

**Call number: 02-00-85 SIDE A**

**Young, Wicken and Hughes – Trip to Central and Circle**

**Summary created by Varpu Lotvonen**

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**Series: Harrie Hughes Collection**

**Notes: Original on 7-inch reel, master copy on CD.**

Tape begins abruptly with a description of a trail over Birch Lake. They were 6 miles above the creek where the old roadhouse was and then they followed the flats [the interviewer and the interviewee are probably looking at a map.] About 1.5 miles from the Quartz Creek is was the old Jump-off Roadhouse. The first was up there 17-miles and there was an old building right near where the road runs. It was a barn of the 17-Mile Roadhouse. [Talking more about its location.] The next was the Jump-off and then was the Central Roadhouse which is on Crooked Creek and is on the road system now. Someone asks if Boulder Creek and Crazy-eye Creek run into Crooked Creek and the interviewee says yes.

There was a roadhouse at Albert Creek, which is the first creek below Central. It was run by 2 or 3 different people, but the last one was Sam Lynn [sp?]. The speaker doesn't remember who built the place. It was operated by 2-3 different people but only for a short time. From there the trail went to Central and then the original trail [unclear]. The interviewer says the trail from Central to Miller House is moved over from the Crooked Creek. The old road is not too far away, and now the road is close to the creek. One can follow the creek all the way up to Boulder Creek and that Creek follows the present road. Summit Lake mentioned.

At 05:04 Harrie Hughes [?] says that Mr. Miller [possibly Frank Miller?] had to stop the recording to wait on a customer. He asks Mrs. Miller to say a few words, but she doesn't want to do it. Then the recording with Mr. Miller continues: Harrie asks about what happens after people leave the Miller House and Mr. Miller asks if he's supposed to tell about the summer or winter trail, and Harrie refocuses the question to concern the old trail, the original horse trail. Mr. Miller tells that the original horse trail went by the flats in the winter but in summer the trail always went to the hills. From "here" [a location on the map] it went to Main Miller Creek and down on the Middle Fork of Eagle [Creek] ¼ - ½ mile East from the present road across Eagle Summit. Then it went down to Middle Fork of Eagle down the Eagle Creek, following along Birch [Creek] to 12-Miles. Then it [unclear] 12-mile, all the way up to the head of 12-Mile right up the summit and over the summit.

Discussing old trail markings [on the map]. Then the trail follows the tops of the hills until it hits the Coffee Dome at the head of the Fairbanks Creek. Harrie and Mr. Miller don't find Coffee Dome from the map. Pool Creek is the next creek. The trail crosses it and then swings on top of the ridge again, below Smith Creek. One follows Smith Creek. [More talking about Smith Creek.] From Coffee Dome it goes to Fairbanks Creek and from there back over to Cleary Summit to get to Fairbanks. Harrie asks when one hits Twin Boots [?], [talking about domes and creeks.] Harrie thanks Frank [Miller] for telling about the old trails and asks him to tell briefly about the gold discovery "around here".

At 9:20 Miller tells that he wasn't in the country at the time but has heard the story from the man who did the original staking. Tom Edmund [?] was an old Welshman [?]. It seems to have started from Deacon [Robert] McDonald who was an English missionary along the Peel River for 35 years. He married an Indian woman and had a family and his family went back to England when he finished his missionary work. He was up at Fort Yukon – Miller doesn't recall the year. McDonald met two Indians who showed him gold. Of course he wasn't too curious but asked about it anyway and so the Indians told him that the place was somewhere 50 miles from Fort Yukon. That was in 1885. In 1893 there were 13 prospectors according to [unclear]. He [who?] was one of the original ones who left the Fortymile to look for this place where the Indians had found the gold. They landed about 16 miles above the place where Circle is now, and followed the foothills out Birch [Creek]. They worked up Birch Creek up to Pitka Bar and that's where they thought the Indians had got the gold. Harrie asks the names of the two Indians, and Frank says one was Pitka and the other Cherosky. Cherosky [Sometimes spelled Cheroski and even Sorresca] was the first husband of Mrs. [Ellen] Callahan who was Dan Callahan's wife later. Cherosky is the father of Mrs. Rasmusson, Nels Rasmusson's wife. Her children [unclear] and Walter Jewel's wife. Frank can't think of their names, but they are the offspring of Mrs. Callahan and her first husband. That was the first stampede to the area.

