

FORBES BAKER - Fairbanks

First reel was recorded in 1973. Forbes talks about his days when he was a linotype operator for the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

He left the News-Miner and worked as a machinist for Wien. Ernie Hubbard and Fritz Wien worked with him. He stayed with Wien for four or five years and then went to work for the CAA (later the FAA) as machinist and mechanic. Retired from FAA in 1959.

Ran for legislature and was elected. Served 1961, 1962, 1963 and 1964. Did not run again.

American Legion. Was charter member of the Dorman H. Baker Post in Fairbanks, Dorman was his brother who died during World War I. Died of pneumonia in California.

Masons: Joined the Masonic order in 1922. He is a past master of the lodge, serving that post in 1928. Was elected secretary in 1939 and held that post for 30 years!

Other groups he's active in: Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo No. 4 and the Rotary Club. Past president of the Pioneers

In June of 1973 Forbes went to England but returned in time for Pioneers' Golden Days activities.

Asked if he attended the July 15, 1923 ceremony in Nenana when President Warren Harding came to Alaska and drove the golden spike, connecting the railroad at the Tanana River bridge. He did not go, but he remembered the visit in Fairbanks of the President. Harding was invited to a special Masonic meeting.

A man by the name of E.H. Mack drove the President around town and in the parade. Mack had just bought a new red car without a top and was very proud of same. Forbes said Mack never shifted out of first gear for the first six months he owned the car..didn't know how to do it. Finally, Forbes said, a mechanic got a hold of Mack and showed him how to shift gears.

Mayor was a man by the name of Markham (spelling uncertain). [Some old timers tell the story that the mayor was living with one of the women from "the Line" and the more proper matrons in the town went to him and told him he had to marry the woman...that they would not permit the Mayor of Fairbanks to greet the President of the United States unless he married the woman whose bed he shared. He married the lady friend]. Forbes did not tell that story, but some of the old timers in town know it and tell it on the sly...not on tape!

(more)

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Forbes recalls when Howard Hughes stopped in Fairbanks on his flight around the world. Hughes had filled his twin engine plane with ping pong balls for floatation in case he went down in the Atlantic or Pacific. He had no more water to fly over after re-fueling in Fairbaks so all the ping pong balls were dumped out. Forbes says most every kid in town went home w that day with his pockets full of ping pong balls.

Forbes wife Hertha died in 1967. He has son Forbes; daughter Evolyn of Fairbanks; daughter Helen Bowles in Louisiana.