

Call number: 02-00-62-37

Harrie Hughes

Date 12/06/1963

Home of Frank and Pearl McGafferty [McCafferty?], Santa Barbara, California. Also traveling.

Summary created by: Varpu Lotvonen

Date of summary created: 9/3/13

Series: Harrie Hughes Collection.

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

Harrie Hughes starts recording by telling the date and the place: It's December 6th [probably in 1963] and he's at Frank and Pearl McGafferty's. It's 1:40pm and they have been looking at some pictures. McGaffertys know a lot of things about Alaska. Harrie asks Frank to tell a little bit about himself. Frank tells that he was born in Sugar Run, Pennsylvania, and that Pearl was born in Seattle.

Frank and Harrie have been working on the Pioneer Memorial Park. There seems to be a very few people who know what happened when President Harding came to Fairbanks in 1923. Harrie asks if Frank can remember what happened then and Frank tells that he picked President Harding from the train and took him to the Nordale Hotel. Harding's wife wasn't with them. There was some other person – Frank doesn't remember who. The next day they drove to Farmer's Loop Road and as far as the 18-mile on Richardson Highway. They walked around the 18-mile roadhouse and drove to 40-mile on the [possibly Valdez Trail which became the Richardson Highway] trail. Harrie asks if it was their plan to go all the way to the Black Rapids, but Frank says it wasn't, at least on that day. That day they visited Cricket's Ranch for 1.5-2 hours and went back. [Unclear] drove over the trail to Chitna, 317-miles. Mrs. Harding's sickness prevented them, but they did go out to the 18-mile.

Harrie asks how many days they spent in Fairbanks, but Frank doesn't know exactly. He thinks it was around 3 days. Harrie says they stayed at the hotel although lots of people deny it. Frank says they did stay at the hotel, and Mrs. Harding didn't leave the room in that 3-day period, at least to Frank's knowledge. She was so shaken up by the train trip that she couldn't get herself out. Frank drove them around in a Buick that belonged to Suthers. It was a sport model, red car. [Pearl says something unclear. They are perhaps talking about the hotel.]

Harrie asks Frank to describe Weeks Field. Frank says there used to be a race track. The platform was a 24 foot square that was at least 3.5-4 feet above the ground and it had steps around the back and a rail around three times [Not sure what this is]. Harrie asks if Frank remembers what flags they had on display there, but he doesn't remember. Harrie says they had an American flag and Frank says he just doesn't recall the rest. All he remembers is [that it was] awful hot and some little girl fainted. A secret service man came down there. They weren't used to the heat either. Harrie asks if there were any airplanes, and Frank says that Ben Eielson had his old Jenny but there was no flying around or commercial flights. Frank says it started shortly afterwards.

Harrie asks if Frank would like to say any greetings for people in Fairbanks, but Frank says he doesn't know who lives in Fairbanks anymore. Harrie says that there are quite a few old-timers around and that Fairbanks people have lots of conversations where he is mentioned.

[Unclear]. Somebody is on a trip around the town right now. Harrie tells that he bought a 1926 Chevrolet from Old Man Hubbard and gave him 62 dollars for it and shipped it via the Alaska Railroad to McKinley Park and the freight was 63 dollars. He was going to bring the car back to town to go in business before the war. He was going to ship it on the railroad, but his neighbor Johnny Howard, who used to work with Gaelan and Tim Park and Bobby Sheldon, wanted the pickup Harrie had at the creek. He made his own road. He carried a shovel when he wanted to go someplace and dig out, dry out [meaning unclear]. Frank says he knows all about that.

Harrie had lots of cases of aviation gas, white gas. He had about 50 cases of it and he used it in mining, in running a hydraulic pump. Johnny wanted the gasoline so badly that he bought the car from him, gas and all. He paid Harrie around \$200 dollars. Then the other day when Johnny and Lina Howard came to town after all those years, Harrie visited with them in town and Johnny said he was offered \$800 dollars for that old car for a museum piece. It was in good condition. Harrie asks if Frank knew Johnny, but Frank just says the name is familiar. Harrie mentions that he knew Gaelan [Galen?] and then Frank says he remembers Johnny, the little guy, the horse wrangler. He's gone a long time ago.

