear]. Blanchfield is between 1st and 1st Avenue, right across from the co-op. It was called Blanchfield Alley, but it is supposed to be a street. [Talking about it, unclear.]

Noble Street was named after George Noble who owned one of the first saloons on 1st Avenue and was a prominent business-man. He also worked to start the Eagles Lodge, Aerie no. 1037 and was active in the old Arctic Brotherhood.

7:40 W. K. Wendell was the first one to build on Wendell Avenue. [Unclear talking.]

Kellum Street is named after Judge J [John]. C. Kellum, an attorney who accompanied Judge Wickersham from Circle City in 1903 to help set up law and order.

Smythe Street is named after Cap [E. J.] Smythe, a long-time riverboat captain who's boat Florence S. operated between Fairbanks and Tanana Crossing. He had a homestead in 8th Avenue between Kellum and Bonnifield. He sold 50-foot lots for \$50 dollars.

Lathrop is named after Captain Austin E. Lathrop.

Cowles [Street] is also named for a judge [James Todd (?) Cowles] . Cashen says it wouldn't be hard to find his full name and title.

Gaffney Road bears the names of one of the first military men, Colonel [Dale V.] Gaffney who was in charge of building Ladd Field that is now known as Fort Wainwright. His first name was Dale. Later, after the war, he came back as a General in Fort Wainwright. Another man's voice says it was in 1948 when he was a commanding officer. Cashen asks if he has passed away but the other people who are present indicate that they don't know.

Eielson Street is named after the first aviator in Fairbanks. He is called the Pioneer of Airways and his name was Carl Ben Eielson. He was first a teacher in Fairbanks High School. Cashen says he's not certain that Eielson was the first one to fly, but that he was one of the first ones. His story is well documented in books and other sources.

11:35 There is Gillam Way that is named after Harold Gillam, a mechanic who learned to fly from Eielson and built an airline business that was called Gillam Airways. He had a hanger a block above Airport Way in that is now called Gillam Way. His story is well documented too. She [Clara Rust] says he lost his life in search for Eielson, but Cashen says he lived much longer than that. [Unclear talking.] He was flying a company plane for Morris Knutson [sp? Knudsen?], who was a pilot there. [Unclear discussion. The other speakers are too far from the microphone.] Cashen says that Earl Borland was the mechanic with Eielson.

Cashen says that Gillam's story is well documented in Flying North and other fairly good books about Alaskan aviation.

12:58 Stacia Street is named after Paul [John] Rickert's wife. Paul owned Rickert Subdivision and his homestead had gardens and greenhouses that were located at the junction of Cushman, Gaffney and Airport Way. It later joined the old Week's Field. He gave some acreage to the City to be joined to the field and sold some more to enlarge it when plans for a landing platform build for the dirigible Norge [a Graf Zeppelin flying over the Arctic] were made. Norge never made it to Fairbanks, but had to emergency landing in Teller after crossing the Arctic. Laurine was also Rickert's wife's name. It was Stacia Laurine.

Bjerremark carries the name of August Bjerremark. [Discussion about pronunciation of the name.] He homesteaded at the Bjerremark Subdivision at 17th and Cushman Street. Jesse and Abigail Streets are named after August Bjerremark's wife. Bjerremark was a water and wood merchant and he had his barns at Cowles and 5th Avenue. Jesse was a wonderful seamstress and gave many big parties she became known for. Discussing if her name was Jessie Abigail or Abigail Jessie.

At 15:52 Cashen says she [Clara Rust] has Clay Street with a question mark and Turner Street with a question mark and that she completes her paper by saying that in early days, 1st Avenue was called Front Street and all streets were given names, from south to north. Streets running horizontally with the river were named from 1st [Avenue] to Old Richardson Highway that was at about 12th and Cushman.

That concludes Mrs. Rust's notes, which Cashen says he finds very interesting. Cashen asks if there are any comments that the other people would like to make or any names they could add to the discussion. A woman mentions Barnette and Cashen says it was named after E. T. [Elbridge Truman] Barnette who was as much a founder of Fairbanks as any one man.

