

Call number: 02-00-120 SIDE B

Short Notes and Bill Sherwin

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Series: Harrie Hughes Collection

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

Harrie Hughes and Bill Sherwin continue the interview. Harrie asks Bill about the early day bicycle races in Dawson City, and asks if he won any races. Bill tells that he won the championship of Yukon Territory and that he has a watch he got for it. It's dated 1902. The race started at the corner of McDonald and Nelson's store, right across the street from the NC- [Northern Commercial Company's] grocery store. There were 8 people in the race and they biked 14 and 2/10 miles on bicycles. That was the only measurement they had besides the claims that were measured. That was from Dawson to Grand Forks. Harrie says they are looking at a gold watch Bill won in Dawson, July the 1st, 1902 and it says "cycle championship from Dawson to Bonanza, won by W.R. Sherwin. Time 50 minutes and 1 second. Frank asks if the race came back from Bonanza to Dawson, but Bill says it was just one way.

Frank asks how many people there were in Dawson at that time. Bill thinks that lots of people had gone to Nome at one point and wonders if they already had come back by that time. They only stayed in Nome for a year or two years. When they [the stampeders] left Dawson, they said they were going to God's country. Lots of them were Americans who didn't like it in Dawson. As soon as they got a taste of Nome with fights and shootings on the beach, claim jumping and such, they all came back with a steamboat and when they got off, they said they had thought it was God's country and thanked God they were back in God's country. It was a remark that was published in papers more than once. The papers published stuff to show that the Americans don't know law and order.

3:55 Frank asks Bill where he was born. He says he was born in Ontario, about 27 or 28 miles north-west of Ontario. That was August 13th, 1878. He passed his 20th birthday in 1898, in Dawson. Frank wants to know how he came to British

Columbia. Bill tells that he left [unclear] 23rd of April in 1898 and went to Toronto where the seven of them met. [Break in the recording.] "On the train?" asks Frank. Bill says St. Thomas was only 11 miles away from a big roundhouse. There were 7 of them and took another fellow on when they got to Victoria. Bill's uncle by marriage, George Washington Stewart, came with them. Then there was a French-Canadian Homer Mercier, and another Frenchman from France whose name Bill has forgotten. One of the others was Fred C. Robinson who was "here" for years and used to run a wood saw. He died quite a few ago and Bill was "cut under" when he died because he used to have Fred over at his place for last three Christmases before he dies. They shared things and everything that was one's was the other's as well. Bill could borrow money from Fred and so on. Then there was Southwin [sp?] who was from Ontario, from near Candy Bay that is close to Point Hope. Bill says he can remember all the counties, lakes and rivers in Ontario.

9:07 Harrie [?] asks if he took a boat from Vancouver to Dyea, but he says they took a boat from Vancouver to Victoria. When they got there [unclear], Bill went back to Ontario but the boys came after him and wanted him to ride with them in 24th of May. Talking about CWA, an [unclear] association. All of them disqualified for a year.

The captain [of the ship?] came to a hotel where they were and said that they are getting out of "here" [Victoria?] 12am at night to go to Seattle where they were going to get their outfit. Bill talks about some western fellows and says he used to ride [bikes?] like hell when he was in Ontario. Last year Bill rode there, he had begun to get his man's strength. He rode 2-mile Club Championship and won it three times, after which he swore off riding. Nevertheless, he went up at 24th of May and took a few of his friends there. They sat eating dinner and [unclear] was there. Lloyd and Lawrence Hoffman, two young fellows who were Bill's age and both dead now, were sent down there by Johnny H. Clover who gave the little star medal that Bill has. They asked if Bill wanted to ride in the races but he told no because he didn't belong to CWA anymore and had sold his wheel. His uncle persuaded him to ride. Johnny Clover borrowed him a wheel – he had many in his store and Bill chose a little wheel. [Talking more about this sports endeavor.] He won that race and many more that summer. He was taken from one place to another the whole summer.

At 14:20 Frank asks if he went from Victoria to Seattle to get his outfit to go to Klondike, and Bill says yes. They arrived at Skagway after Seattle in spring of 1898. It had taken them a week to get across the continent on a CPR [Canadian Pacific

Railway?]. Frank asks if they went over Chilkoot, but Bill says they walked over the White Pass, all the way to Bennett Lake. They had their gear freighted in on a horseback and at Lake Bennett they bought a barge. They were traveling on Ontario Gold-fields Mining and Development –company money [?], but everyone had to pay 600 dollars for the trip.

Frank asks if Bill started Frank in a bicycle race when he was a kid. Bill remembers it but thought that it happened in Fairbanks. Frank says it was his first race and he won it. Bill tells that he left Dawson in June 20th, 1908, having spent 10 years there. Harrie asks if he made any money in Dawson, to which he says it was nothing to speak of. He had a little wood-saw there: a 3 horsepower 2-cycle Cushman engine. The engine was given to Fred Robinson and Bill if they could run it. It was at Dawson Amateur Athletic Association rink one fall when they had a fall fair there. That was the first Fall Fair they had there. The engine was running well but when they filled up the tank or something, they couldn't start it anymore. They tried for 3 or 4 days without success. [Bill explains what was wrong with the engine and how they got it started again.] The tank exploded once and Bill got a little bit burnt. Afterwards they made another one just like that.