Harrie tells that when they were [living] in the McKinley Park, Harrie used to stop there at a roadhouse, 8-miles from the Park. They [the roadhouse] would send a word down that they had a party coming and they wanted horses, so they send somebody look for them. Harrie was the one who had to go hunt for the horses.

Harrie says Frank and his wife brought a large collection: The book is about 2x2.5 feet, it's very thick and it has old pictures of Harding and a number of other things. There must be a 200-300 pictures in that. McGafferties are giving it to the Pioneer Memorial Park. Frank says he's had it for a long time and makes no use of it and so they want to give it away.

Pearl sends her greetings to Odessa, and asks her to stop by and visit her in Santa Barbara. She gives her address, and introduces herself as Mrs. Frank McGafferty.

Frank doesn't know who to talk to, but Harrie encourages him by saying that lots of the old pioneers are still around. Andrew Nerland is mentioned. Frank greets [unclear name] and asks him to visit them in Santa Barbara.

Harrie reports stopping at a Sunset Motel on the 101 Highway out of Santa Barbara, and that he is getting ready to start up north in the morning. Harrie left Santa Barbara 8:15am and now he is near San Luis Obispo, about 2/3 of the way to San Francisco. It's a beautiful road with lots of eucalyptus trees. He is stopping at a Standard Oil station. Sunshine is bright. It's 65 degrees and getting warmer.

Today Harrie visited with Bob Murray in his home. Bob worked at the [unclear] air force base as a fireman and he and his wife are starting a laundry at Sunnyvale Avenue. Harry tells their telephone number at Mountain View, CA. About the situation with their business and rented house. They were interested in hearing about Fairbanks, and sending their greetings.

Paul Vaughn wasn't home. They had left for a month's trip. Harrie gives his address in Mountainview. They have probably left to Santa Barbara. Harrie gives driving directions.

At 14:31 Harrie states that it's December the 17th, 1963 and he and James McDonald have landed in an address in Ashland, Oregon. The sun is shining and they are going to let Clyde Berkinson [Burkett?] say hi to his friends: Clyde says hello to all the Pioneers of Alaska. He is now living in Ashland and has retired from Alaska. He says his best wishes to all the Pioneers of Alaska.

Now Harry says that they moved to kitchen and Jimmy was demonstrating a kitchen gadget. Talking about the gadget that's called Electric [unclear] center, model 300. It's for retired Alaskans, so when you visit Ashland, be sure to visit Mr. and Mrs. Berket and see the gadget. After visiting Clyde Berket they took off and there was fog all the way from Berkets' to Sacramento. From Ashland, Oregon they went to Medford and had fog from there to Bend, Oregon. Jimmy got to visit his friend in Bend and they took off down the Columbia River Highway where there was no fog. The highway was wonderful but it was overcast and so they got no pictures. Now they are in Portland, Oregon and they stopped at a little motel right downtown. The motel has a gadget where they turn the switch and the heater in the ceiling of the building turns on, giving out radiant heat. Jimmy is amazed with all the gadgets.

It's 12/19/1963 and Jimmy and Harry are at a Zoological Garden and Museum at the Oregon Museum of Science. Harrie is talking to a man who was in Alaska many years ago: He introduces himself as [unclear, Sam Diack] and 40 years ago, when he was a college student in California, he went up to Alaska as a tourist and ended up as a good bum. He had a wonderful time. He was supposedly going to be one of

the first tourists at the Valley of the Ten Thousand Smokes. When they got there, to Kodiak, with their tourist group they found that they couldn't hire packers. The four of them, young bucks, were hired as packers and they earned enough money to get to the train to Seward and to Camp Curry. They wanted to see Mount McKinley and managed to hire an old mule named Jack to carry their stuff. They hired Jack for \$10 a day which they considered stiff price, but they really wanted a pack animal. The owner of the mule was a Princeton graduate and in hiring the mule there was one little stipulation that they had to hire him too for \$10 day. The price to hire a Princeton graduate was as high as the mule's. They went to the Copper Mountain and went part-way up the Mogle Glacier [sp?] and met a man named Scott who was the game warden and the postman. He was running his dog-sled across the dry tundra to get it back. They had done a little bit of ptarmigan hunting and while Sam was cleaning the birds, this man approached. He hid the birds because he knew they were illegal and tried to wipe blood off from his hands. Scott introduced himself and said he was a game warden. Sam was a little agitated and explained that the mule had kicked heads off of ptarmigans and they didn't want them to go to waste so they brought in a dozen for dinner. Scott turned around and said that his lead dog just snaps heads off of them and that he's got 15 of them. Harrie asks about game and he man tells that there were sheep, goats and caribou.

