

Call number: 97-176-01 SIDE A

Name and place: Harrie Hughes with Tom Long

Date: January 11th, 1960, Tom Long's home in Fairbanks

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Date of summary's creation: 03/13/2014

Series: Pioneer Tapes

Harrie Hughes introduces the recording and says that it's a second part of Tom Long's story. [Unclear talking.] Everybody was hiding. [Unclear talking, discussion between a couple of people, children's noises in the background.] They used to wade [?] them to Poorman on the mouth of Tamarack. [Unclear] would bring mail and eggs and stuff with a wagon. [Unclear talking.] The speaker, Tom Long, built a cabin there in 1913 when the stampede was on. Jack Monnehan [sp?] was on that stampede but he has died. Harrie Hughes says that the cabin is 49 years old but it burned down.

3:29 Tom had Bob [Unclear] helping him to build the cabin. They also had a barn behind the cabin, but when Tom went to Kuskokwim, [unclear talking].

6:13 Harrie asks how much a good team of horses was worth in those days. Tom says they were about \$500-600 dollars, about \$300 dollars [?] for a good horse. They were bought in Seattle and freighted in. Freight was around \$100 dollars per horse. [Unclear talking.]

8:23 Tom had one horse that weighed 2,100 [pounds] and [unclear]. Harrie [?] says they had races in 4th of July celebration in Fairbanks and had had that for last 30 years. They had a celebration with tug-o-wars, [unclear] races, egg races. He asks if the participants remember the tug-o-wars. Tom tells that he participated in the tug-o-wars and they had those in Poorman too. Fred Joyson [sp? unclear]. [Unclear talking.] Another man tells that he remembers one tug-o-war in Ruby and his dad was [unclear] and someone told his father is a liar. [Unclear cross talking.]

12:09 Tom tells something unclear about Peter Miller who was a marshal at the time. His brother went crazy and was put in the prison. On the way out with a dog team, the person who was being taken out said that the marshal was crazy. [Unclear talking.] Harrie says that it was a rough country to live in since not everybody had the instinct to live in solitude. They had lived too long around civilization and learned to depend on somebody else.

14:12 Tom says he's born a hillbilly and he'll die as one. [Unclear talking.] Harrie says that they don't prepare for it, and if any kind of a disaster happens, they'll die. Tom says he went down there and [unclear, cross talking]. In 1954, a dog team ran away from him, chasing a fox. When they went over a river bank, Tom should have quit [let go of the sled?] but he didn't want to let them loose so he went down about 30 feet and landed on a rock that put a crack on his head that took him to hospital for 7 weeks. He was 76 [?] years old and that was the first time he had ever needed a doctor or medications.

One of the sisters [nuns] came down on a boat the next day and asked Tom what his religion was, and Tom answered it was nature. She got upset because of that, and walked home. She said that Tom didn't have a religion. [Unclear talking about religion.] Harrie says that when one lives in nature that was made by God, that's the closest one can get to God.

17:12 Tom talks about his cabin fire: When he woke up, he saw the cabin blazing. He opened the door to go out of the cabin and the blaze followed right after him. Heat was expanding. He might have been smothered by smoke if he hadn't had a big ventilator. When he got in from trapping [unclear] and if he had had that closed, he might not have ever woken up.

He was asleep and the cook stove was [unclear] and when Tom went out, he had to go through two doors. His clothes were burning, but he put the fires out with snow. If he hadn't had underclothes on, he might have burned to death. That's the closest call he's had in all these years.

19:39 Harrie asks how he provided for himself when he started crossing the country with his team, and what equipment he had with him. Tom tells that he always had a small ax, [Unclear talking]. [Unclear talking.]

23:21 N. C. Company [Northern Commercial Company] used to act as a bank in those days. People would leave their money to them and whenever they needed a few bucks they'd get it. Some traders made money off of that as they bought for cash and [unclear] for cash. [Unclear talking.]

Tom says that he has had a [unclear] with the N. C. Company since 1908. He got into it [unclear]. He had a wood contract for \$13,246 dollars that spring and the NC got about a half of it anyway. Tom Egan, who was a miner, made a big money on Cleary Creek and when he got into Iditarod, Tom Long took a contract from him to put in 28,000 cords of wood. Tom got horse feed from the NC-Company. [Unclear talking.] When he got his debts settled, he had some 3,000 dollars left out of all that money he made.

