

**Summary for H00-135-02**

**Maurice Goding, Charlie Jones, and Frank Thieson are interviewed by an unidentified female interviewer in Fairbanks, Alaska in 1955, and the 1954 Pedro Monument Dedication is rebroadcast in 1955**

SIDE 1

Maurice Goding is interviewed by an unidentified female in Fairbanks, Alaska on January 8, 1955. It's his 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday today. His daughters are Evelyn Franich who lives in Fairbanks, and Marge Smith in the office of delegate Bob Bartlett in Washington, DC.

Goding came to AK on February 22, 1902. He left in 1942 and stayed Outside until the fall of 1943, when he retired. He had 41 years in AK at that time.

When he came north, he began by prospecting, and then found himself working for the White Pass Yukon Railroad, where he stayed until he retired. It was built to take care of the Klondike gold rush and it's still going strong, says Goding. It uses diesel locomotives now. It's still narrow gauge. The railroad had been completed before Goding arrived. He thinks they had a hard time keeping construction workers, as they might leave whenever they got a stake somewhere.

Goding thinks he didn't take his prospecting too seriously; he had fun, though. He was a boy and this was an adventure to him.

With the railroad he worked in the locomotives department, starting in the round house and working up to senior engineer. When the Army took the railroad over during the days of building the Alcan Highway, he went back in a supervisory capacity.

The first 20 miles of the railroad climbs up 3,000 feet, which is quite a steep grade. Goding tells that one time a rockslide took a locomotive right out of the middle of the train. The engineer and fireman both lost their lives.

Goding comments that prospectors, given a little salt, could practically live off the country for food. The reason they drank tea on the trail was because it's lighter and less bulky than coffee.

Goding's recipe for Sourdough Starter was printed in the Turlock, CA Daily Journal. The interviewer asks him to recite it over the radio:

For the starter, mix 2 cups flour with 1 tsp. salt, ½ tsp. dry yeast, 2 cups lukewarm water, and 3 tbs. sugar. Stir into a smooth paste and put in a warm spot. Stir the mixture 2 or 3 times a day and in 2 or 3 days it will be ready to use.

The night before making hotcakes, add 2 cups flour, 1 tbs. sugar, ½ tsp. salt, and 2 cups water to make a thick paste. In the morning leave a cup of the starter in a bowl for the next time. To the rest you could add 2 tbs. sugar, 1 tsp. salt, 2 tbs. melted fat, an egg if you had one, and 1 tsp. soda dissolved in a little water. If the batter is too thick add a little more water. Cook on a hot greased griddle.

Goding has seen restaurants advertising that their starter has been going since gold rush days. Last time he was in Ketchikan there were such ads, and he had some delicious hotcakes there. Bob Bartlett carried a cup of starter back to Washington, DC with him, says Goding.

Skagway was just a railroad town in the beginning. When tourists began to be attracted to AK, the railroad didn't want to bother with them, because they were so busy hauling freight to the mines. Later, they began to cater to tourists. They put up a marker on Soapy Smith's grave, which was taken away piecemeal by tourists; they erected another one enclosed by an iron gate. Martin Ichen built himself the only streetcar in AK, in Skagway. He had a dummy of Soapy Smith on the front of the car, and showed tourists how prospectors had searched for gold. Ichen was also an undertaker.

Goding thinks of his railroading days more than his prospecting time, which was brief and incidental. He quotes Robert Service: "You come to get rich." Goding recites a few lines of a Service poem (Dan McGrew) at the request of the interviewer. Dan and Lou Lehman do a nice recitation of that poem, says the interviewer.

All those who came to AK in gold rush days are saluted with the rebroadcast of the Pedro Monument Dedication of July 4, 1954, on January 8, 1955 in Fairbanks, AK. Gus Conrad, who came up in 1902 with the stampede, gives the dedication speech.

Says Conrad: Jackson's Weekly said, "He started it all," about Felix Pedro. Fifty-two years ago he made the first discovery of gold in the Tanana Valley. E. T. Barnette built a trading post on the Chena River in 1901. In 1902 the U.S. Signal Corps completed the AK Communication Service linking Valdez to Eagle City of the Yukon, and Fort Gibbon, Saint Michael, and Nome.

Lieutenant William Mitchell at Eagle and Lieutenant George Gibbs at Fort Gibbon had charge of this division. Lt. Gibbs arrived in Chena in December 1902 and visited Pedro's claim with Barnette. Gibbs sent a telegram to the commander at St. Michael. A stampede began from Rampart miners and others along the Yukon. There was a signal station at Grangaard, where Conrad was mining in the lower Tanana Valley. He went to Rampart, got outfitted with a dog team, and found a traveling companion, Bill Simon, a former U. S. mail carrier. They were the first stampedeers to reach Frank Mace and Marston's Roadhouse, located where the Past Time is now, on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. and Cushman St., on Christmas night, 1902.

