

LENA PHIPPS and LILA MAE KING  
July 10, 1973

Mrs. Lena Phipps is the 1973 Queen Regent and was interviewed in her home at 407 11th Ave., Fairbanks. She lives there with her sister Mrs. Lila Mae King, both of whom are widows. Lila Mae enters into the conversation so we interviewed both at the same time. Noise in the background is the water pump. Lila was watering her yard...she's a prolific gardner.

Lena Phipps came to Alaska first in 1925, going to Seward where her sister Lila Mae Mitchell was living with her husband and young son. Lena was then a widow with a daughter 11 years old. Daughter's name was Frances Williamson. Lena's maiden name was Williams.

Lived in Seward two years. Came to Fairbanks in 1927...a two day trip. Lila Mae came with her to Fairbaks. Lila and her husband ~~had separated by then~~. in 1928 she married Walter Johnson. Trip up from Seward was in the summer time. Overnigheted at McKinley Park.

At Fairbanks they stayed at the Alaska Hotel, operated by Mr. and Mrs. Foster. Hotel located near the old Pioneer Hotel and Northern Hotel.

Lena and Lila and Lila's husband (and the two children) left Fairbanks and went to Grundler telegraph station near Big Delta. Lila said Grundler formerly was called McCarty but the name similarity with McCarthy caused the post office to change the name from Grundler to Big Delta. From Grundler they went up to the Good paster area.

Both children went with them and were educated by the Calvert course. Frances was later sent outside to Seattle for more schooling.

Lena born Mt. Olive, N.Carolina near Raleigh. ~~Born~~ Born in 1898, Sept. 7. Lived in Mt. Olive in childhood and then to Jacksonville Fla. Worked as waitress in Jacksonville.

Her trip to Alaska was just for a visit. Stayed 47 years. Still has brother and sister in Jacksonville, Fla.

Back to Lila (off the phone now) and Lena and the Goodpaster. Named after Billy Goodpaster. Billy was never on the Goodpaster. He was one of the surveyors and he surveyed the Voltmire (sp?) and when they named the rivers they mistakenly named the wrong river after Goodpaster.

Lila returned to Seward for a while with Mitchell (Ralph) then returned to Grundler and married Walter Johnson. Mitchell was in charge of Grundler when they went there. Walter Johnson was a miner and trapper when Lila Married him. He and his brother Lawrence Johnson were mining on Tenderfoot Creek, Lila said. Johnsons came in 1907.

Whole shebang (two sisters, new husband, two children) went to Goodpaster. Lena came back into Fairbanks later and put her daughter in school here. She worked for the Lunds. Frances went to the old Main School that burned.

Lund carried mail out to Delta. Lena and daughter lived ~~for~~ with the Lunds. Frances went to school here about 2 years and then Lena sent her out to Seattle where she lived with three old maid school teachers named Bee, Elizabeth and Harriet Lowing. Lena had made contact with them through their brother Steve Lowing who had been living at Delta. The Lowing sisters took Frances to Grand Rapids Michigan with them when they returned home. She continued schooling there and went into junior college. After jr. college she went into nursing training and graduated as a registered nurse.

Lena went back to Goodpaster with Lila when Frances went outside.

Lived in two room log cabin with Bob and Walter and Lila (Walter adopted Bob so Bob's name now is Johnson).

Grew vegetables and kept through winter in root cellar. Kept cabbage, potatoes, beets, carrots etc. etc. Cellar was in cool ground and about every third day would add wood to stove in cellar to keep it at certain temperature. Used bags of moss to cover door (for insulation). Poultry beets for chickens.

Kept chickens all winter...heated chicken house. Kept all but 24 hens and two roosters. Killed off the rest when it was cold enough. placed chickens in pan and froze and then poured water over so ~~water~~ ice covering enclosed the chicken. Then they packed them in the snow for safe keeping.

Grew just about everything they needed. Had all the fresh eggs they wanted all winter. In spring they raised friers and kept until fall. Would ~~swap~~ swap ~~xxx~~ roosters with people in town once in while so the stock would keep good.

Killed caribou for meat. Corned lots of it. Canned some, too. Canned in jars (Mason and Kerr jars). Fish, too. Grayling. Salmon was too far gone by the time they reached the Goodpaster. Salmon was going back to spawn and die. Used dead salmon for garden fertilizer.