There were also two prospectors in around the Copper Mountain with a semi-permanent camp. [Harrie and the man are discussing Hudson Stuck's expedition]. There were not many tourists and the game laws were not as strict as they are now. [Unclear.] By the time they got to Fairbanks, they were really broke. The only way for them to get back in time for college was to mush it out on the Richardson Trail. They met Ziegler who was a Unitarian minister and also a painter. The Sam was sitting on top of a [car] which was loaded with ore and chatted with Ziegler. It turned out that when Sam was a small child in Detroit, Michigan, Ziegler was the assistant pastor at the Unitarian Church where the speaker's family went to. The speaker also remembers S. Hall Young who was a great friend of Hudson Stuck's . They met in 1915 in boys' camp in Ontario. He was a perfectly delightful man who told them stories about Alaska. The speaker was 12 years old and the world was opening up and from that time on he wanted to go to Alaska. He's been to Alaska for several times. [Harrie asks something unclear.]

Sam says he hates flying and is sad that there are no boats anymore. He crossed the Panama by a freighter [ship]. He was born in Detroit, Michigan and his full name is Diack, which is a honest Dutch name. He's 60 years old and was in Alaska when he was 20. His son worked for Alaska Fish and Game in Cordova when he was 20 years old and he was a law enforcement officer in Kodiak for a long time. Kid had enough money to get his pilot's license and is going to go back to fly. He has been the president of the Museum for a couple of terms, and a chairman of fundraising, little this and that on the board of directors.

Harrie asks some other persons take on things too. A man's voice says that Sam was too modest when he said he's just in the board of Trustees. He's an honorary board member because they don't dare to lose him. The men are talking about his fundraising abilities that helped establish the museum, and give fundraising tips for Harrie. Discussion about establishing the science museum in Oregon and its basis in the community, building the buildings, and the Museum's importance. They also discuss labor unions and mention the psychiatric ward "Morningside" that used to handle all Alaska's mental patients.

Around 37:55 Harrie talks about Pioneer Park and how they found a local architect drew a plan for their central [unclear] and that Rusty Heurlin, the famous painter has designed the gate. They have a railroad place made for the Harding Car.

The man Harrie is talking with advises against having a fixed plan because many things that start off with a rigid plan end up having trouble. Circumstances change, but the whole trick is to let people understand that it is for everybody. Harrie discusses their plans of making a zoo that some people objected because they want real animals. Sam, Harrie and the other men talk more about zoos and their morality. [Unclear talking about how army would give them animals but they have no room to keep them, and how University of Alaska took over the animals.] Harrie ends the recording session by asking if he can play the tape at the University and Historical Society. The men don't object.

At 43:47 Harrie tells he is at [unclear] but yesterday they drove into Seattle and stopped at a motel around 130th on the Everett Freeway. They got up this morning at 7 and went to visit with Jack Corb and visited Mrs. Kugel's house and met them. At the store there was another Fairbanksian, John Cooper. Jimmy and Harrie have let him listen to the tape and discuss some things that were in it. Harrie asks if John wants to say something to the people in Fairbanks. John talks about Oregon Pioneers organizing a work group, and that similar thing certainly could be done in Fairbanks. As an example of Fairbanks community spirit is the building of the Curling Club. Pioneers should be commended in working for the project and that it will be for the good of all of Alaska. Talking about business donations that might spur a welcome competition on who donates the most. The donations are tax-deductible.

Harrie states that the tape is ending and it's December the 20th, 1963 in Seattle Washington.

At 48:51 Harrie says Mr. Kogel just corrected them that they are in one of the suburbs of Seattle, known as Edmond. Mr. Kogel says that there are numerous retired Alaskans in the area and as they go downtown Edmond, it gives one the feeling of being in the Southeast Alaska with the water and the hills. Still, even though they are close to a large city, they have virgin timber around. Harrie says that tomorrow they are participating in an Alaska Yukon Pioneer's meeting in the Odd Fellows Hall in Seattle, and that he is going to terminate the tape.