Fairbanks received its name in 1903.

After resting a couple days, Conrad drove his team out to Discovery claim on Pedro Creek and there meet Pedro and Ed Quinn and had lunch with them. Pedro gave Conrad information about deposits on Goldstream Creek. He found Pedro kindly and courteous. Conrad later became a mine operator on Ester Creek.

Fairbanks has become a connecting city for AK, with the AK Railroad; the roads coming through here; the University of AK, Fairbanks; the U. S. Air Force at Ladd Field; and aviation transportation throughout the territory. "All this has been brought about" by the efforts and dedication of Pedro, says Conrad. Pedro informed friends at Circle to come find ground.

Jack and Frank Coster, Thomas Gilmore, and Dan McCarty, Jr. located ground on Pedro Creek. On Fairbanks Creek: Danny Shea, Dan McCarty, Sr., Matt Mihan, Mr. Larson, George Poe, James Funcheon, and Mike Stepovich. On Cleary Creek: Cheshire Noble, Al Hillie, Fred Blecker, Jack Ross, Herb Wilson, Frank Larson, and Sam Wye. On Goldstream Creek: Harry Edward, Ed Erickson, Dave Cascaden, James Russell, and James McPipe. On Ester Creek: Jack Maholsey, George Herskine, and George McRory

located ground in spring 1903. Conrad knew all these men and feels that we owe a debt of gratitude to these honest pioneers.

Following Conrad's speech, the master of ceremonies for the day, Robert J. McKenna, President of the Pioneers of AK, calls forth the historian for the pioneers, Frank Chapados, to place a wreath upon the monument.

Chapados recites a portion of part of the ritual of the Pioneers, which defines the word pioneer: Soldiers sent ahead of the main armies to prepare the way. The AK pioneers continued the westward push of former pioneers, and have paved the way for the "peaceful armies of civilization."

McKenna steps up to point out 2 members of the ceremony, the Governor of AK, who Sec. McKay said could make it, and Delegate Bob Bartlett, who's on a tour with Adlai Stevenson. As jets roar overhead, McKenna says there is still a lot of pioneering work to do. He visited the opening of a pulp mill in Ketchikan, a \$52 million venture, and recognizes it as a pioneering project. Other projects include the risking of great sums of money in the exploration for oil. One of AK's greatest resources is the pioneer spirit, founded on hard work, courage, enthusiasm, and willingness to take chances.

## SIDE 2

Charlie Jones, from the first AK Legislature, passing through on his way to Juneau, is interviewed by an unidentified female interviewer in Fairbanks, AK on July 4, 1954/January 6, 1955. His picture once appeared in Pic Magazine; the caption said, "Doesn't this man look like Harry Truman?" Jones is quoted as saying, "That's where the similarity ends." For 54 years Jones has been in AK, and joined the Republican party the first year.

Regarding the organizing of the first AK Legislature: Nels Svensus, from Wrangell, who'd served in the WA Legislature; Milo Kelly, from Knik, who'd served in the OR Legislature; Jude Elwood Broder, from Nome, who'd served in the CA Legislature, all contributed. They had a copy of one of the proceedings of the OR Legislature and on that they based their legislature. Ernest Collins was elected Speaker of the House, H. T. Ray from Seward was elected president of the Senate. Of all the members of that first legislature, Henry Roden, Ernest Collins, Dan Sutherland, and Jones are all that's left. Roden and Jones are still in politics.

The legislature met in 1913. They did not know how much of a tax duplicate they could raise. They didn't want to create a debt. In the Wickersham bill that had created the legislature it said they could place some duties on Federal officials in the various divisions of the territory, so some offices they didn't create. One they did create was that of treasurer. They were successful in collecting more revenue than they expended so they had a balance when the 1915 legislature came in.

Creating voting precincts had been tricky. Some places people were missed, and in others there were hardly enough people to get the officers to run the election.

After that first legislature, Jones was out of politics for a while. He was appointed U. S. Marshall for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division in Nome, and also acted as superintendent of the AK Road Commission. In the winter, he'd prospect. He also raised 3 children. He served nearly 9 years as a U. S. Marshall of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. (Jones was appointed by Judge Loman upon the death of Mr. Griffith during Coolidge's administration. Hoover

reappointed him.) Jones was U. S. Marshall during Prohibition, a strenuous job for law enforcement. A lot of the men he arrested he'd been drunk with himself.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division was created at the time of the gold strike at Nome, where Rex Beach wrote his story *The Spoilers*. There were 2 divisions created, and an unattached part where Judge Wickersham served as judge. Judge Noyes, appointed at Nome, and Alexander Mackenzie controlled him. This was a vicious stage for Nome. The U. S. Army declared martial law in 1900-1901. They established Ft. Davis in 1900 and had 2 companies stationed there. Jarvis had come over previously with a detachment from St. Michael in 1899. The big stampede began in 1900. The beach was covered from Hastings Creek to beyond Quartz Creek.