Sometimes had mountain sheep and moose.

Went up the Goodpaster river using an outboard ~~motor~~ motor though they had to "poll" up certain sections that were too low in water level.

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About the second creek up from cabin there is Frances Creek, named after Lena's daughters.

Lena baked every Monday...sourdough~~z~~ break, cakes, cookies, pies. She cooked sourdough pancakes and steak or ham or sausage. Picked berries and canned them. Picked a lot of berries and rose hips for chickens.. "Never had a sick chicken". Made ~~gs~~ Low bush and high bush cranberries. Salmon berries. Rhubarb, Celery. Very seldom could they raise potatoes because of frosts. Planted potatoes about 30 miles downriver. Would tend the potatoes every time they went ~~by~~ by and would harvest them in the fall when they were freighting in supplies. Potato patch was where south and north forks of Goodpaster came together.

Lila had three weather schedules a day with CAA and two a day with Lou Joy in Fairbanks. Started weather reporting (first report at 5 a.m.) \_\_\_\_\_

Lena lived on Goodpaster four years...total.

Came into Fairbanks from Goodpaster and went to work for Margaret Ofsted (name was Margaret Burgie then). Margaret ran the Northern ~~Hotel~~ Hotel....until it burned down. Then she married Phipps...in 1952. Oscar Phipps. Had known him for years. Lived at 214 Third Ave. until the flood.

Oscar worked as engineer at F.E. power house. He first came to Alaska coast in Juneau and logged. Came to Alaska in 1910. Then he worked for White Pass Railroad as a fireman on engine. Then he came to Alaska Railroad and quit that and went to work for F.E. Oscar was chief engineer. He retired from F.E. in ~~1967~~ \_\_\_\_\_ when he was 67 years. Total of 35 years with F.E. He helped build the plant.

Oscar had lots and lots of pictures of F.E. years, but flood ruined most of the pictures.

Oscar was sick in 1967 during flood. Lena took him out to Portland that winter. She brought him back and he lived two months after that. He has a son, Jack Phipps, who runs Butchers Lodge about 20 miles away from Paxson Lodge. Jack Phipps lives off college road not too far from Scotts (Jo and Dick Scott).....

Married Oscar in 1952. Other clubs? Only Pioneers. Oscar active in sportsmens organization. Helped organize the Tanana Valley Sportsmans Association. Other organizers were Sam White and Irving McK. Reed. Also Doc Huffman....and Bob Huffman.

Lena and Lila talk about Tan. V. Sportsmens Association and the way it has gone...they didn't like the way ~~xxxxxx~~ it is now....Lila talks about how one moose bull services many ~~b~~ cows.

Caribou migrations....? Must be about 10 years since they have come through in big migrations. That mountain up in the Shipcreek area some times looked like a living, moving mountain. "crazy yahoos from the lower 48 """" Lila gets worked up over these crazy yahoos....

Lena and Oscar used to go up to the summit (12 Mile Summit on Steese Highway) to watch caribou runs....just to look and some times they would take one if they had ~~xpx~~ to. NO! Lena said, later. They never would take one. The only thing they took was pictures.

Ruth Schriber took pictures when they went to Summit.

Then talk about Queen's robe (with brief intermission about Margaret Ofsted and our lunch in the 10th floor Petroleum Club last winter just before Lena went outside).

Visited Johnny Frasco at his mine at 12 Mile Summit (or ~~ha~~ vicinity)

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Lena and Oscar went outside several times...to Ohio where Oscar's sister is still living. Oscar Feb. 17,

Lena's birthday and Mike's and her son's (George Dalton) are close. George and Mike born on Sept. 10. Also Bernice Alridge. Also Tom Paskvan's wife is also Sept. 10th.

Harrowing experiences? Fell in river (Goodpaster River) and brother-in-law pulled her ~~ax~~ out. Lila says "And we call that her swimming hole. Everbody has a swimming hole. I have one, too." Lila said she was watching the hills for wild game when the boat rounded a turn and she ~~a~~ took a dip in the river. That happened more than once...for others but not Lila and Lena...Lila had seen three caribou when she went in that time.