

H76-04-01

Glenn Burrell, 1893

Fairbanks, Alaska

Neville Jacobs, interviewer

September, 1974

Glenn Burrell came to Alaska in 1925 at the age of 31. He was married in Idaho and had four children before his divorce. He worked on the Chick Nelson project in 1929 about 25 miles above the Kennecott Mine. It wasn't a large deposit of copper and it didn't produce. They brought the equipment up the Copper River by railroad and then freighted by mules. He walked to and from the project. He was there for about three months. He walked out the week before Christmas and stopped at the roadhouse on the Nazena River. Walter Holmes and his wife ran the roadhouse the last few years of operation. He talks about McCarthy being the "liquor town" for Kennecott Mine. The owners of the store in McCarthy were Jack and Charlie O'Neil. There were four or five bootlegging joints there. Roy Snyder had a "pool hall" in McCarthy. Glen talked about prohibition time. He talks about the bucket line in the mines called a sky line. He worked as the head timber man to keep the stokes from falling in. He said the mine had the highest test copper ore in the world, as high as 86%. He said there were all kinds of colors in the ore. He said the Green Butte which is up McCarthy Creek is another area with high grade copper. He talks about the owner of Green Butte who shipped some ore out to the Tacoma smelter. The Guggenheim Corporation charged the mine owner for shipping the ore out.

He worked in 1929-1930 at the Kennecott Mine and then worked on the Boulder Dam and the Big Coulee Dam. He also prospected in the San Bernardino Mountains in California. He was good at estimating how much pay was in an area. He talks about Arnie Sundt and Slate Creek. He worked for the FE Company when he first came to Fairbanks. He built the office building, the power plant and several warehouses. He poured the first concrete building in Alaska and the first sidewalks in front of the FE building. Up to that point the sidewalks were board sidewalks. After the FE Company cut wages when they went into production he quit the company. He then ran a freight line out of Fairbanks going over the Valdez trail to Paxton and Sourdough. There was a ferry across the Tanana River at that time. It only operated four or five months of the year. The ferry was on a cable line. They used the power of the river to move the ferry. He drove a GMC truck with flatbed. The road was so narrow that two vehicles couldn't pass each other. He talks about the roadhouse at Sourdough that was run by Hazel and Tiki Wackter. They also had a fox farm there. He freighted supplies to the roadhouses. He also supplied game meat to the fox farms which wasn't legal. He ran freight on the Steese Highway too. He talks about Ollie Sterling who worked for the Road Commission. He would also travel on the Taylor Highway. When he was freighting he also sold liquor on the side. He ran his own still which he operated in the winter. He said he used corn and sugar and describes his technique for distilling. He considered it a commercial business. He sold the liquor to the roadhouses. He also made rye whiskey. He would make about 1800 gallons each year.