

Call number: 02-00-133-10 PT. 1

Harrie Hughes reads a letter from Jeff Davis, King of the Hobos and Hamper (?) of the Knights of the Road

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Harrie Hughes starts reading a letter that says it's going to be King Jeff's account of his trip. He left Cincinnati, Ohio on June 15th to go to Fairbanks, Alaska. Tank no. 1 had given him a purse of \$400 dollars [as a donation from the Knights of the road?] so Jeff was well supplied. His first stop was in Chicago, but Pat Gorman was out of town so Jeff headed for Milwaukee. The first thing he did was to call Phil Valley (Valli?). Both of those members have done much to their outfit, the Knights of the Road. In Saint Paul, Minnesota, he tried to get ahold of their chief dispatcher Doc. A. Topa [sp?], but failed. He did see Verne Tester [sp?], a chief dispatcher of Saint Paul Tank. Then he continued onto Seattle, Washington. Don Christensen, who is the chief dispatcher of Seattle Tank, was out of town, but George Wagner, who is known as the champion blood donor in Seattle and who is a charter member of the Knights of the Road, took him visiting the members. They hit Hank's place in Occidental and Hank "fixed them up with a bead bag." They ate a lot.

Hank Rasalsky [sp?] was an old-time member of their organization. Allen Palmroy, one of their lawyers, and Clay Nixon and other members in Seattle, gave Jeff a royal reception. From Seattle, he got a plane to Fairbanks, Alaska. The Chamber of Commerce thought that a bunch of bums were landing in Fairbanks, but when they strolled through bars and shops of Fairbanks they got proof that while some gentlemen were acting like bums, "we hobos were acting like gentlemen." They are indebted to the [Fairbanks Daily] News-Miner who gave them a really sincere welcome, carrying the bo's [short for hobos] on the front page during their 3-week stay.

3:14 Harrie Hughes also saw to it that the hobos got the right kind of attention. He brought about the hobo picnic and hobo ball and the proceedings, \$273 dollars, were given to the Crippled Children's Society. Leonard Luban [sp?] and Sophie Stephens [sp?] made the hobos' stay a success. Luban is a grand duke of the Knights of the Road and Sophie is the grand duchess.

One of their greatest surprises was to meet Earl Pilgrim whom they hadn't seen since 1914 when Jeff had the hotel [unclear] for homeless men in Seattle. Earl is a swell fellow and carries the bo-card.

Harry Hingey [sp?] was too ill to attend the convention in Fairbanks and [so was?] Jack Hughes, the blind philosopher. He is well known in Alaska and has made many trips there in past years. Jack had his "office" at the Elks' Club. The Elks threw down a red carpet for him and Jack deserves to be treated well. Jessen's Weekly in Fairbanks covered their activities in a well written write-up by Albro B. Gregory, the editor. He was a fine person to meet, and so was Cliff Sonny [sp?], the City Editor of the News-Miner, and all their reporters who were never too busy to interview them.

4:53 Harrie Hughes took their delegates to North Pole where Mayor Miller Santa-Claused everyone, and made Jeff a citizen of North Pole.

Two of the most interesting saloons were the Wonder Bar and the Gold Rush Bar. Jeff recommends visiting those places. From Fairbanks they flew to Anchorage where they were invited to hold one of their conventions sometime in the future. They got telegrams from Bo Michael in Dublin, Ireland, one from Governor Dissall (Dinsdale?) of Ohio, and one from Mary Clancy of Cincinnati, Ohio. Both sent letters of greetings from Ed Miller of the hotel workers and bartenders and Kurt P. Fuller who is the president of [unclear] workers. Jeff thanks for the letters.

Jeff tells that he stopped in San Francisco on his way to Cincinnati and met many of their bo members. Then he went to Phoenix, Arizona, to meet with Paul McAdams who is their long time member. He took Jeff to army and air bases where Jeff met their members in uniforms. In Tucson, Arizona, he met one of their vice presidents, John Becker, who is charter member of the Knights of the Road. He has the Shoeman's Ranch, a half-million resort with cottages and a swimming pool. Jeff visited him for a week.

6:39 First of the resolutions is that it would be beneficial to have a pioneer memorial in Fairbanks, Alaska, in memory of those who blazed the way to progress in Alaska. Also, to have a monorail system overhead the railroad property to hook up autos to long trips. They need a cooperation of highways, [unclear] and tunnels to help carry on the project. John Becker proposed a statue of Jeff on the Shoeman Ranch. Also, the consideration of the association of Hobos [unclear], taking over his ranch between 5-10 years. The letter is signed by King and Emperor of the Knights of the Road. [Break in the recording.]

At 7:41 another reading of the letter starts. [End of the recording.]