At 12:52 Frank tells that Chris Harrington was one of the first stakers, having staked the 1<sup>st</sup> Below the Discovery at Mastodon Creek. Jack Gurger [sp?] and Pat [unclear] made the discovery but that fall they only bought a small amount of [break in the recording, unclear]. They worked up as far as Pitka Bar and there were 6 [unclear] that went back and wintered at Birch Creek, about 9 or 10 miles from where Circle is now located. That was in 1893. In spring of 1894 they worked back up the river to the Harrison Creek, up at Pitka Bar. There they separated: Two stayed at Harrison Creek, two went to Mastodon Creek, and two came down to Mammoth Creek. The creeks weren't named at the time. [Unclear] build fires and have smoke so others would know, and all these discoveries were made practically

the same day. McGregor was the first one to go prospecting on Mastodon Creek and that started the stampede in 1894 July. Independence Creek was named then. Then there was miner's law that entitled miners to have one claim per creek and for that reason every creek is named differently. The creeks were staked in 1894 and 1895 as a part of the stampede. Harrie asks if Mr. Miller has an idea about how many millions of dollars were taken out from the creeks, but he says he doesn't have an idea. He couldn't even guess.

At 16:16 recounts that at one time Circle was called the biggest log cabin city in the world, and it had 8-10,000 people there. When the strike was made in Dawson, it took years for the people in Circle to believe in it. People kept dribbling away. The people who didn't have anything, they joined other stampedes [?]. Harrie thanks Frank about giving the information and explains that it won't be used against Frank.

Frank tells about Chris Harrington [?] who staked 1<sup>st</sup> Below Discovery. Discoverers were allowed two claims. Jack and Pat had a 1000-foot claim and Harrington got the 1<sup>st</sup> Below Discovery. Harrington was never fully satisfied with it and after searching for 2 years, he located Archdeacon McDonald who was still alive in England. Deacon told him his information as well as he could but Harrington was never satisfied and had an idea that it [the original discovery] could be over the Crazy Hills. Usually around 1<sup>st</sup> of July [unclear] and Chris saddled his old pack horse and never took anybody with him. He went to the Crazy Mountains but he never made his mind that he had found where the Indians had found gold.

Someone asks if this Harrington was the same as George Harrington who had claims around Fairbanks area. He says it was different Harrington. Thanking for the interview again. Harrie talks about the USGS map that they used in locating the old trail. Harrie gives details about the map, such as its print.

A voice says that Andrew Wicken, Frank Young and Harrie Hughes are recording for Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo no. 4, Fairbanks Alaska, and they thank Mr. Miller. Harrie Hughes states that Mr. and Mrs. Miller took them to the old bunkhouse which was built by Fritz Miller and which is still in operation. They offer beds from there and so a person can sleep in the original cabin of the Miller Roadhouse which was built in 1896. Harrie thanks Mrs. Miller who says it's \$2 dollar a bed.

At 21:40 Harrie Hughes says they are getting ready to leave Miller House. Mr. and Mrs. Miller have shown them all around the old place which is one of the last surviving roadhouses in the Interior Alaska. They are heading towards Road Commission Camp to have coffee. It's raining a bit.

They are on mile 87, on the location of the previous roadhouse. Harrie asks Frank to tell about that roadhouse. Frank tells that they are now at the old 12-mile roadhouse. He doesn't remember if Reed built it originally but a woman by the name of Gertie Smith ran it later on. Then it changed hands several times and finally it burned down. There are few odds and ends kicking around. It was one of the old historic roadhouses of the Circle Trail. Now there is grass and weeds and if one wouldn't know it's there, it would go unnoticed. Harrie says that it would be a good idea to establish a monument there to commemorate the individuals who created the early life in Alaska.

Andrew Wicken, Harrie Hughes and Frank Young move onto the Road Commission Camp which is at 82-mile. They had a coffee and they visited some pioneer Alaskans. Harrie asks what Frank thinks about the 82-mile. Frank says that the cook was good and they were treated cordially. They enjoyed a nice cake and a good cup of coffee while it was raining and cold. After reminiscing for about 15 or 20 minutes, they continued on the rainy and slippery road towards Nick Kupoff's place near the Discovery Claim in Pedro [Creek].

Nick welcomes his guests. Harrie says he'll make a report on tape when he gets home. [Break in the recording.]

Harrie states that he just took Andy Wicken and Frank Young home and talks about the recording that was made in various locations and with variable background noises. He hopes to have the tapes transcribed and written into history.

[End of the recording.]