

Call number: 97-176-01 SIDE B

Name and place: Joe Terris and Tom Long with Harrie Hughes

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Series: Pioneer Tapes

The recording begins with unclear talking. A speaker, Joe Terris, tells that there were about 5 big grocery stores, four saloons, and a newspaper [unclear cross talking]. Someone else [Tom Long?] says that when he was a kid, there were about 5 [not sure what], a newspaper, a pastry store [?], and in summertime they had steam boats. They were double stackers, [unclear talking, and listing boat names]. The Icen [sp?] was the biggest boat that ever went up the Yukon River and it only made one trip. [Unclear talking.] It burned all the wood that was on the river.

1:58 Another man tells that in the early days there was a Scotchman named Captain McLain. [Unclear talking.] He had one of the big boats and he went to Dawson. Robert Lee is mentioned. NC [Northern Commercial Company] got a hold of the boat [unclear talking.]

Tom [?] asks if he knew Archdeacon [Hudson] Stuck, and says that he can tell a few things about him. Stuck used to travel a lot by a dog team. He was going towards Kantishna, and there was almost no trail, so it was rough going. Soon he saw another dog team coming towards him, and the Archdeacon asked the other fellow how the trail was in his direction. He cursed and asked the Archdeacon how the trail was where he was coming from. Archdeacon replied the same way, and that was all he had to say. [Laughter.]

One time he pulled to the Tanana, and there's a big, high, bank on the Tanana. He was driving a big string of dogs and his leader was on top of the bank while the sled was still down on the river. He was in g-pole and skis and had a heavy load. He was shaking the g-pole and encouraging the dogs to go, but they wouldn't move. There were 4-5 men standing on the river bank while Stuck kept wiggling the g-pole and encouraging the dogs. Then one of the men asked if Archdeacon

Stuck would like him to bring the team up. He agreed, so the man took a hold of the g-pole, let out a lot of cuss words, and the dogs went right up the bank.

[Laughter.] Archdeacon said “there was something in that language after all.”

5:43 Another time he was stuck on a bar with his boat and there was another boat coming up the river. They could see the boat and that there was a man in it. The man hollered over, asking the Archdeacon his name. He said he was Stuck. The man asked again, and Stuck answered: “I’m Stuck.” The man replied: “Okay, we know you’re stuck, you can stay stuck.” [Laughter.]

The ministers covered a lot of territory in the old days. They had boats in summer and dog teams in winter. That was the only way they could travel to different missions.

[Another man says something unclear about something across Ruby creek and right on the hill where Taxton used to live. More unclear talking.]

7:15 The whole [unclear] was built on pilings. [Unclear talking.] There was a building “on this side,” facing the river, and on the other side of the river was [unclear]. The front end of the building was on the bank and the ass-end was out on the pilings. In wintertime, Ruby was a dirty town because people dumped all their garbage out onto the back ends of the buildings. People would come in to Ruby and see the ass-end of town sticking out. They had a big fire in Ruby that burnt down the whole riverside, so that was all cleaned out.

[Unclear talking.]

There were two fires. [Unclear talking.] There was one of the most crooked traders that lived on the Yukon River. He stole from the Indians, he bootlegged, and did everything there was to do to make money. [Unclear talking about cut down alcohol.]

10:39 Tom tells that Roy had Ed [unclear] up there at Corner Hot Springs [?] where they had a still running. [Unclear talking.] Tom tells that [unclear] was the second town marshal in Ruby. C. K. Snow was the first one. He asks if the other man remembers Snow. Snow and Fred Clarke had a [unclear] together at that time. [Unclear talking.] They put the first man they arrested in Ruby into a tent on the beach and had him there before they had a jail built. That was when the camp was

first struck. The other man says that Snow didn't try to make a record for himself but [unclear]. [Unclear talking.]

13:01 There was no drunk driving those days because they didn't have automobiles. Tom says that there was only one cop in Fairbanks. That was an old-man [unclear]. Hubbard was quite a bit later. James and that guy who had the motorcycle and who bought his own police uniform are mentioned. Old-man Gibbs was the policeman "here" when Tom was a boy and going to high school. He can't remember "that guy's" name.

Harrie asks if they happened to know Captain A. J. Gadder [sp?]. Tom mentions [Elbridge Truman] Barnette, and the other says he never knew Barnette. [Unclear talking.]

15:11 Tom [?] asks if the other speaker remembers the fall of 1927 when his brother drowned, and the other person says that he does. Tom tells that he went down with a boat that fall, right at freeze-up time and he was 19 years old. Tom stayed with his folks that winter because it had been just the two boys in his family and now his brother had drowned.