Someone adds that Kellum was named after doctor Kellum. Cashen says that Kellum was mentioned and a lady's voice says that he was mentioned as a judge.

[Unclear talking about Dr. Kellum.] Cashen says that Clara Rust mentioned Cushman who was a lawyer who helped “him” [Wickersham?] and that Kellum was a judge and an attorney who accompanied Wickersham. [Talking about Kellum.] Cashen says that Mrs. Rust might have mixed up Cowles and Kellum because Cowles was an attorney who came with Wickersham and worked as an attorney. Wickersham’s book Old Yukon tells about that pretty well and one of the interesting things in that book is a replica of an old Fairbanks newspaper. The professional ads are good: they give the names of the doctors and attorneys, recorders and all the people. [Unclear talking.]

A man’s voice says it’s a shame they don’t have Frank Young and Edby Davis present since they have good memories. He continues by saying that Turner Street was named after a prominent man.

Harry Bentley is mentioned and someone says that Harry Bentley used to have a restaurant and a dairy farm on the island. Mall was built later. He had the restaurant at 1st Avenue around the same time with the dairy business. Cashen says the Bentley Dairy was in operation for years and that it didn’t close down before until the war. That property was sold. Bentley Drive is named after Harry Bentley. Bunnell is named after Dr. [Charles E.] Bunnell [who was the first president of the University of Alaska, then known as the Agricultural College and the School of Mines. Brent Street is named after Margaret Brent, an early telephone operator whose property the Brent Subdivision was.

21:19 Bridget was named after Bridget O’Connor [More talking about her being Pat O’Connor’s mother.] Cashen says that many of the names are not named after anybody in particular, but that sometimes they had just interesting names. A woman’s voice mentions Melba Street that was a little street that her husband was surveying. It had to be named and there was a little girl named Melba and so they named the street Melba. Melba was excited to have a street named after her, but when she saw the place and there was nothing there, she was angry because she had expected something bigger. Another woman says that Young Street was named after Ed Young [Edward?], a flyer who was killed over by Livengood. Cashen says Ed Young was flying around the same time when Noel

Wien and Ben Eielson were starting to fly. Ed Crosson, who was a flyer, gave his name to Crosson Avenue. Cashen says he was the chief flier for Pacific Alaska before it became Pan American. Then he was a chief of a division for Pan Am.

A man's voice says that Davis Road is named after Ed Davis who had a big farm there. Mike Ursing died 2-3 years ago, or 3 or more as a quiet man's voices suggests. Cashen asks if Mike was a driller. [Unclear talking about Egan.] Cashen mentions Egan Avenue. There is a Moore Street named after George Moore who had a homestead there. Discussing the O'Connor homestead that was across Creamer's Homestead. Radel Lee [Rydell? Riddell?sp?], Warren Taylor and Bud Meyers are mentioned. Their names combined formed Lemeta [a homestead?]. That was made into a subdivision quite recently. A man's voice says that Gilmore must have got its name from Tom Gilmore. Cashen says that when they made Week's Field Subdivision the City took it and made it into residential business. They put the two streets side-by-side because they have Pedro Street and Gilmore Street. Gradelle Avenue is mentioned. [Unclear talking and a question.] Gradelle is still in the real estate business and was married to Taylor at one time.

27:30 Talking about Gilmore Trail that runs near the Gilmore Creek, which was named after Tom Gilmore. Cashen asks how the Steel Creek Road got its name and says that there must be Steel Creek somewhere. A woman says that they were driving up the Chena Hot Springs road, trying to get to Gilmore Trail. Steel Creek is somewhere there. [Unclear talking.] Talking about Slater and Slaterville that was their homestead.

