

Call Number: 02-00-57 Pt. 2

Flood Interview – Walley Pt. 2

Summary created by: Jacob Metoxen

Date of creation of summary: 3/25/2013, 4/17/13

Notes:

The interviewer asks Walley what kind of problems he ran into with a large amount of people around the transmitter. Walley says when there are a large amount of people who stranded from their homes and no chance of bringing food, people sometimes panic. The people up on the hill didn't have that bad of panic as Walley thought it would have been. He said people were tripping over each other trying to help others and there were a few people who threatened others. Walley says nothing dramatic really developed except for a time when they had to call state troopers to stop a fight. He says some people had guns in their cars who would kid about having guns in the car but no one actually pointed a gun. The interviewer asks how Walley handled news of deaths. Walley says they didn't get the information of people dying. Also, there were times when KFAR thought that announcing a death wouldn't be right because families were separated from one another. He tells one story from a letter to the radio station after the flood about a young lady from Hamilton Acres. There were two boats and a lot of people got into the boats and one lady was handed a 7 month old baby. The boats divided. One went to the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and the other went to Lathrop High School. The mother was on the boat that went to the University and the baby went to Lathrop High School. The lady with the child didn't find the child's mother until seven days later. The mother knew that the baby was in the hands of the young lady but never knew how well the baby was being taken care of. The interviewer asks a man in the background named Pete if he needs anything. The interviewer then asks Walley how good the communication was with Civil Defense. Walley says only the utmost emergencies were reported to KFAR. He says there were a couple of days where there wasn't really any communication. The interviewer asks how good the communications were with the university. Walley says the communication was mostly from car and walking because the University was close. Walley says the people at the Geophysical Institute were unbelievable because they ran KFAR lines from the Geophysical Institute over land to get KFAR an associated press wire and a line for doctors. Walley says without the helicopters there is no saying what would have happened. Walley says the military did everything they could for the people. The Wien Commercial Helicopter service turned 3 helicopters over to the people to use. Walley says he requested the Armed Forces radio announcers and the announcers were there within 10 minutes via helicopter. Walley says there was never a broadcast on the helicopters but every hour someone would do a survey of the area and give an extensive report of what he had seen. There was a helicopter that took Jerry Springer out to the Badger Road area. Springer helped outline the food program in some of those areas because of the helicopter. Walley says because of his authority as a city councilman, people would approach him to take authority to get jobs done in different areas. He says he can't start to tell how he felt the first day he saw a helicopter.

At 12:10 the interviewer asks Walley to discuss his functions as a city councilman. Walley says there were meetings up on the hill but most of the Council and Assembly were scattered around in the area. He says the Council never met until the Monday night after they got into town, the week of the 14th. Walley says each assemblyman took a part in a semiofficial capacity as much as he could. The interviewer discusses the ending of the emergency and when KFAR phased out the reporting on the hill. Walley says the following Monday night there was still water but they were able to get to the 4th floor of the Lathrop building and they operated on a generator and also got their TV on. Walley says he doesn't know what would have happened if the flood happened in Los Angeles. He says the people of Fairbanks saved themselves problems and that a whole lot of credit goes to a lot of people. Walley says Alaskan ingenuity helped save lives. Walley says there was a lot of humor no matter the circumstances. A second interviewer, Pete [No last name], asks Walley about the authority. Pete asks who took over as authority. Walley says in areas where authorities couldn't get to, people took on roles of authority. Jack Murphy is mentioned being a local director. He says the Mayor of Fairbanks took a lot of authority because he had to. The interviewer mentions Wally Droze [City Manager] being in charge. Walley says under the charter the city manager is the man who is in complete charge in a disaster of any kind. Walley says a lot of decisions were made by heads of the different departments. Walley begins discussing contacting doctors and how doctors came to the transmitter and a tent hospital was suggested and the doctors held a meeting at the KFAR transmitter. The mayor requested a food survey and Walley says he called the mayor on the radio and he was at the KFAR transmitter in moments via helicopter with the Red Cross director. The mayor put KFAR in charge of Red Cross in the area. Bill Simon, a local banker, volunteered to help and found himself in charge of the Red Cross. Walley says their food survey was taken in many different ways. He says they had a map of the area and asked volunteers to come from each area with their food needs. Thousands of people were surveyed. 14 young people with motorcycles did a head count and when the Red Cross came, an entire map and survey was provided. Walley says he took over some of the Public Works Department. Russ Gallespy [possibly Gillespie] who was one of the foremen of the Public Works Department had been stranded on the hill and when they found out KFAR needed vehicles they went to get some dump trucks and went to Safeway to buy food. Walley is thanked and the interview ends.