They visited Louie Johnson and some other old-time Alaskans. Jack Korbe went with them and took them to his place. He has a little homestead and Harrie took pictures of it. He also took pictures of Louie Johnson at the sanitarium. Now Jimmy and Harrie are on their way back town. They are going to hit the [unclear, Fauntleroy?] ferry and go visit Joe Dimond at Dockton on the Vashon Island. Harrie asks Joe to say something to the folks in Ketchikan and Fairbanks. Joe says it would be nice to see them. Harrie asks him to tell something about his house. They have a house in Docton on Vashon Island that they built in 1959. They like it there and their daughter lives right next door. He hopes to visit Fairbanks.

At 52:13 Harrie Hughes states that it is November 6th, 1963 and Harrie Hughes and James McDonald left Fairbanks on Wednesday morning, 6 o'clock in a Ford automobile for a trip through Canada, Washington and Oregon to visit old-time pioneers from Alaska. They are in a home of Mr. McBride in Vancouver. He has an enormous collection of diaries, pictures and history. He has also put out lots of information for the British Columbia Digest and several historical papers. Harrie is recording for Tanana-Yukon Historical Society.

Bill starts that his full name is William David McBride and he was born in Butte, Montana, in 1888. His early schooling was in Flathead Valley County in Montana in Kalispell. His parents moved in before the coming of the Great Northern Railroad. William's first trip to Alaska was in August, 1899. His father by adoption, Frank R. Miles, had left to the Klondike Gold Rush in 1897 and returned in 1899, taking his wife, William's aunt, and William from Seattle to Skagway on the "SS City of the Peak" [?] in 1899. He had a brother, Murray B. Miles, who was a conductor at the White Pass Railroad which at time went only as far as the Lake Bennett. They saw the headwaters of the Yukon in August 1899. He didn't return to the Yukon until the spring of 1912 when working for the Southern Pacific Railroad Company in California. He heard about a job opening in St. Michael, Alaska with a steamship company, the Northern Navigation. He went to St. Michael, to the other end of the Yukon, where he remained for 2 year until the company he was working for was purchased by the White Pass and Yukon Route and he was moved to Whitehorse, Yukon, in 1914. He remained there in various capacities until the fall of 1961 when he retired. He has researched the history of Yukon and Alaska. On their first trip to Yukon Territory and Alaska they only got to the Lake Bennet and turned back to Skagway and home to Montana but William's stepfather stayed. [Harrie asks something unclear.]

William says that the Pioneers in Fairbanks need to start gathering their historical material as soon as possible because it may get lost. William talks about the Yukon Historical Society Museum which he was establishing. Harrie asks about the copper nugget in front of the museum. William tells it weighs about 3000 pounds and it's solid copper. Copper nuggets bear resemblance to gold nuggets and that one was from the White River. It cost about \$25,000 dollars to drag it out with bulldozers and over the mountains. Native copper was discovered from the White River in early 1900s and William understands

that there is a much larger copper nugget in Anchorage that came from the Copper River in Alaska. The one in Whitehorse is the largest single piece of copper ever found in Canada. There wasn't enough copper to start a mining operation, however. His father Frank Miles thought they really had something and spent two summers prospecting in the upper White River. [Unclear.] William's first trip was by an ocean steamer from Seattle to Skagway and then they took the railway as far as it went. Later when he came to Whitehorse, the railroad was already built and Whitehorse was the head of navigation on the Yukon. From Dawson to Alaskan side the transportation was with Alaskan steamships, operating between Dawson, Nenana and Fairbanks. In wintertime, they had a stage-line between Whitehorse and Dawson which was 330 miles. That was before the time of airplanes. In 1930s the first airplanes started to appear in the North and eventually airplanes took over the transportation. Then the Alaska Highway opened up the whole country, changed the population centers, and opened new areas for mining.

At 1:01:11 Harrie asks how long it took him to come in. William says that it took 4-5 days to get to Whitehorse in 1914 whereas now it takes a few hours to reach Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia, with airplanes. Buses take 3 days to get from Whitehorse to Vancouver. Harrie asks about early day cattle drives and William knows that they used to bring cattle from Skagway to Whitehorse in cattle cars on the railroad. Then the cattle was transferred into barges and taken into Dawson City. Prior to that, there had been 5 or 6 cattle drives made over the Dalton trail, that is from Haines following the Dalton trail to the point near Yukon Crossing. Then the cattle was put into barges and taken into Dawson. Cold storage hadn't been developed yet. When cold storages were invented, transport of live cattle ended.