21:27 Fred Robinson was running it on [Unclear's] mill on the Klondike and it exploded all over Fred who has big scars from that. Fred had to stay a couple of weeks in a cabin. When he was in there, he took the engine apart and discovered what had been wrong with it. [Explaining what was wrong in the engine.] Meanwhile they had already ordered a new engine. Harrie says it is interesting how they created their own [unclear] for an engine. Bill says they used their ingenuity the best they could.

Then the engine was sitting on a side-hill once and didn't have anything to hold it in its place. It settled sideways and [unclear talking about the engine]. They hated to see the engine go because it was handy and light. Fred said he could raise that back in. George Palmer had a bicycle shop where Bill was working every once in a while and George had a tank with a foot pump there. [Talking about what he did with a foot pump and a tank. About brazing cast iron and fixing the engine [?]] More talking about fixing the engine.]

Harrie says he'll run to the car to get more tape. [Break in the recording.]

At 28:19 Harrie says it's November 10th, 1961 and that he is going to give a report of a meeting concerning the Pioneer Park and Museum –project. Mr. Boucher of

the City Council and of the Park and Recreation Committee invited Harrie to attend their dinner today and bring him up-to-date of the progress of the Pioneer Park project. Harrie explained some details of the work done that's been required to get the Park into operation. After a more thorough understanding between the [Fairbanks] City Council, Park Board and the Pioneers of Alaska, they can hopefully speed things along. Park Board offered to do whatever they could in a way of encouraging getting the project under way. It's necessary and in keeping with all the plans of the city's Park and Recreation Board. They informed Harrie that they'd write a letter supporting the park project to the State land officer Joe Lawler and to the City Council with a recommendation that the City gives the project their full support. Harrie hopes that their effort will turn into something that will benefit all of Alaska. [Break in the recording.]

At 30:50 Harrie says it is November 13th in 1961 and they are at the home of Charles and Mrs. McGrath. [The address is given.] Mrs. McGrath's name is Dorothy and she was born in Manitoba in 1905. She came to Fairbanks in 1938 and likes it fine. Charlie was born in Fairbanks. His father farmed in Fairbanks in the early days and Charlie grew up at the farm. [Break in the recording.] Harrie says Charlie decided not to tell a story tonight and Harrie is going to terminate the recording.

Mrs. McGrath gave him a picture of old [unclear] Smith who homesteaded a property at 34-mile on Richardson Highway. Charlie gave Harrie a picture of logging. It has the largest load of wood ever hauled in the country. It was 7 ½ cords and the smaller was 6 cords. [More talking about the picture with single-horse sleds called "old cutters".] [Break in the recording.]

Harrie says it's November 15th in Fairbanks, Alaska and Frank Young is visiting Harrie Hughes' house. The recording is a personal memorandum of incidents in Frank Young's life. Frank says Harrie and he have been talking about early day characters and Frank has talked about early day characters. In 1926, Frank wrote a play which was titled Within the Circle. There were 12 cast members and the play took 2 hours and 20 minutes. George King from the Boundary was in it, and Hutchison from "down here," as well as [unclear] from Wien Airlines and Mr. Pearl who was Paul Greimann's stepfather. Then there was [unclear] who farms 18-miles out of Fairbanks, Alaska Linck and William Greg [sp?] with whom Frank used to write stories with. Within the Circle was the first Alaskan play written and staged in Alaska. It was played in the old Moose Auditorium which was down at

2nd and Wickersham. It was later built into a cold storage plant and an apartment house.

Then Frank wrote many other short stories which he used to write for different publication [Frank mentions a few]. He also wrote a number of old Alaska songs, like When the Ice Worms Nest Again, which he wrote in 1915. There's been parodies made of it and many people claim they made it, but it was written by Frank while he was living with Maroy Lunn [sp?] who is now in Los Angeles. Then he wrote Down Along the Kobuk. [Frank mentions a few other songs.] He is also going to organize his memoirs soon.

At 38:48 Frank says that Harrie wants to know his age. He was born in Seattle, Washington in 1893 and his family came to Juneau in 1896. Joe Juneau, Harris and Chinaman Joe and all the early day pioneers around Juneau were their friends. In 1898 his father left Juneau with the family and they went to Dawson over the Chilkoot Pass. Then his father took the family back to Whitehorse where they stayed until 1903 or 1904, after which they came back to Dawson and to Fairbanks in 1905. Frank was going to school then. The first schoolhouse was where [unclear] where Jimmy Bank's dad had a blacksmith-shop. That's right when one turns from Noble [Street] to [unclear, sounds like Wenlavna]. It was where the first school was built and not many of them went to that school. It was in 1905 and there were only a dozen pupils. Later they moved to the old Ford block right across the street, on 2nd [Avenue] and Noble [Street]. It's used to be a parking lot and an office for the Union Oil Company. That used to be the Ford Block. There was the old main school on 8th and Cushman [street], which later burned down and was later built as a more modern building that is still there. It was first built up there in 1910.

