

Call number: 02-00-110

Various recordings and personal memorandums.

May 8th-May 19th, 1962

Summary created by: Varpu M Lotvonen

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Series: Harrie Hughes Collection

Notes: Original on 3-inch tape, master copy on CD

Divina [unclear] says it's May 8th, 1962 and she is in Harrie Hughes' house [address is given]. Harrie asks Divina her full name but Divina says she is going to read something. [Break in the recording.] She says: "Nordale visiting. Arnold Nordale who has the Nordale Corporation is in Fairbanks for a business visit." Divina is reading from a paper about Nordale who resided in Seattle. [Break in the recording.]

Harrie says it's May 9th, 1962 and Bill Julian is visiting Harrie in his house. Harrie asks Bill to spell his full name. Bill says it's William Julian. He was born in Italy, in Castellamadre which is on the Adriatic Sea. He was 13 months when his parents left Italy to come to America, to Steubenville, Ohio. He was 16 or 17 when he came to Alaska and he was born in 1883, February 9th. When he came to Alaska, he went to Nome. The town was booming there but died down later on. He came to Fairbanks in 1909 and went prospecting in Goose Stream River, in Moose Creek. Harrie met Bill first in Kantishna and Bill tells that when he first came there, he went to the Bonafield [?]-country. There he heard about a person who had a lease with [unclear]. He heard about a fellow, Matt Fisher [who had a claim?] at the Clam Gulch. When Bill came out he asked if Matt Fisher wanted to lease him the ground but the fellow was planning on mining there himself.

Bill went to Fairbanks and on his way down he met George [unclear]. Then Matt Fisher came along with a couple of young dogs and asked where Bill was headed. Bill told him that he was heading to Bonafield. He was going to have a horse too but had not picked it up yet. The postmaster in Fairbanks, Dill, told he could use the horse. [Unclear talking.] There were 2 dogs and a sled. When Bill got the dogs to the Wood River he met a fellow by the name of Frank Weasley [sp?], a Russian. Bill got Frank Weasley to go with him because he couldn't do the work himself. Bill paid him \$5 dollars a day to go to work and back. Then they went to get some

sheep. Harrie says that was the best meat. In spring he preferred to go [unclear]. [Unclear talking.]

8:20 Then he had 9 dogs and then he hired a man from Fairbanks. He was Italian, John Decontare [sp?] but he drowned in the Kuskokwim later on. [Unclear.] Harrie asks Bill about his dog team. He had 9 dogs. [Unclear, Toklat River mentioned.] One of his dogs got hurt in the hip and he had to lighten the load. He often hauled 1200 pounds in the sled. Harrie asks if it was easier to go on ice than on snow, to which Bill says that dogs got sprained more often on ice. When he went to the Little Moose Creek, the weather got warmer and when he got to Toklat, there was a foot of water everywhere. Bill had to walk ahead of the dogs [unclear]. [Unclear talking about ice.] He made two trips and went to a roadhouse.

Harrie asks who were at the Knights' roadhouse at that time and if Bill knew the Knights. He says he did and Jim Burroughs too. Bill says that Jim Burg [Burroughs?] got with Knights later on. They both died in there. [Unclear talking.] Somebody [Jim Burroughs?] was a game warden. They had lots of wild game all over Alaska. Now salmon are going downhill and "they" are trying to restore salmon. Bill says he doesn't believe in that [unclear]. He wouldn't kill a buffalo anyway.

At 12:34 Harrie says they used to kill meat when they needed it but now it's killed for sport. Bill says there used to be lots of trappers and prospectors who made trails and Harrie chimes in by saying that now one has to make one's own trail. Discussing how "they" don't live out in the country like the old-timers did because of the highways. [Unclear talking about building corduroy roads among other things.]

Harrie asks what Bill can tell him about old Bill Taylor who was Harrie's friend. [Bill says something unclear.] He had left one pole in the tent [unclear talking.] Harrie says Bill was a nice fellow but without responsibility [perhaps meaning that he was irresponsible]. [Unclear.] Later, Harrie says Bill had too many claims and Harrie heard he had miles of claims. [Bill says something unclear.] When Dunkel leased the ground from Bill Taylor, Harrie was a pilot for the cat-crew to take them in. He walked to lead them in, and make a trail for them so "they wouldn't make a hole". He walked the 90-miles. [Bill and Harrie are discussing some creeks, Bill's speech is unclear.]

