

Sam O. White

Interview by Neville Jacobs
at White's home, Fairbanks
June, 1974
3 hours

Sam O. White came to Alaska in 1922 for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

Sam was the subject of a chapter in Helmericks' Last of the Bush Pilots, and himself wrote autobiographical material published in the Alaska Sportsman Magazine in 1964-65, a series of twelve.

This tape reviews White's life in general, his boyhood in Maine, his move to Alaska; about a third of the way into Tape One he begins narrating a trip made to triangulate the region between Anchorage and Fairbanks along the present route of the Alaska Railroad.

Sam discusses methods they used in surveying and his own work as preliminary reconnaissance man for a team of some thirty men.

Sam recounts many varied adventures of the group traveling north: they encountered severe weather, rugged terrain, wild game, short supplies and strange people.

In 1923 Sam arrived in Fairbanks, having completed this trip.

Sam next commenced a trip overland with Dan MacKenzie and six horses to make a preliminary survey for mapping the region between Fairbanks, Eagle, and Circle City. This story continues on Reel Two and Three--fascinating listening for those who enjoy a first hand account of wilderness exploration before Alaska's aviation had developed and game was abundant.

U.S.C. and G. S.

White's reconnaissance work is the basis for many of Alaska's maps and survey work today.