

H97-66-08

Charles Jones

Anchorage, Alaska

Charles Jones talks about coming to Alaska in 1900 from Ohio. He was always curious about places when he was young. He was working in Chicago when he read about the golden sands in Nome. He traveled by steerage from Seattle to Nome. He was traveling in June and there was still ice on the Bering Sea. There were walrus on the ice. Nome had 40,000 people in 1900. He showed a nugget to the interviewer. He packed coal on his back for his first job. He worked on the railroad, on the waterfront and worked in the mines. He said there was every kind of mining in Nome. There were many ways to wash the gold out of the sand. He describes mining on the creeks. He said all of the creeks in the Nome area had gold. There was five hundred million dollars worth of gold taken out of the Nome area. He describes one of his holes filling up with water while he was mining. He said the U.S.S.R. and M. Company worked in the Nome area. He helped to build and worked on the railroad in the Nome area. He was appointed U.S. marshal by Judge Lomen during the prohibition days. He describes a trial after he confiscated home-brewed beer. He also describes finding a still and the man resisting arrest. He thought it would be better to get rid of the man by fining him and sending him away from Nome. He turned out to be a good worker and had a successful life.

He was married and had three children. His son was a member of the Army.

He became a member of the first legislature in 1913. He said Ernie Collins and Henry Roden were still living at the time of the interview. They were the last living members of the first legislature.

He tried enlisting in the army, but he was too old. He went to work in the shipyards in Seattle. He later worked for the Seattle Hardware Company. He wasn't happy in Seattle and decided he wanted to get back to Nome, Alaska. He recited one of his poems about wanting to return to Alaska and another he wrote for a lady friend.

He talked about the first legislature. Only three of the original laws from 1913 have been knocked out. He said they all had copies of the enabling act on their desks. They also had copies of the inhibitions. They had certain limitations. If anything came into the judiciary committee that had any of the inhibitions it was thrown out. They had to change the days for the administration of the law because of travel time in Alaska. He doesn't believe they did a good job on the constitution. He is a Republican, but he won't back someone just because they claim they are a Republican.

The interviewer asked him when he started writing his poetry. Charles said he never planned on getting married. He always liked to dance and the Pioneers of Alaska had dances and card parties. One night he met a lady that he liked. After seeing her with another man he decided to write her a poem. He talked about Audry Loftus and Grace Butrovich. Audrey came to visit Charles in Nome. He told Audrey he was going to burn a lot of his old letters. Audrey wouldn't let him and took some back to Fairbanks. He does recite some of his poetry to the tourists. He has never published any of his poetry, but he talked about the possibility of publishing. When his daughters started entertaining young men he decided to write a poem about it and gave it to his daughters.