At 21:01 Harrie says the state put in a new road to Stampede [Creek?] last fall but they have to put in 5 new bridges and culverts. Earl Pilgrim is mining there at the Anemone Mine [Antimony?]. [Bill says something unclear, seeing from the paper. Discussing Earl Pilgrim with Harrie.] Bill says he doesn't know how Earl [?] is

going to cross the river, and Harrie says that Earl is worried about it too. [Bill talks about something unclear about Earl Pilgrim's operation and a road crew.] Harrie says he was hauling ore out to the railroad and that he has hauled 465 tons of ore out to Alaska Railroad, then the price dropped and he left it there. They wired Harrie and him and Otto the Finn helped Harrie to load it, so the two of them loaded 18 carloads of ore. Then there was a cat in Bill's place. [Discussing where Harrie was then.] Bill mentions somebody with low ceilings and Harrie talks about how someone wanted low ceilings to save heat and told Harrie about it. There was an octagon, a round one that he made at the Middle River but it's all gone now. [24:32]

Harrie asks if Bill remembers Lee "Lease" Lisher [perhaps Leisher?sp?] who trapped "there" after Andrew. He had been in Pennsylvania on a farm. [Discussing Lee and his nephew who was down at Savage River. Bill says something unclear about the ground.]

At 25:51 Harrie asks if Bill remembers when Harrie was at the Late Night Creek and how everybody was making fun of him for prospecting there. Bill says yes, but the people [who made fun of Harrie] didn't know nothing themselves. Harrie found something on Late Night Creek but it wasn't enough to make good money. Bill mentions about Sanderson [Creek?] and Harrie says he was on Sanderson. Bill tells he and another fellow went over the Totatlanika [River] and stopped at some little shack. The next night they had to get out of there. Harrie says there was a man who had a still and who was bootlegging there. He had to haul the still there with a sled. [Unclear] had a still over on Late Night Creek too, about 7 miles up the creek. The still is still over there. The pan has rusted away. Johnny Bischei [sp?] used to make home brew and Dalton was there. Tracy, Joe, and Fanny [possibly Joe and Fanny Quigley], as well as other people whose names Harrie doesn't remember were there too. [Bill says something unclear.] [Unclear] Johnny was his father. There was Big Nelson. Harrie says he remembers Big Nelson. Bill mentions John and says he didn't die but came out and continues mentioning Eureka Creek, Willow Creek where they built a cabin, and Middle Creek. Bill tells that he had one dog and a little bit of a sled [unclear]. Harrie says he should have started early in the morning when the snow was solid. Bill says he had no gun and no dog team and no nothing. Bill said to John that he never should have "started over here without a gun." [Unclear.] He had 2500 fish for the dog which Bill thought was nothing for two weeks in a bush.

Harrie says it's the end of the tape and that he'll let Bill hear his voice a little. [Break in the recording.]

29:45 the recording resumes with Harrie saying it's April the 11th, 1962 and that he's giving a personal memorandum for Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo no. 4 about the Visiting Committee that is composed of Frank Young, Andrew Wicken and Harrie Hughes. They visited: Albert William Trana who was born in Sweden. December the 16th, 1882. He came to Wyoming from Sweden in 1905 and came to Alaska in 19 [Break in the recording.]. He worked in the Copper River area and on Copper River Railroad. He also worked for the Alaska Railroad and in 1917 he was in an accident in which he lost one arm and was considerably crippled on the other arm.

When he left the railroad in 1917, the railroad took up a collection to send him "up" with mail, to have his arm taken care of. They wanted to buy him an artificial limb. Harrie was in some of the committees to help some of the disabled and welfare-cases on Alaska Railroad and continues telling that he was employed at the BNB-crews at the time, known as the Bridge and Building gang.

Albert got back to Mayo-brothers and went to Kunnik where they took care of him for some time. Then he took off to Minneapolis and contacted some of his friends there. He had one relative. Albert saw an old-time doctor who decided to operate his arm because he had tuberculosis of the bone and they had to remove the arm. The doctor had him in a Swedish hospital and Albert said it was fine and elaborate, describing different parts of the operating rooms and nurses. At the operating room, there was an amphitheater behind a sound-proof glass where people could watch the operation. There were also 4 operating tables. Albert said he passed out after one inhalation from the gas and after two hours he woke up at his cot [?]. His arm was bandaged awfully tight and he was in pain. 8 days later they removed the bandage and his circulation started again. His arm healed up excellently and after 10 days he headed home to Seattle, Washington and from there, back to Alaska. He has owned four pieces of property in Fairbanks and has been on the tax-roll of Fairbanks since 1925. He's on the Territorial welfare, receiving \$100 dollars a month and has a little cabin [in Fairbanks].