41:44 Harrie asks what he remembers of the Territorial Guard during the WW I. Frank remembers it and still has a certificate from being a member in 1914 or 1915 or 1916. Harrie asks if that Territorial Guard was disbanded to be built again. Frank says it was disbanded and they started again for the WW II. Harrie asks if it was Territorial Guard and not the National Guard but Frank says he meant Territorial Guard. Harrie was in it too. Frank says the main school at the Cushman was the only school around for a number of years.

Judge Wickersham decided to promote the College [Agricultural College and the School of Mines, now the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.] They started breaking ground in 1914 or so. Harrie says there wasn't much progress made until 1918-

1920. Frank agrees. Harrie says that Bob Bloom was one of the pushers in getting the University started. Frank says that's all he can tell about schools. [Break in the recording.]

44:03 Harrie says they have to go through the last part again and that they started talking about some places Frank would like to visit. Frank says he'd like to visit the spot he found many years ago. Frank found a cave "up here," not too many miles out of Fairbanks now that they can travel with airplanes. "Them days" it took a long time to hike there. Frank found a cave and implements of a cave-man, such as flint arrows, a maul with one end used for chopping and the other to hammer with. He'd like to go back there. Then he'd like to go to Mastodon Graveyard that he found. He supposes it has been found by other people too. That's where the mastodons roamed in Alaska when it was tropical country. Frank thinks that the animals must have got into a battle because there were a number of them killed there. There are tusks and bones and parts of big backbones in the sand. It was quite a place to look at and Frank would like to take pictures there. Then he'd like to go to a spot where a meteor had struck the earth and made a big hole quite a number of years ago. Frank would like to take pictures and to get people interested in the places he found in his early day adventures.

At 48:57 Harrie asks if Frank met anybody who had made a discovery he hadn't even heard about. Frank says not too many. There were explorers but most of them were looking for gold or quartz. People weren't interested in the things that Frank was talking about but were lured by gold and getting it quick. Now people are taking interest and Frank is under the impression that with good pictures his findings might be of value to future generations. Harrie says talks about equipment they need for the expedition. [Talking more about their possible trip to take pictures and record their findings.]

Frank wants to talk about some early day pioneers at Kantishna –country and asks if Harrie remembers Joe [Joseph] Quigley and his wife Fanny. Harrie says he does. Frank says they patented claims. Harrie says they have 26 claims near the Red Top Mine in Kantishna. There were a number of other prospectors working there. Joe and Fanny lived off the country. Then they sold their interest to National [unclear] –Company and got \$10,000 dollars a year for 5 years. Joe and Fanny went through the money quite quickly. Fanny died in Fairbanks a few years ago. Frank says that Fanny Quigley was one of the women pioneer prospectors. He is under the impression that the Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo no. 4 fixed Fanny's grave. Harrie tells that Joe passed away about 1 ½ years ago and lived in Seattle after he left Alaska.

Harrie visited him in 1957. Joe had a fine collection of ore samples and other mineral samples. It was priceless and Joe was going to leave it for the museum but ended up selling it in Tacoma because he needed money. All he had left of his souvenirs was buffalo horns and several other little items. He had been in many places in Alaska and he was well versed in where to find gold in Alaska.

5:29 Once Harrie walked to Kantishna when Fanny was still living. There was a Cat crew that was brought in from the railroad, through the Savage River, the Middle River, Clearwater and then to Stampede. From Stampede they went to Glenn Creek, Little Glacier Creek and down to Moose Creek and down onto the Black [unclear] alongside the Wonder Lake. They took off 4 miles from Wonder Lake to Johnny Buche's [sp? Bugge?] place. Johnny was another old-timer and had a roadhouse where they stopped for the night before continuing on over to Caribou Creek where there was a man named Bill [William] Julian who had mining property there. There were some 60-planes there.

Frank asks if Bill Taylor was one of the pioneers who climbed Mount McKinley and Harrie says he was, and that he died in the [St. John's] hospital in Fairbanks. Harrie continues his story: Harrie was the "pilot". The crew picked him up after he had spent time trapping and living in the country. Harrie didn't have trouble crossing rivers and the crew took him along to go to Kantishna. There were several places in the trail where Harrie was searching for solid footing for the heavy equipment from the streams. They had a Cat [Caterpillar machine] with a [unclear] loaded with oil and a wannigan behind it. The other Cat had the dredge parts. Harrie scouted the trail for them so the Cats wouldn't get stuck. He walked the whole 90 miles without getting them into ditch even once. Frank says that that's quite a record and asks where he was going. Harrie says they were heading to Caribou Creek. That's about 18 miles from Red Top Mine. He has some pictures of it. Frank says he personally knows 3-4 Caribou Creeks. The State Geographical board will be renaming them to help people.

[End of the recording.]