Harrie asks if William would like to tell any interesting things to the Tanana-Yukon Historical Society. There's one story William will never forget. There was an extremely severe winter during 1917-1918, and there was a mail carrier named George Scott who handled the mail by dog team from Whitehorse to Lake Labarge and Carmacks, and towards north. George Scott was a graduate of Oxford and wrote in absolutely beautiful Spencerian hand. He was married to a squaw called Susie who was one of the [unclear, sound like loneliest? holiest? Possibly homliest?] persons who ever lived in Yukon. She also had an injury to one of her legs and walked with a sideways motion. They called her the "living grouse" [unclear?]. George started from the Lake Labarge with a dog team towards Whitehorse and got caught in that -70F weather they had at the time. They found him sitting under a tree, frozen to death with his dog team close by, buried in the snow. They picked up Scott and brought him to Whitehorse where he had to be thawed out in a water tank before burying. [Harrie says something unclear.] William had an experience of freezing his heels in cold weather. They were frozen solid and the flesh cracked open from a quarter of an inch. At the time he was living out of town and couldn't get to a doctor. Some old-timer told him to get tallow with skin on it and shape it to the heel and leave it on for a couple of weeks. William did that and when he took it off, his heels were fine.

Harrie asks McBride to tell something about his daughter because Alaska Linck would be interested. They have a daughter who is a flight supervisor for the Pan American Airlines. William tells more about her work, which started in Whitehorse where she worked at the ticket desk. Later, she moved to different cities and positions over the years. She used to work as a stewardess between Seattle, Whitehorse and Fairbanks for Pan American. Later she worked in New York. As a Whitehorse girl, she has a very keen interest in Yukon. More about the daughters.

[Harrie says something unclear] Harrie asks William's name and address and he gives them and tells that some old-timers who move to the Vancouver-Seattle area find more friends there than they would find from Alaska. There were 400 people at a party last year. Harrie states he is closing the interview, but then he reads a poem by Kim Smith and Jack Holland that was written in McBrides scrap book and dealt mainly with falling in love with a "squaw" [an indigenous American woman]. The scrap book has several hundreds of pages and Harry reads what the front page says, written by Ambrose Bierce.

Mr. Bill McBride reads a little article that was written in the early days. It's called An Impression of Alaska by a Cheechako. It's a poem that was written in the spring of 1913 in St. Michael, Alaska. It was started by the second cook of the steamer Susie and finished off by William. Over 200 copies were mimeographed and given to the Seattle Chamber of Commerce tour that made the trip up and down the Yukon River from St. Michael. [The poem's gist is that God decided to give Alaska for the Devil who wanted to build a new hell and he did, especially by creating Yukon mosquitoes and by luring people in with wildflowers and gold.] Then there is a poem on the wall called Trail's End, signed by [Unclear] McLaren, July 28th, 1931. Now Harrie states he is ending the interview and heading towards Seattle with Jimmy.

At 1:18:53 Harrie tells that he and Jimmy stopped along the Everett Freeway and visited a man called Dawson Cooper who lives near Pinehurst. They got there at about 8:45 and have been visiting with Dawson, his family and Grace Fisher, Harrie's old sweetheart. Harrie prompts Grace to tell her whole name on the tape but Grace declines. Children's voices introduce themselves, then the adults: Jimmy, Mary, Billie, Mrs. Cooper, and old man Dawson.

They are at the Veteran's Hospital on Beacon Hill November 22nd, 1963 they are visiting George [unclear] from Fairbanks. George says hello to everybody and his wife. He says he's pretty good and is expecting to get out in a matter of weeks. He is going to stay in town, in Savoy. Harrie asks if there are others he knows from Fairbanks and he says there used to be Bob Duckovich [sp?], he's had heart trouble. He's had visitors, but in the other place nobody would come and he was quite lonely. Harry and George talk about somebody who visited him previously and then they discuss his getting out of the hospital. Harrie talks about having coffee with Mary [Perhaps George's wife?], and says Smitty was there and gave them

pictures. Smitty said he would stay there until George goes back. Talking about Smitty's brother and about George's case of shingles and chicken pox. Harrie says George has to record something to Mary because she is worried. George says he told Mary not to worry because he is coming home soon.