25:50 Harrie asks if he made the snow shoes for horses himself. Each foot board was buckled on the horse's toe and [unclear]. They were 12-inch boards that were about two feet, one foot each way, kind of a square. Harrie asks if he made his own snowshoes or if he bought them from Native people. Tom tells that he made his own. At that time, the Natives "didn't know nothing about that". Tom saw people do that [horse snow shoes] when he was a kid in Idaho. There was a big stampede going to Montana and Tom saw how people snowshoed in the mountains of Montana and Idaho.

[Unclear talking.]

28:52 Harrie says that one meets one's own trail and goes there without snowshoes. Tom says that horses make their own trails. Harrie tells that when he used to make trails in McKinley park, he'd take big snow shoes and make a trail right across the creek where he wanted to go, and after a couple of days it was so packed that he could walk on it. Tom tells that he rides his toboggan sled on the trails and that after one runs over it a few times, it gets hard and one can walk on it. Toboggan is the best sled to trap with.

Harrie tells that he once tried 8-foot skis and fooled around with them for 2 weeks, until he got rid of them and took his snow shoes back.

30:22 Tom tells that he used to ski ahead of a dog team. One time he left Ophir [Creek] with 11 dogs and only a bundle of fish on the sled. [Unclear talking.] There were 8 big malamutes and [unclear]. Tom had "this kid" Robert [unclear] on his way back, so on the way back, he had to stop only once. [Unclear talking.] He was faster than some of the racing teams. Tom tells that he was skiing and had only a bundle of fish in the sled, and the dogs were good malamutes. He wouldn't have made that time if he didn't have the three other dogs on the lead. They kept them all going. [Unclear talking.]

33:05 Harrie asks what his best trapping year was. Tom says he doesn't know. 1928 there was lots of fur and prices were good. He caught a few marten and fox, but started cutting wood on the side. He's not a real trapper, but he just picked it up when [unclear].

After the war, he started trapping again. One year he got some 200 beavers and 50 marten. He trapped a little in the winter, looking after a ditch in the summer. Trapping [unclear] kept him busy more than anything.

Harrie asks what he planted in his garden. He tells that he had about 1000 pounds of [unclear] and carrots and rutabagas and six tanks underneath the floor of the cabin where he put all his produce. Then he had canned goods and stuff.

36:13 Harrie asks if he ever had a bear break into his cabin, and Tom tells that he killed 5 bears. [Unclear talking.] He killed two bears this summer: one over at a lake where they get ice from and that's going in town, and the other one was when he was back the next day and encountered another bear. [Unclear talking.]

Another man's voice says that it's hard to understand that there's nothing going on at Ruby and Poorman anymore. [Unclear talking.]

38:26 Harrie asks if he knew Bob McKenna, [and?] Mickey McKenna. He had the Golden Heart taxicab near Nordale Hotel. [They are all looking at a photo.] Harrie says that the picture is of Marie Ferry who lives in Ketchikan, and the picture was

taken at the Pioneers of Alaska Grand Igloo Convention in Seward. She passed away and her funeral is tomorrow. Mrs. McKenna is going to be buried. [Unclear talking.] Somebody had a store and they left when WW-1 was over. Harrie shows a picture from Dawson [unclear].

Tom says that when he came to Fairbanks in 1905 and 1906, his father was a priest in town. Harrie says he's showing another picture from Dawson that was taken over at Robert W. Service's cabin with Andrew Wicken and Kitty McLennan [sp?] and there's [Unclear] McKenna. [Unclear talking.] Harrie tells that there's another photo of Mike Binnich [sp?] from Dawson who's a friend of John Hajduckovich and hadn't seen John in 50 years. They went to the pioneer's meeting over there. There's a picture of the Grand Convention with all the ladies.

42:07 Tom says that his dad knew John in 1912 and tells that Ruby was struck in 1911. His dad came to Ruby in 1912, and his mother and brother came in in 1915. Tom was just a boy and he knew all the teamsters. Joe was one of them. There was John, Joseph, Jaldi [sp?]. They were on Sophia [Princess Sophia, a steamboat that sank in 1918, resulting in loss of hundreds of lives and devastating the Interior communities]. Whole Taxton [sp?] family went down with Princess Sophia. [Unclear talking.]

43:11 When they came to Ruby, they had a team of 21 dogs that they kept regularly. The speaker's brother was 3.5 years older than he was, and they still hitched up 10-11 dogs and went out mushing when they were just kids. They knew all the people on the creek. [Unclear talking.]

[End of the recording.]