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Heinie Carsten at Tanana-Yukon Historical Society meeting

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Notes: Original on 3-inch tape, master copy on CD

Heinie Carsten is talking about somebody who was picking gold right off from the bedrock. A man in town [in Fairbanks] saw the gold. The geologist told Heinie all about it when he came back and told Heinie where the place was. The geologist went back to East Cost and this winter Heinie got a hold of him and got the map showing where the gold was. Heinie says he had been to that spot many times, but never prospected there. He was 15 miles beyond that place when he found "pay" [gold]. He had walked right over "this spot".

The interviewer asks if he knew John Murtie [sp? possibly Murie?]. Heinie says he's heard of him. [Unclear question about "bar sniping" on the Birch [Creek]. Heinie says it's hard to say, but that there is a lot of money there. He continues that in the early days Charlie Rogers and Dus Winneman [sp?] used to go over there in July and rake out 50-60 ounces of gold and sell it.

Someone asks if most of the creeks are still staked to which Charlie says that they aren't. The interviewer asks if there is increased interest in mining because there are rumors that the price of gold will increase. Heinie thinks that the big trouble is that wages are so high that a person could earn a lot of money by working for wages. There's no reason to prospect any more. Heinie thinks that lots of men are going prospecting after the Brooks Range "opens up." After the pipeline is done and things cool down, he thinks there will be lots of men going to Brook's Range and Heinie says that they are going to find gold too. Michael Lester spent a winter at the Brook's Range. [Unclear talking, laughter.]

A woman asks what Heinie thinks about the pipeline and he says he thinks it's going to go through and go to Valdez. The lady asks if Heinie doesn't think it would do the damage that people think it would do. Heinie doesn't think it will because "they'll have everything up to snuff" and they'll build boats that are almost fool-proof. Of course the small boats of 150 tons or so aren't "fixed up for it," but bigger boats will have air chambers in them and if something would happen they'd still float.

At 04:05 another lady asks if Heinie will use his money traveling, but Heinie says he has no desire to do that. He went out [of Alaska] the year his mother died, and he doesn't want to go out again to look at her grave. He's going to stay and mine until he drops. He wouldn't retire because he'd drop if he did. The lady talks about her time working in a laundry in 1923. There was Mrs. Aurola who was a large Finnish woman and a couple of years after she was laid off, she went back and that's when Heinie's sister [unclear]. Heinie says that she and Jack O'Gerra [O'Hara? O'Gara?] ran the American Hand Laundry. The lady says that she worked there for 9 years. Once Heinie was there.

[Unclear talking.] Man asks if Heinie knew Charles Hodgers. Heinie tells that he did. He doesn't know "two accidental Hodgers", they are too big for him. A lady's voice says that Charles Hodgers' sister and her husband built a cabin up at Cushman Street where the fuel office is. Heinie says that he furnished the logs for them.

A lady tells that she was at Deadwood Creek in 1936 and 1937 and she found an old diary that was written by Mr. Bloom down at the creek. He mentioned [unclear] and the lady asks if Heinie knows who he [Unclear name] was and who Mr. Bloom was. The interviewer recaps that Dr. Hanson says she lived in Deadwood in 1935 and that found a diary that belonged to Mr. Bloom and that mentioned Swiftwater Bill. She wants to know if Heinie knew Swiftwater Bill. He says he didn't, because Swiftwater Bill was in the area before Heinie's time in Alaska. Heinie heard lots about him, however. He knew Bloom, Pete Bloom who committed suicide. He got into an overflow and put a snare around his neck which he had fastened to the back of his sled. Then he told the dogs to mush. George Bloundel [Blondell?] found him frozen in overflow and the dogs too. Dr. Hanson says they lived in his cabin in Deadwood. Heinie asks if she was there when John Hanson was there and she says she is his wife. Heinie says she should remember him and that he used to talk to her a lot, but never knew she was Mrs. John Hansen. [Laughter.] Mrs. Hansen says Heinie has a better memory than she does. Heinie says he remembers Mrs. Hansen's husband so well. He helped Heinie out many times.

