

ORAL HISTORY 78-40-02

Pioneer Women of Alaska

Mike Dalton, interviewer

Clara Rust

Fairbanks, Alaska

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Mike discusses the Pedro monument dedication on July 22 of each year. Earl Beistline recognized the Pioneer Women of Alaska who were present at the July 22, 1973 ceremony. The women present were: Adrianna Coyle who came to Dawson in 1900, Clara Rust who came to Fairbanks in 1908, Amante Hanson who came to Chena in 1907, and Dorothy Loftus who came in 1906. Other Pioneer Women of Alaska, who were still living and not present were mentioned: Agnes Thomas, Helen Carlyle, Minnie Brewess, Fannie Joyce, Louis Carstens, Charlotte Cuban, Margaret Murie, Mildred Murilin, Mary Joyce (honorary member), Henrietta Durrie, Lucy Bailey, Mary Miller Furan, Albina Miller, and D. Moody Harris. Mike and Clara talk about Eva McGown who died in February 1972. They discuss honorary members of the Pioneer Women of Alaska. Mary Joyce was driving a dog team to Fairbanks, but was stopped by a snowstorm. Louisa Black from Dawson is also an honorary member. Mrs. Warren G. Harding was also made an honorary member in 1923.

Mike and Clara talk about a list of the former king and queen regents for the winter carnival and Golden Days made up by Amante Hanson. Clara talks about the reasons for the king and queen regents. For the first winter carnival in 1934 it was decided to have elections for the queen and king regents. They decided that the pioneers should be recognized. The first queen regent was Catherine van Curler and king regent was William Craigy. In 1935, the queen regent was Minnie Creamer and the king regent was Peter Dyser. In 1936, the queen regent was Eleanor Robinson and the king regent was Ole Fisher. In 1937, the queen regent was Mary Miller and the king regent was Jack Buckley who was a U.S. marshal at one time and a fire chief. Mike and Clara talk about Mary Miller coming over the Chilkoot Pass in 1897 and carrying one of the children. In 1938 the queen regent was Delia Dunham and the king regent was J.H. Grows. In 1939 the queen regent was Alice Hanley and the king was Luke Colbert. In 1940 the queen regent was Jessie Beermark and the king regent was John Quinbow. In 1941 the queen regent was Stacia Rickert and the king regent was Jack Burlington. There were no carnivals or special events between 1942 and 1945. Mike asked Clara about social activities during the war years. Clara said there weren't too many. The army took over Eagle Hall and the USO organized dances there and at the university. Mike said the Pioneer Women didn't sponsor the carnivals but participated in them. Clara said that two women (Kay Huffinan and Clara? Murry) started the winter carnival. Auxiliary 8 started to elect the queen and king in 1947 but after 1950 they alternated elections with the Pioneer women of Alaska. In 1946 the queen regent was Genevieve Parker and the king regent was Otto Neilson. Otto Nielson and his wife had a mining operation on the little El Dorado and were neighbors with Clara and her husband. In 1947 the Auxiliary no. 8 chose Blanche Cascaden and Henry Appell as queen and king regent. Henry Appell climbed Mt. McKinley along with Harry Carstons.

Mike and Clara discuss Charlie Mays. Charlie Mays had been studying Sam White's diaries. They discuss Sam White arresting Blanch Cascaden for illegal possession of furs. E.B. Collins was the attorney who managed to get Blanche's charges dropped. Blanch was from the Livengood area. Her first married name was Timmons. Clara talked about wanting the Elliott Highway named for Blanche instead of Elliott. Mike and Clara talk about the possibility of having some roads named for some of the old timers.