

H97-175-21

Mike Firu

September 9, 1960

Fairbanks, Alaska

Harrie Hughes, interviewer

Mike Firu was born in Romania in 1897. He came to New York in 1919. He came to Juneau in August, 1936. He worked in the Alaska Juneau Mine until 1939. He moved to Jonesville near Anchorage and worked in the coal mine for one year until 1940. He came to Fairbanks and worked for the FE Company. In the fall of 1941 he went back to work at the Healy River Coal Company. After the war he worked at Ladd Field. Now he is retired. A lot of the people he knew in Fairbanks are gone or have moved. He knew John Whitner, A.P. Davis, Dominic Puchacha, Frank Mussano, Steve Begich, George Begich and John Widmore. He worked at Santana Coal Company. He talked about drilling by hand. They finally got an electric drill and electricity in the mine. George Bovanovich, Mike Popovich and Harry Corey. Harry now runs a roadhouse at Chikaloon. Mike talked a bit about Jonesville. Harrie and Mike discuss Cap Lathrop and his accident. Harrie asked him about entertainment. Mike said they had the theater for entertainment. Mary Thompson was down the track. Andrew Begich had a grocery store and bar. The former Mrs. Bill Shannon ran the post office. They talked about Romanoff. Harrie said he used to go sheep hunting with him. Mike said Romanoff worked for the Road Commission. Bill Green was an agent for the railroad. He left Healy in 1944-45. Mike said they had an explosion at the mine and they couldn't get the men out. Harrie talked about sheep hunting in the area. Mike said he never got one but there were quite a few people from back east who would come for sheep and grizzly bear hunting. Harrie asked about Santana Village. Mike said Tony Andrew and five or six families were living there. Usibella was living there at that time, too.

Harrie asked what he did in Jonesville. Mike said he was mining there. Mike talked about the explosion at that mine. He described how they put air down into the mine.

Harrie asked what he was going to do now. Mike said he was going to live with his brother-in-law in Arizona. Another brother-in-law lives in the Watsonville area. He was expecting to leave in the next day or two.

Harrie asked about working in the Alaska Juneau Mine. Mike said they paid \$3.60 a day. They paid \$45.00 a month for room and board. After the union came in they got \$5.00 a day. Harrie asked about the Douglas Mine. Mike talked about the mine caving in. The mine caved in during the lunch hour when everyone was out of the mine. Harrie talked about working for the railroad.

Harrie asked where his wife was from. She came from Washington. Her name was Mary Ann Boeing. She had one sister and two brothers.

Popovich, Mike

Lathrop, Austin Eugene, |d 1866?-1950.

Thompson, Mary.

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