8:35 Dr. Hanson says that she is interested in the history of that area before Fairbanks was established. Heinie says that Circle Camp was long before Fairbanks and even before Dawson was struck in the 1880s. She says they don't have enough history about Circle Camp and Fortymile and she wishes that somebody would dig up the history. Gilmore and his bunch came down from Fortymile and discovered Fairbanks. Heinie says that Antone Standard is the first man to find gold from Bonanza Creek in Dawson. He was sinking a hole and there with 6 men with him and they were all out of grub. Antone Standard stayed with it and picked through the muck. His first pan was \$0.15 cents and his next one was \$0.20 cents and the next one after that was much better. They staked the claims, but had to go to Fortymile to record the ground. Antone didn't have a dime so he told his story to lots of men around there. Clarence Berry was a bartender at the Fortymile Roadhouse and he listened to the story over and over and then he finally decided that the man was telling the truth. Then he grubstaked Antone with next winter's food and promised to hire 2 men to go with him and said he would take half of the cleanup. Antone agreed. They went there that winter, burned wood fires [to thaw permafrost] and took out the dump. The next spring when it was time to sluice, Clarence Berry went there and his share alone was \$250,000 dollars. Heinie has it in black and white in Central. That was in 1897 or 1898.

11:32 "And Clarence Berry, I've known several men that hit him up with a price of a meal and he never gave them under \$20 dollar bill. Never." Clarence Berry got lucky. He owned ground in Ester and made good money and wherever he had ground, he got money. Someone asks if he's the man who owns the Miller House ground. Heinie says he was and that it was worth \$22 million dollars when Clarence Berry died. [A lady asks something unclear something about Cleary Post Office and says they had a house across the old school.]

A man's voice asks about "Pete the Pig." Heinie tells that Pete the Pig had some ground at the head of the Salcha. When Heinie walked over from Woodchopper, he stumbled upon Pete the Pig's cabin that was at the head of the Yukon fork of the South Fork of the south fork of the Birch [Creek]. He had a winter cabin there. Heinie asks if people have heard about Mt. Kathryn who is named after Dean [Ernest] Patty's wife. Heinie wasn't far from the mountain when he stumbled upon that cabin. He found some signs of Pete the Pig who was already dead by that time.

[Heinie explains the location of Salcha River in relation to Yukon Fork, Mount Kathryn and Woodchopper [Creek]. He's probably drawing the lines in the air. Sterling Creek flows into the Charlie River.]

The interviewer asks how Pete the Pig got his name. Heinie says that he grunted like a pig whenever he got drunk. [Laughter.] Someone asks if Heinie read Wickersham's book and tells that it mentioned Pete the Pig. Heinie says he's read it, but doesn't remember.

At 14:34 the interviewer asks if Heinie has any stories to finish up with, but Heinie says he has lots of them, but that he's kinda rattled. The interviewer says he has related his story very well and that he has contributed a lot to the history of Alaska. He wishes that Heinie comes back to talk later. Heinie says that Michael Lester has $\frac{3}{4}$ of his life in Alaska recorded on tape. Heinie says there was something he wanted to say, but it slipped his mind. Then he says he's going to sing a song that he heard a long time ago and perhaps Mrs. Von Hansen has heard it too. It's called O Don't You Believe it. [Heinie sings a song.]

18:11 The interviewer asks if anybody has questions. [Unclear question about McIntosh's dog.] [Laughter.] Heinie says no, and the interviewer says it's a restricted song. Heinie will sing another song. [Sings another song, name is not mentioned.] [Laughter.]

The interviewer thanks Heinie for the presentation. Heinie says he could tell a whole lot more and says he's inviting everyone to visit him when his wife is better.

[End of the recording.]