

Amelia Hill
1 hour
Ophir
B. Feb., 1885

Interview by Neville Jacobs
Fairbanks Pioneer Home
June, 1974

Amelia Hill came from Finland to the United States soon after 1900 to look for work. She arrived at Ellis Island, tells about difficulties encountered as a stranger; then finally to live with a family and work for them. She had Finnish friends in Alaska and was able to join them in the gold fields.

Amelia tells how she came north on the Yukon riverboat and "danced all the way." In the Ophir area she met and married Vic Hill. They went up the Koyukuk River on a pole boat to prospect, with her husband's partner Gus Benson. They lived hard in the Koyukuk, struggling to survive, but they had a good life too, always had plenty. Vic was a good worker, and while they didn't make a big strike in the Koyukuk, they had a good garden, good hunting; always had plenty of food.

After Koyukuk, the Hills moved to Ophir. They settled down there, had a big house on the hill, and mined together for years. Amelia tells how they lived, built their houses, kept them warm, took food from the land, cooked, and mined.

Their house was 22 miles from Ophir but they went in to Ophir to shop and for dances. Amelia loved to dance and in fact so did all the community, and this was their favorite recreation. Amelia says they mined year after year, keeping up their assessment work, and she still has her old rocker. (Not a chair--mining equipment.)

Amelia brings out her diary and photo album in the middle of the tape, and conversation centers around photos, especially

of an airplane on which she flew to Fairbanks; then photos of their house, surroundings, and mining operations.

Conversation turns back to aspects of mining and general life in the Ophir area.

Amelia repeats many times how hard they worked, yet what a satisfying life they had and never wanted for anything.

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