Noel Wien was the only one who was flying from Fairbanks to Nome with his Hamilton all-metal plane. The fare was \$350 dollars from Nome to Fairbanks and \$150 from Ruby to Fairbanks. Tom wanted to come to Fairbanks to go to school in February. They flied "from here to Nome" with a full load of passengers who paid \$350 dollars, so he wouldn't have a seat for Tom with his \$150 dollars. Finally Tom told Noel that he wanted to get back to Fairbanks and that he doesn't want to wait much longer. Noel promised Tom a seat from the next flight, but when he came from Nome to refuel in Ruby, he had a full load again. Tom went home and told his parents that he would start walking towards Fairbanks the following morning.

He started out and walked to Nenana in 9 days. That was in February, 1928. The trail was good and Tom didn't use snow shoes.

17:19 The other man says that Tom's older brother kidnapped [unclear, cross talking]. [Unclear talking.] Noel Wien stopped on the river and offered Cliff a free ride if he helped with the reindeer [? unclear]. [Unclear talking.]

20:12 Noel Wien was the oldest flier of all the Wiens and he knew how to fly before the others learned. Noel Wien was the first one of them to come to Alaska and he was a flyer when he came. Ralph Wien was the second to come to Alaska and he also learned to fly “here.” He got killed up at Kotzebue. Then Sig Wien learned to fly in Alaska. The fourth brother never flew in Alaska, but he worked as a mechanic.

The other man says something unclear about how they had to pack snow with their snow shoes for a landing strip. Then “he” [unclear who?] went to Iditarod and never came back. [Unclear talking.]

Tom asks other men to guess how much the ticket from Nome to Fairbanks was at its highest price, and tells that it was \$600 dollars. [Unclear talking.] Joe Crosson was one of the new pilots as well. [Unclear talking.] Noel Wien, [Elmer A. A.] Bennett, and Crosson flew out of Fairbanks. [Unclear cross-talking.] Bennett was a heavy drinker and was drunk all the time. The other man says that he had been flying for the army before he came “here.” [Unclear talking.]

24:05 [Unclear] Mayo was an early pilot who flew out of Nome a lot. The other man asks what happened to Bennett’s plane when he left, and if he sold it to Wien. The man says he doesn’t know, but that they wrecked lots of planes too. They could land any place, and that one man landed right on the beach “over there,” right on the Yukon River sand bar. [Unclear talking.]

25:55 Tom tells that he remembers how they [airplanes?] started carrying mail to the Yukon. The old dog team mail carriers were more regular and more in time than the airplanes were. The dog teams ran regardless of the weather. Their load limit was 800 pounds on the river, but cross country it was 600 pounds. Scotty Clarkson is mentioned. The mail carriers made money by hauling other freight besides the mail and they might have had two sleds: one for the mail and the other one for freight.

They would come in with 19-21 dogs and sometimes Tom saw that they had 3 men snowshoeing ahead of them. They were breaking the trail for the teams. The other man says that they picked up Mike [Unclear] and snowshoed. Mike told that all he

had with him was cigarettes and coffee, so he lived on cigarettes and coffee. Tom asks if Mike is still at Cripple [Creek]. [Unclear.] Tom continues by saying that he would like to see Alaska as it was in the old days. Harrie wonders if raising the gold price to \$70 dollars [per ounce?] will do them any good, and Tom says that he believes it would, because people would be able to work low grade grounds.

28:11 Harrie says that they raised the price of gold to \$35 dollars an ounce 30 years ago, but the cost of mining has gone up 8 times. Harrie wonders if raising the price to \$70 dollars would make up for the difference. Tom says that some people are still making money, and it depends on the richness of the ground. If the price was \$70 dollars, they could work lower grade ground too. [The other man says something unclear about prohibitive costs.] If the price of gold would rise, they could get back to work. The price of gold should rise to \$240 dollars to cover the difference. Harrie says that now they have state tax and income tax and everything added to it. [Unclear talking.]

30:01 Tom remembers that in Fairbanks, too, one could buy milkshake for 25 cents and now it is 50 cents. Harrie notes that it's doubled. The other man says that the milkshakes are bigger now than they used to be. [Unclear talking.]

31:04 Harrie asks if Indians or anybody were trapping there, but Tom says they weren't. [Unclear.] They aren't trapping like they were 15 years ago. The Indians are living off of welfare checks and unemployment checks.

The other man says that Charlie and her [unclear names] went down to get married and Steve was the commissioner that time. Tom says that he got the welfare check. [The other man says something unclear.]

Harrie says that that's the reason he's not giving the tapes to anybody – he doesn't know how they would be used. There are names and places. [Unclear discussion.] Harrie says he wants the university to sign a statement that says that they are liable for any misuse of the tapes. Forbes Baker didn't quite understand the liability issues. Harrie says that they want to make the legalities so that the tapes can't be misused. [Unclear talking.]

35:25 Harrie says that when the tapes are transcribed, anything that would be liability or reflect on the relatives of any of the interviewees, the names have to be

eliminated and they can't be used. He continues that the tape was an interview with Joe Ferris who was visiting with Tom Long at his home in Fairbanks, Alaska.

[End of the recording.]