

Call number: 02-00-109 SIDE A

Paul Kogonivich, Trip to Ester and Happy Mines

January 25th, 1962

Summary created by: Varpu M Lotvonen

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Series: Harrie Hughes Collection.

Notes: Original on 3-inch reel, master copy on CD.

The beginning of the recording is a copy of the beginning of 02-00-90.

At 9:00 non-copied recording resumes with Harrie Hughes saying the date is January 24th, 1962. Harrie Hughes and Bobby Sheldon made a tape recording for Bob Grath and Al Poletti [sp? Poletto] of the First National Bank. They talked about early Skagway, described the old clothing, history and stories to get information for a play that is going to be at the Ice Carnival and at Golden Days. They spent about 2 hours recording. [Break in the recording.]

Now it's January 25th, 1962 and Harrie is in the home of Ed Farrell [address is given]. Ed Farrell is an old-time pioneer and a member of Igloo no. 4. He was elected as the King Regent for the Ice Carnival and Golden Days.

Harrie asks Ed to give his full name. He says it's Edward R. Farrell. He was born in a small town in Minnesota. They left there when he was just a baby and went to North Dakota. His siblings are: John, Mary, Joann, Margaret, Jim, Frank, William. Ed was raised in Centralia, Washington. They came to Centralia in 1897 from North Dakota. Ed learned to be [unclear] trade and got married in 1946 in Fairbanks with Rebecca Evans. Harrie says that Frank [Young] is going to ask the questions from now on.

At 12:40 Frank asks Ed how he came to the Yukon or Alaska. Ed says he was hired out on a steamer and they came to Juneau to unload some freight. The crew stayed in Juneau for 36 or 40 hours and that was in 1898 and from there they went back to Seattle. In 1899 Ed's uncle had been in Dawson and he came out and when he went back, Ed got the fever and went up with him. They got off at Skagway and from there they went over the White Pass to Whitehorse. Frank asks if the railroad was in already, but Ed says it wasn't; they finished it that year.

Frank inquires if Ed went over the Chilkoot Pass but he says they went over the White Pass. Then they met a teamster who was hauling oranges and eggs and other things to Dawson. They walked most of the time but sometimes they got a ride from the teamster on down hills. That was 450 miles to Dawson.

Ed worked at the mines in Dawson until 1902 when he got a lease on lower Hunker Creek. He and his partner O'Connor sank a 45-foot deep shaft there and got a very good pay on the bottom. That evening they put in points around the bottom of the hole and went to bed. They were getting \$20 dollar pans out of the bottom of the hole. Next morning when they got to the shaft, water was running out of the [unclear]. They got pumps and pumped until they went broke and finally gave up.

Ed came to Fairbanks in 1903 and after he got there, he got a word that the dredgers had come in and dredged that ground [in Dawson], taking \$100,000 dollars a day from there. Him and his partner had tapped into what they thought was Klondike water and couldn't pump it out. That's the time he missed out on a big stake. They sluiced out the little dump that they took out of the hole and got \$1,900 dollars out of that. When he came to Fairbanks, the gold price was low before it rose again in 1934. Frank asks if Ed started prospecting when he got to Fairbanks. He says he did, and that after the first year, he was on Fairbanks Creek. From there he went over to Cleary Creek and worked some more and in 1905 he went to Totatlanika country to prospect. He was there for over a year. Frank asks if he was also in the Chandalar –country and he says he was he was there in fall 1903. Frank's next question is whether Ed knew Charles Mack [sp?]. Frank knows him. They weren't exactly in the same party but they were on a same stampede.

At 17:52 Frank asks about Ed's "marriage on the Yukon" story in which he officiated a wedding. Ed tells that they were camped on a lake there and a man whose name Ed has forgotten – Frank suggests Dalton – was going on a stampede with his woman. When they got there they got bad news. Parties came out of there saying that there was nothing to the stampede.

Dalton and the lady wanted to get married and so they asked the mail carrier there to marry them but he wouldn't because it wasn't in his line of stuff. Finally they asked Ed who had never married anybody and hadn't seen a wedding in his life. The couple promised to help Ed along with it and so they got together and said a few words, had a miners meeting and decided that that wedding was legal.

Frank says that the fellow Mac wrote the poem and Ed says they all helped with it.

Frank says there has been some changes made to it and asks Ed to read it. It's called Matrimony on the Yukon. [Discussion about who is going to read it.] Frank [?] is reading the poem. People who signed the poem include: Aggie [sp?] Dalton, Jack McGillis [sp?], and French Joe. Frank says that those days people didn't wait for priests or clergy. The poem has been requested to be reprinted because many of the old-timers never saw it. They talk about how some parts of the poem were added. According to Ed, they all participated in putting the poem together and had quite a time there.

22:18 Frank asks Ed if they returned back to Circle after the marriage. Frank says they had a small rowboat with which they went down river and caught a steamer going up to Fairbanks. That was that same fall and it hadn't frozen yet, although freeze-up was close.