34:40 Frank and Andrew went to visit a neighbor of his, and while there, Albert talked about the Alaska Railroad and Fairbanks history. He knew Harrie when Harrie was running a boat up and down the river.

They talked about Eat'em'up Frank about 25 or 30 miles below Fairbanks on the Tanana River. He used to run a roadhouse and people used to stop in there. Frank was a great hotcake -maker. His hotcakes were filling. He used to say people need to eat them up or he feeds them to his dogs, and that's where he got the name Eat'em'up Frank. Harrie used to stop by his place when he was running a riverboat. Then Eat'em'up Frank came to Fairbanks to take care of the dump and

Albert and him used to be pretty good friends. Albert with his one arm missing and the other crippled has been quite handicapped, but very independent. He's a good citizen.

Harrie states it's the end of the personal memorandum. [Break in the recording.]

At 36:14 Harrie says it's May 12th, 1962 and this is his personal memorandum of a funeral service of an old-time Alaska pioneer. Pete Bajonich [sp?] was 80-year-old prospector who died May the 7th and whose memorial service was given at the Fairbanks Memorial Chapel. Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo no. 4 conducted the ceremonies and [unclear] was at Birch Hill Cemetery. [Unclear], [Unclear] Linguine [sp?], Bob Bigovich [sp?], Jans Weltzin, Edby Davis and Billy Wick [sp?]. Bajonich lived by himself in Graehl and he was found by his cousin George Bajonich, collapsed on the floor. He was taken to the hospital where he later died. Another cousin Steve Bajonich runs the Model Café in Fairbanks. The other survivors are a brother in Paris, a sister and a nephew in in Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia?sic?]. Bajonich came to Alaska in 1898 and lived in the Fairbanks area since 1909. He was born in Yugoslavia.

There was quite a turnout with a serious ceremony that was well-conducted. They took some photographs. Mrs. Jean Schreiber took pictures at the memorial chapel and Harrie took some pictures at the grave for the family. The Pioneers did a little visit at George and Mary Bajonich's house. [Break in the recording.]

At 38:46 Harrie says it's Sunday morning, May 13th, 1962 and Jimmy McDonald and Harrie Hughes visited Nylon over in Grail [?]. Harrie took Jimmy around and showed him where a number of other old-timers lived that he had probably lost his track of. That was in morning and in noon they went to the International Airport and had lunch. Then they got back to town and went out to Richardson Highway, and out about 24-25 miles.

Before Eielson, they saw moose on the road and quite a few birds and ducks. Then they went to 35-mile, saw a flock of geese and ducks of all kinds. Then they took pictures and went to Big Salcha and Aurora Lodge. The ice is jammed between the bridge and the Tanana River but above the bridge it's barely open water. Lake Harding and the roads were in fair condition but there was water so they turned back to Fairbanks. On their way to town, around North Pole, there was a pickup-truck turned over and Harrie and Jimmy stayed to help until the troopers came. The car was probably stolen and the boy who was driving it just got a scratched up leg. [Break in the recording.]

One more item for the Sunday: When Harrie got home, Paul Kogonovich came to spend a couple of hours with Harrie. They looked at some slides Harrie had taken. [Break in the recording.]

At 42:10 Harrie says it's Monday, May 14th, 1962 and nothing exciting happened. Harrie had a regular City Council –meeting in the evening. They seemed to postpone all the important things for further study. [Break in the recording.]

Now it's May 15th, 1962 and Harrie says that Igloo no. 4 Welfare Committee met with City Attorney Barry Jackson in regards to welfare of the aged cases in Fairbanks. They discussed possible tax-exemptions and possible relief from interference of aged people as most of their lives are very short. It seemed to Harrie that Barry Jackson himself was in favor of correcting the situation. Adolph Stock, Collin McDonald, George Gilbertson, Harrie Hughes and Barry Jackson. [Break in the recording.]

It's Wednesday, May 16th and Harrie reports having worked around the yard, organizing his sheds. He also called Frank Young around noon and they visited Irving Reed who's the president of the Tanana-Yukon Historical Society for 1962 and 1963. They discussed personal memorandums and things that happened in the past. He's writing a book or a story about some early day characters. They took 2-3 pictures of Irving, his wife, and a little squirrel in the yard. It was a medium-cloudy day –more about weather and road conditions.

