

H97-66-49

Alfred J. Ghezzi

March 28, 1963

Fairbanks, Alaska

Tanana Yukon Historical Society meeting

Alfred Peter John Ghezzi is introduced by Bob Sheldon. Alfred Sheldon is one of the past postmasters in Fairbanks. He was born to a family of thirteen children. He was born in New Zealand and has been a citizen of the United States for forty-nine years. He came to Alaska in 1906. He had first heard of Alaska in the 1890s. He had read about the gold strike in Dawson. After leaving school he volunteered for a regiment in South Africa. In 1904 he boarded the Ventura to travel to Vancouver, B.C. He went up to Monte Cristo in B.C. and worked for mining companies. He worked putting in air compressors. In 1905 he headed for Dawson City. He met up with three other men who had a boat outfit and they headed down the river to Dawson. He worked at El Dorado for the Palmer Brothers. In the fall he went Outside. He left Seattle again for Alaska in 1906. He came into Valdez and bought supplies. It took them twenty-one days to get to Fairbanks. They came to Fairbanks on March 8, 1906. Fairbanks was a busy place with gambling halls. He thought there were 5,000-6,000 people living in Fairbanks. His partner went to Ester. He went to Cleary City. He cut wood for a restaurant, The Bucksaw. He worked in the Three Below Cleary Mine. He worked from April to November of that year. He was fired from that job when he went into town to go to a show. He started up a business in Chatanika. He was in business for ten years. He was also the postmaster there. There was a strike the first two years he was in Chatanika. Abe Spring went to Russia to get workers to break the strike. He got his opening stock from Sully Spring. Sully Spring was then in Seattle. He took over the post office from 1909-1911. There were about three hundred people getting mail in Chatanika at that time.

He got married in 1913. They were married for forty-four years.

In 1913 he took over the operations of the bank at Chatanika. It was the First National Bank. He received all the gold dust that came out of Cleary.

He moved from Chatanika to Nenana in 1917. He was in Nenana for seventeen years. He was in general merchandise business in Nenana.

He moved to Fairbanks in 1934. He shipped the lumber from the building. He took over the post office in 1940. Bobby Sheldon talks about his time in the post office.

He had a model-T when he was in Nenana. He talked about Wickersham and his influence on Alaska.

He returned to New Zealand in 1959. It was a frontier country when he left. He came from dairy farming country. It has developed quite a bit since he left.

He and his wife had three children. His wife died in 1959. His parents were from Ireland and Italy and settled in New Zealand. His wife was from Ireland. His son, Alfred Jr., lives in Anchorage.

He talks about Fred Crew and recites one of his poems. He recites another poem by a pioneer.