

Ina Uotila (Kerturi)

Ina Kerturi Uotila, 92 years old in 1974. Guest at the Fairbanks Pioneers Home.

Finland

Born 10 kilometers from city of Rauma (sp?) Jan. 10 1893

Three brothers and one sister went to United States in 1899 and Ina followed in 1901, traveling with Gus Uotila's sister. She landed in Boston in June of 1901 and went to Cape Cod where her sister was and went to work for a family at Cape Cod. Did housework. Really nice place. Just like a home to me. Stayed there 3 years and four months. By then mother and father were in United States.

Met future husband on way to United States in town in Finland. Gus came over in 1902, going first to Pittsburg to see his sister and the two came to Cape Cod to visit Ina. Gus got job in Cape Cod. Brothers were in Michigan and parents went there, too. Brothers worked in stool factory and then in mining. Mother cooked for them. Mother got sick so sister (who was then married with small baby) asked Ina to go to Michigan to take care of mother. Gus quit job and followed Ina. Ina's brothers and Gus went to Butte, Mont. and she followed. Went to Butte in 1906. Gus had gone on to Astoria but returned to Butte and married Ina.

Ina and Gus married in Butte 1907. He followed her all over. Had five room house in Butte and Ina cooked for two brothers and two others who lived with them.

Gus's younger brother Charlie Uotila came to Alaska. Another brother Toibo Uotila was already in Alaska. Toibo spent one summer in Iditarod and went back to Butte. Toibo ~~want~~ wanted to go back "for the sourdough pancakes".

Gus went back ~~ix~~ with Toibo and they skied overland with 6 other Finns from Seward to Iditarod. In march 1913. Ina stayed in Butte and worked and belonged to union (culinary union) That was the only union in the United States for women then. Got \$40 a month and board and room. Worked 8 hours. Had Finn hall where Finns met. Lots of Finns (came from 1918 to 1925 or so) 72 East Park Street.

Ina came in 1913 in steamship "Senator" to Nome. "Talk about storms and icebergs. Everybody was sick on the boat but me. I never get sick." From Nome went to St. Michael on Umitilla (boat's name) and waited in St. Michael for week waiting for "Louise" to get ~~ix~~ fixed. Met Gus' nephew on same boat. Didn't know he was aboard or even headed to Alaska. Transferred to another boat (Dawson) after the Louise got them ~~ix~~ through the mouth of the Yukon. Headed for Holy Cross and then up the Iditarod River on ~~ix~~ the "Nancy Belle" Three ~~ix~~ or four days to get to Iditarod. Gus was working for Charlie Strandberg. Freighting. Gus left letter at hotel at Iditarod that he'd be there in morning. But Ina and two other Finn ladies walked the seven miles with one of the husbands....

(more)

Ina Uotila

Ina's first home in Iditarod was in a blacksmith shop.
Home ready for you to live in?

"Home ready? Let me tell you. No home. My gosh this is what I want to tell you. It was just terrible. no place to live." Partitioned off part. Went to work right away in boarding house.

Blacksmith shop. It was as black as could be. That was the only thing we could get. No floor. Gus said "We got to live here" Got folding bed and stove. ~~x~~ Got rough lumber ^{floor} Went to mess house and got three egg cartons...three empty egg boxes and put them on top of each other for a dresser. Got curtain across front. ~~Got~~ Got mirror for top. Bed, dresser, couple chairs. Moss from roof fell through on face.

We were planning a nice cabin in the fall. The fellows went on stampede to Chishana. Bought house for \$75

Chisana stampede in 1913. They never found anything.

Stayed in Iditarod 6 years. Open cut mines. Mud. Howling dogs all the time.

Charlie Strandberg went broke and Gus went to work in mines. Johnnie Beaton found gold in Iditarod in 1909. Stampede in 1910. Gus had horses in 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917 and hauled wood for miners. Otter Creek discovery. Cut ~~xxxxx~~ wood in winter. Tony Lindstrom was one of Gus' wood cutters. Wood for steam plants and steam used to thaw the ground for mining.

Riley Investment Co. came in. In Nome they found out that water would do the same as steam so they switched to water.

In 1932 Gus started to mine for himself. Got first tractor and in 1937 went from Iditarod and to Ophir Creek. Mined there 27 years when Gus retired. Retired in Fairbanks and lived in Lathrop Apartments.

When came in it took her 25 days. Going out took _____ days. Thirty miles below Tanana ice jam and spent 8 days in Ft. Gibbon...in fall 1919. Jam came down and knocked big hole in boat. Went to New York and east. Hurried to get back after New York!

Returning to Iditarod went to Wasilla by railroad and then dog team to Iditarod. Bought dog team from fellows from Bethel guys. Gus skied ahead and Ina mused team. Another old fellow with us with 5 dog team, "I had to break trail for him"

End reel 1 (one hour)

Miscovich family...Johnnie George, Howard, Andy....George oldest. Olga is yungest girl and in Seattle now.

Bears? Saw bear in San Diego zoo. Had a big bear bother her at Iditarod. Never shot gun except one time in Michigan when people were practicing.