At 22:50 Frank says Ed did lots of prospecting and mining around Fairbanks after that. Ed says he mined on Dome Creek, Pedro Creek and on several smaller creeks around the area. He was down in Ruby and mined one creek there for 5 years straight. Altogether he was in Ruby for 12 years. It was called Miketchem Creek [sp?] and it was 18 miles below Long Creek, towards Poorman. Frank asks if Ed did any prospecting in other parts, like at Tanana or up the Salchaket, or other places. Ed says he drilled on Salchaket and prospected in Seward –country and in Valdez. He made a trip over to Valdez in fall of 1911 or 1912 with Angus McDougal. Frank says he has to turn the tape over. [Break in the recording.]

At 24:39 the recording with Paul Kogonovich starts. Someone says it's [unclear] in 1962 in Fairbanks, Alaska. Harrie Hughes and Paul Kogonovich are going to reminisce about prospecting and mining in Ester valley. Harrie says Kogonovich told him about Strawberry Joe. [Paul's answer is unintelligible.] Harrie says he used to make wine out of strawberries, and says that he was making potato liquor when Harrie was "down here". They are at Happy Siding now. Paul talks about Cripple Creek no. 5 dredge. Harrie says they will move onto the next place.

Now they are at 11-mile, at the junction of New Nenana Road and Moody. Harrie says that Paul says the water is muddy as if people were mining there. Paul says something about [Ready] Bullion Creek and they think there are boys working. Cripple Creek Resort is there. The tourist attractions didn't exist in the early days.

[Unclear talking. Harrie says something about a water pump.] He and Paul are standing where the water pump is and there are 2 good sized cats. [Break in the recording.]

Harrie asks Paul what he is doing now. [Unclear answer, they are discussing the equipment.] [Break in the recording.] Harrie says the background noise was from a water pump. [Break in the recording.]

Now they are back in the car and have taken 3-4 exposures of the hydraulic operation at Hassel's property. They took a couple of pictures of the old Cinnabar who was owned by Gus Koppet [sp?] [unclear]. Harrie and Paul are going to move on and visit some other places. [Break in the recording.]

Harrie says they stopped at a mine and are visiting with Linda. They are going to visit with Mr. Hassel too. Harrie asks Mr. Hassel what he is going to do this summer and they talk about his mining operation and mosquitoes. Harrie says Mr. Hassel has a cat there and a hydraulic pump. [Paul says something unclear. Discussing their trip plans. Unclear discussion.] Harrie talks about the Pioneer Park and what they are going to do there, perhaps they will set up a mining camp. [Discussion about somebody.] Harrie says they are ready to move into another location. [Break in the recording.]

35:50 Harrie says they are down in [unclear], Malamute Saloon [in Ester]. [Paul says something unclear, about whiskey and a pan of gold.] [Bar discussions.] Paul has a dog called Brandy because he likes brandy and so all his dogs are named Brandy. Talking about an instrument that is a combination of a violin and a music box [nyckelharpa or hurdy gurdy?] that was made in a prison. It's going to be interesting for tourists. [Music is playing, obstructing the speech so it is incomprehensible, talking about instruments.]

At 41:40 someone talks about being born in Cleary Summit Roadhouse. Talking about some bottles [bootlegging?] and an old whiskey still. Harrie says that this part of the recording is taken in the old Malamute Saloon that is owned by Don Pearson [sp?]. Harrie will play the recording back to Don. [Break in the recording.]

42:48 Now they are up the Henderson Road from the Old Ester Road and now they are at Paul Kogonovich's mining claims. It's 16 to 18 miles out of town. Paul says it's about 14 miles. Harrie says that Paul doesn't have a house there anymore but it's moved away. They will move on.

Now they are at Montgomery claim which is 660-feet down 1320 feet across, near the Ester Creek. They took one picture. They stopped Grahnd's [sp?] claims and Paul talks about how he worked until 5 years before the war. He used to have 7 or 8 men working at the claim. Finally he gave up. Now his niece lives in Vancouver, B.C. Nobody works on the mine anymore. [Break in the recording.]

Paul and Harrie are now visiting another old-timer, Karl [unclear]. There are cabins that are in good shape, they have metal roofs and rain barrels to catch water. Harrie talks about how they lived a different life than people in a city live. [Break in the recording.]

At 46:08 Harrie reports being in the woods where Paul took him to one of his friends' place and showed Harrie a little cabin that was built to be an emergency cabin. One can hardly find the trail anymore. Up the road towards Sheep Creek there is an old Eskimo-type sod house. Paul tells that Mr. Ghezzi, [unclear, Alfred?] Ghezzi's brother, used to live there and prospect for a number of years. That was maybe around 1910. Harrie says they are moving onto another place. It's 2pm in the afternoon.

Harrie and Paul are at Irving McK Reed's house. They've been all over his mining claims and have taken pictures. [Harrie asks something unclear.] Irving says that he was a little bit invested in Happy Creek [unclear]. [Unclear.] George Moore had claims on the upper river [?]. [Unclear talking about Cinnabar mine. A lady's voice joins the discussion.] Harrie talks about heavily mineralized country with Paul and mentions a person who worked near the head of the Cleary Creek [unclear discussion between Harrie and Paul.]

[End of the recording.]