At 1:26:44 Harrie reports having made it over to Bob Bloom's house in West Seattle. Alda Bloom [sp?] was home with the little girl and while Harrie was there Bob Bloom came home [unclear]. Jimmy and Harrie took Jens Valdeen over to his place and are stopping at a motel out on the freeway. They had a very busy day and they called the Alaska Sportsman and a several other places. They visited George in the hospital. Now the time is 8:15 and they are ready for a nice rest and tomorrow is the Thanksgiving.

Harrie reports that it's November 28th, Thanksgiving morning and Jimmy and Harrie had a good night at the motel. Now they are at the home of Robert Bloom and Mrs. [unclear probably Jesse] Bloom. It's a beautiful home [Harrie gives the address.] Mrs. Bloom brought out a certificate of their marriage and recognition of outstanding service to the State of Alaska which is signed on September 27th, 1963, by governor William A. Egan. Harrie took pictures of it. It was the first certificate issued under Alaska Statehood for meritorious service by an individual.

Harrie tells that Bob Bloom told him about President Harding's trip to Fairbanks and about driving the golden spike at Nenana where the railroad connected in 1923. Mr. Bloom told them that Harding stayed at the Harding Car on the railroad, which was heavily guarded. Mr. Suthers' car was used to drive him to the ceremony. In the meantime, Mrs. Harding stayed at the Nordale [hotel] and didn't care to go to the ceremony. After the ceremony, Mr. Harding was driven back to the Harding Car and he was attended by Mr. and Mrs. Marquam. [Bob Bloom says something unclear.] Harrie recaps: Mrs. and Mr. Marquam were seen in a photo with Mr. Harding. Bob Bloom also told that the Harding Car didn't stay overnight in Fairbanks but started back south on the railroad.

Isabel Marsha Becker states that she is going to play the London Dairy Aire on their old piano. [Piano music.] She states that she was born in Chicago and that she turned 13 last September. She talks about her musical interests. [Plays the Star Spangled Banner.] Harrie says she is Robert Bloom's niece.

They stayed at Bob Bloom's for 2 nights and spent one night on the road. They headed south and stopped at Jean [Gene?] Woodcocks', visiting him for one night. Then they stopped one night on their way to San Francisco and visited McBride in Vancouver, British Columbia. McBride had established museum in Whitehorse and has a fabulous history, records and a large diary. In San Francisco they looked up Jimmy McDonald's boy and his family. They have 4 kids and one more on its way. Jimmy wanted to stay in the hotel while Harrie was taking a trip to Santa Barbara and back. Harrie describes the weather: it's sunny and warm. He just had coffee and filled his tank with gas and he is on his way to Santa Barbara.

Harrie arrived in Santa Barbara 5:50 and filled with gas. He is going to stay in a classy motel with a swimming pool. He is going to meet with three people: Frank McGafferty, Estella Gilbert and Professor Erwin Reed who lives in Malibu, California. Now time is 6:35 and Harrie is going to wash up and go for dinner.

He got up in the morning and took a shower. It's nice weather and Harrie is getting ready to go visit Tony Nordale. [His address is given.] People on the freeway are traveling 60-70 mph and it's a beautiful drive. Harrie is standing at the Devro Home [Devereaux sp?] for retarded children and Tony Nordale is there with him with their house mother. Harrie is going to take a picture for Mrs. Nordale and Tony's friends in Fairbanks. Tony greets his mom and asks how she is. Harrie is taking Tony out for a ride. His housemother is Camellia Kessler. Tony seems to have lost some interest in horses, but he indicated interest in machinery and such. There has been a little improvement but he's lost his interest. He was happy to see Harrie though, and hear about the old-timers. Harrie describes the Devro Home and says that many of the boys have bicycles. Now Harrie is on the freeway, heading towards McGafferty's home in Santa Barbara, CA. It's a beautiful, hot day.

[Isabel Marsha Becker piece is copied here again, as well as the rest of the recording.]

[End of the recording.]