Cashen asks if anybody knows after whom Minnie Street was named. [Unclear talking.] She had a sign: DAMNC. Halvorson Road is along University Avenue. Somebody says there was a man named Halverson [Orvin T?] who lived there but she doesn't remember his first name. [More talking about him. He's at a Pioneer Home in Sitka.] A woman's voice says he blew his hands off with dynamite.

Cashen wonders if Harriet is named after Harriet Hess. Hayes and Hess are probably named after the mountains, as well as Deborah. A woman's voice mentions Morgan Way that was named after A. B. Morgan who was a Nazarene preacher who bought that property from Dr. Bunnell and subdivided it. Cashen

says he surveyed it. It's close to the post office. Cashen says A. B. Morgan went south and wonders if he still is at the Juneau area.

31:51 Weeks Field was named after a Secretary of War or maybe it was the Secretary of Interior. Cashen talks about a monument at Weeks Field that has a plaque that notes the person who was a secretary of something at the time when the field was put into operation.

Another man is talking about Kellum to which Cashen says that they think he was a Doctor and that Mrs. Rust thought he was a judge. Dr. Will Chase was in Cordova. Chase Street was perhaps named after people named Chase who had quite a bit of property there. Doctor Cellum spelled his name with a C instead of K. Cody Drive in South Fairbanks is named after Bismarck Cody who had a homestead near where Sears and Roebuck are now, which was right across from Rickert's homestead. Talking about where Cody Drive is.

Cashen asks if anyone remembers the name Cutter. Another person says that he has heard controversy over the name Lacey. There was somebody named Lacey, but there also used to be whiskey that was named Lacey Whiskey and the street was named after whiskey. [Unclear talking.] Cashen says it was a popular whiskey and that there must have been big signs promoting it. He continues by saying that Lathrop and Lorraine have been talked about and asks whom Lillian Street is named after. Nobody seems to know. Somebody says that she believes that Mary Lee Avenue was named after Ravelle (Gradelle?) Lee's mother.

Another person mentions that Mac Road was named after a real-estate dealer who took up a homestead out there shortly after the college was started. Cashen asks if it was called the Mac Homestead. The man's voice says that the old road used to follow the slough. Monroe was named after Father Monroe. Cashen says he was the first Catholic priest who came down from Eagle in 1903 or 1904 when the town started. He built the Catholic Church "on the other side", near 1st [Avenue] and Dunkel [Street]. Then one winter they hauled it across the ice to its present location. Father Monroe built the hospital too.

37:29 Noyes was a judge in Nome during the early days and participated in the scandals there. The other Noyes who was with the “ice pool scandal.” Rex Beach wrote a story about Noyes in Nome and it was called The Spoilers. [Unclear talking.] Noyes Slough was named after the same man and they used to have a lumber-yard where the Golden Valley is now. His first name was Frank and he had a son. He also used to have a private riverboat and their family was quite wealthy. Their house is still standing there: it’s a 2-story building that the NC-Company [Northern Commercial Company] used. The undertakers are above and it served as a bath house during the WW II. Cashen says that Jack Linck lived there for a long time when his family was growing up. Cashen says that he’s seen pictures of the house in its heyday and that it had beautiful furnishings inside. Someone says that he used to carry papers there and that he used to hate that because it was long ways out of town.

Cashen asks about Illinois Avenue and wonders why it wasn’t named Minnesota or Nebraska. Someone suggests that one of the pioneers originated in Illinois. A woman’s voice mentions Jadd Homestead in Cushman, which was just beyond Rickert’s homestead.

Cashen asks where the name Peger comes from and someone says that Pegers still live there, so the road was named after Peger Homestead. Someone else wonders if Pratt Avenue was named after Judge Harry Pratt. [Unclear discussion.] Cashen says that it’s a fairly new street but that it might be named after Judge Harry Pratt who was a judge for many years and whose father was a judge.

At 41:33 they are talking about Phillips Road that’s close to Phillip’s Field and is named after a fellow who had a homestead there. His name was Carol Phillips.