It's May the 17th. Mr. and Mrs. Reed have been visiting with Harrie and they discussed Pioneer Park –project and other little interesting details. Irving says that it's been an interesting evening and that they hope to do something about the Pioneer Park when they go to the City Council –meeting next Monday. Irving also wants to go talk with the board of regents, representing the Tanana-Yukon Historical Society. [Break in the recording.]

May the 18th, 1962. Harrie says he had copies made of the Department from Natural Resources, Division of Lands letter of November 22nd, 1961, regarding the Pioneer Park. The Co-Op Photo Shop made the photo fax copies with no charge to Igloo no. 4 and one copy is to be used by Irving McK Reed in his conversations with the Board of Regents at the University. Second copy is for the delegates of Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo no. 4 in his discussions over the proposed park. More talk about copies. [Break in the recording.]

At 48:12 Harrie says it's May the 18th, 1962 and his friend Paul Kogonovich has been visiting with him and they have been talking about old times. Paul told about lots of things that happened before Harrie came to Fairbanks. Harrie asks Paul to

talk about what he saw when he came 'here' [to Fairbanks area]. Paul says it was lots of trees and brush. They didn't have roads like they have now. Harrie asks if Paul remembers the old NC-Warehouse and the blacksmith store and he says he does. The blacksmith used to shoe horses. [Break in the recording.] Paul says that George King was there and that he had quite a few horses.

Harrie asks how he first met George King. Paul says he can't exactly remember. Harrie says he was a WW-I pilot to which Paul says he knew him and knows his daughter too. Harrie says George flew the largest airplane those days that was ever built, with 12 motors in it, a Faulker. He brought it from Germany to Fairbanks. Paul doesn't remember because lots of time has passed. [Break in the recording.]

Harrie says that George King was in town the other day and they joked about flying. He was a real Alaskan bush pilot. He was going home to Boundary; or rather they flew to Eagle and drove to Boundary. He made fun of Harrie for not stopping at his place to make a recording about airplanes. Paul says Gaelan [Galen? sp?] died in a wreck and Harrie asks if he knew Johnny Hard [sp?] to which Paul says he does. [Paul talks about something unclear, that he used to know those pilots.] Harrie asks if he remembers Chrissesson [Christianson? sp?] who used to fly over Harrie's cabin, making a dive when he flew over and Harrie could always say it was him. Paul says Polack [Pollack? Pollock?] used to work for the BA and finally he got his own plane. He was prospecting. Harrie interjects that he rode with Polack and other fellows, a pilot by the name of English. Harrie was looking at the river, so they flew all over the Tanana River and the Yukon, looking at sloughs. Paul knows the planes that were "over here" and [Break in the recording.] Harrie is talking about army planes that flew over [discussing some books]. Paul says that the first time he saw a plane was in Chicago in 1909 [Unclear story about the first electric car].

Harrie asks if Paul remembers the first Stanley Steamers and he says he does. The boat companies in Alaska tried to get those engines to put in a boat. Then there was a Perocero [sp?] steamer. There were two companies: White and Stanley who experimented with steam and made those [unclear what] for 7 years. Perocero was gasoline. [Break in the recording.] Harrie says he's going to let Paul listen to the tape now. [Break in the recording.]

At 55:38 Harrie says it's May 19th, 1962 and it's Armed Forces Day at the military bases in Alaska. Harrie is going to give a personal memorandum about a visit by Andrew Wicken and Harrie Hughes to Pioneer Colin McDonald's place. Colin McDonald took them around and showed them 30-40 old automobiles and wagons and an old Caterpillar that he has in his yard. He has 30 or 40 old-time

phonographs and several hundred records that are real antiques. One of them was from 1896-1897. Then he has older cylinder records. Harrie took some photos of the historical items and spent an afternoon with Wicken. Colin is a musician and has been playing in bands over the years. Currently he plays with a 3-piece orchestra at one of the nightclubs to supplement his income. He has an electronic organ in his house – old-time pieces he is familiar with. They used to have good time in various nightclubs, dance halls and roadhouses in Interior Alaska.

People today don't realize what they are missing: now the new people are trying to change the way of life into something that really isn't good in Harrie's opinion. They are losing sight of the important things where people are happy and it's an honor to own a home. So few people own their homes in Fairbanks area [more about home owning]. Harrie wonders if they [Alaskans] have been invaded by a foreign doctrine.

[End of the recording.]