Jones tells the story of the men who discovered gold at Nome: Lindenberg was one of the men hired when the Laplanders were brought over to teach Eskimos to herd reindeer (they also brought reindeer over). Bryndesen had mining experience in the mines of MI. The other man, Lindblom, had jumped ship at Teller. All 2 came down to a Swedish mission at Golovin.

They went prospecting after reports of gold on the Shinhock River. There was a storm and they put in at Nome. They went back in the hills and found gold on Anvil Creek and Snow Gulch. Then they staked their claims. They didn't know how to set up a mining district under existing laws. Gabe Price had been sent by Charles D. Lane to investigate the reported strike on Over Creek at Council. The 3 got Price to go with them and help lay out a mining district. There were 2 Eskimo boys "who didn't know whether they had a right to stake claims or not" but they allowed him (Price?) to stake #8 and Utica Claim on Snow Gulch for the 3.

Charlie Lane arrived in a boat called the Charles D. Lane, and brought in the Wild Goose Mining Company, to work all the claims, and also bought more claims. Lane was instrumental in getting the case out for declaring Noyes in contempt of court. Noyes was arrested, along with Dudley Dubose. Wickersham was sent over to preside. Moore of PA was then appointed judge and served until Moraine was appointed. In the meantime, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> beach lines were struck. A man could make \$25-100 a day mining gold on the beach.

Jones is a gold man who wishes our money system were still based on gold.

Frank Thieson is interviewed by an unidentified female interviewer in Fairbanks, AK on January 8, 1955. He's mined for 29 years around Wiseman and Bettles.

He arrived in Fairbanks in 1922. He landed in Juneau in 1912. In 1922 the F. E. Co. was doing a lot of work in Fairbanks. Thieson stayed until 1925, when he moved to the Koyukuk, where he's been ever since. This summer his partner Durand and he opened up Slate Creek and Andy Schwasdahl and his partner opened up Mascot Creek. These areas have been hand-mined in the past, but not with equipment. Vincent Nor has been mining by hand on Mascot all along. Thieson started mining on Slate Creek in 1930. They're now using tractors. There is one dragline in Motor Creek. Tractors work better where the ground is shallow and narrow.

Top gold producers are U. S. Smelting and Refining in Fairbanks and Nome, which uses dredges. The Strandbergs at Utopia Creek on the Koyukuk, behind Hughes, have washing plants; at Myrtle Creek they use a drag line for tailings, and when the South Fork Mining Co. was there, they had drag lines and tractors, which they've now

moved out. The interviewer states that there are 148 placer mines in AK at this time, and only 3 lode mines. People don't look for lode mines because it's so expensive, says Thieson. The only place it was really pursued was in the Chandalar, the ground that used to belong to Governor Seltzer. Denny O'Keefe says there's still a lot of quartz there. It takes a much larger crew to run a lode mine than a placer mine.

Thieson says that the days of the prospectors are gone. Only those that are used to roughing it and want to work can do it. It's easier now to go out and work for wages--your money is assured. Thieson would hunt, trap, run dogs, and sink holes during the winter, and start mining as soon as water was running.

He used to work in the confectionary business before he went to WWI and then came to AK in 1922. He preferred the outdoors to confections. Douglas Island and Juneau mines were running when he arrived and work was easy to get. In Juneau it was hard rock mining. Many of the workers had been miners in MT and CO and Europe.

Al West was Thieson's partner for 5 years. They took the first floatplane on the Koyukuk. They sunk it in the river, and had to try to pull it out with ropes. Joe Crosson got a kick out of that.

Before planes, they'd haul freight from Bettles to Wiseman on scows. Sam Duggan had a steamer, the Teddy H., and a trading post. In the winter, prospectors could chop wood for steamboat fuel or work on scows to earn a few dollars.

Last year was the first time in 30 years Thieson spent the winter Outside. He found things quite different there.

He says it takes a sturdy woman to be the wife of a prospector. Thieson thinks there are quite a few women out in the hills, like Mrs. Marson, who helps sink holes in the winter at Wild Lake. Frank Smith's nephew and his wife came to visit from Chicago and Betty (the wife) learned to tan a moose hide, and made her own moccasins from it.

In the old days if you didn't have enough supplies stored up during the winter, you could get something brought on the dog mail from Tanana. Thieson used to bake bread and throw it outside to freeze until he needed it.

A lot think airplanes have hurt the country, but Thieson thinks they make life more convenient. This summer he was out (with the Wiens?) and had fresh supplies dropped to him by plane.