Cashen asks if anyone knows what Rewak means and if it’s a combination of names. A woman’s voice says that there is a hotel at the Airport Road [by that name?]. They wonder if it’s a combination or a made-up name. [More talking about it.]

Sandvik Road is named after Pete Sandvik who lived there. Shanley Street was named after John Sexton Shanly and the spelling should be Shanly [Cashen spells

the name out], but there's another one [street?] with "ley." John Saxton Shanly was the first graduate of the Alaska College [Agricultural College and the School of Mines] in 1923. He had had 3 years in Cornell [University] before he came up to Alaska to work on a railroad and ended up in Fairbanks. The school had just started and it was almost the last possible moment when one could enroll when he was in the courthouse, filing for his property. Somebody said he was right below the college and explained that they were just starting an agricultural college. He became interested and then Bunnell happened to walk by and got introduced to Shanly who decided to enroll. He was able to graduate the following year and he became the first graduate. He had studied agriculture and his purpose for coming to Fairbanks was to file for the homestead and try farming. He didn't stay too long after graduating, however. He did a little business: sold seeds and did a little farming. He's still alive and came up to Fairbanks when his daughter graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Cashen says he has a tourist agency in Buffalo.

45:11 Charlie Slater's property became Slaterville. Cashen thinks it's nice that homesteaders' names have been preserved in many areas. Many names don't mean anything. Talking about Traynor Gate and nobody knows why it's named so. Wolf Run is named after Dr. Ernie Wolf. Wien Avenue is after Noel Wien. Wilbur was after the old Wilbur family. There was an alderman Jack Wilbur who still lives in R Street.

Cashen says they are at the end of their list. A woman's voice says that there is Warren Street that is named after Warren Taylor. Someone suggests it's after Dr. Warren but the first woman speaker says that's same as Warren Taylor. Discussing Well Street and someone was thinking there was a well there, but it was near the old Pioneer Hotel. Cashen mentions Pioneer Wells that was at 5th and Cowles Street. Eva McGowan's house used to be next to it.

Cashen mentions short little streets like Perry Street and asks where the names come from. Yankovich is named after Mike Yankovich who had a homestead there. [Unclear talking. Talking about Perry Street.] Someone asks why the street in Graehl is called Fortymile and Cashen explains that it was a popular name. It

was a famous mining camp on the Yukon and Cashen believes the place in Graehl is named after the famous mining camp and not the distance. [More discussing about that and where the name Graehl comes from – nobody seems to know.]

At 51:43 Cashen says that name Graehl has been there forever [and tells how it's spelled]. It might have been a homestead. [Unclear talking.] Hamilton Acres was a homestead of Hamilton. Somebody says that it would be interesting to have names of the homesteads in the area. [Talking about a summer trip. Unclear discussions.] Fairwell mentioned. A woman's voice talks about Clara Muddler [sp? Mudder?] who was married to George. George died and she married Charlie. [More unclear discussions.]

Cashen says they are onto a good start and asks Madame President what they should do with it. She says people could research streets that they are interested in. A man suggests that they give the information to Clara Rust because she is a good writer and that the information might help her remember so she could maybe write brief biographical sketches of people whom the streets are named after. Cashen says they now have a lead that they can use for getting more information.

Another man says that there is information about some of the places in the Golden Days Paper. They have given brief histories of Bonnifield and the others. The man has saved one from 1964 onwards and Cashen thinks they can all be found from the University Library in microfilm. Another man says that it would be laborious to go through the papers but if they could get Frank [Young] and Edby [Davis] and Clara [Rust] to get together, they might get lots of information.

Discussing that they should continue [the street names -project] on the next meeting, hopefully with Frank and Edby. Bill Cashen says he's going to close the tape after reading the names of the people who have participated in the discussion: Dolly Young, Francis Baker, Eleanor Reed, Gerone Lardenne [Jerome? sp?], Bill Hogan, Boyd Hering and Stella Hering, Edna Wilder, Bill Cashen. Margaret Harris is the newly re-elected president.

[End of the recording.]