Series: Tanana Yukon Historical Society tapes

Forbes Baker, born Jan. 1, ~~1888x~~ 1893 in Oregon.

Came to Skagway with his mother and brother Dorman in 1902. His father was freighting on the Yukon River. In the fall of 1904 Forbes came to Fairbanks to join his father. the father and son wintered in Fairbanks and sent for Mrs. Baker and Dorman the next year. That first winter in Fairbanks Forbes delivered the Fairbanks Times newspaper to Ester every day on foot...13 miles each way.

He attended grade school in Fairbanks. In 1910 he left Fairbanks and joined the U.S. Signal Corps. Spent five years in the army (including a stint along the Mexican border chasing Poncho Villa who, Forbes recalls, spent lots of his time in Los Angeles living it up wheil the U.S. Army scouts looked for him).

Forbes joined the U.S. Navy and completed machinists training. He had taken some machinist training in Fairbanks. During World War I Forbes remained in the navy, making many, many trips to Europe and back transporting troops.

It was while his shipp the Mississippi was in the Navy yard in Brooklyn that Forbes met his wife Hertha. Hertha, who died in 1967, came to the Naval hospital as a visiting volunteer to help the convalescants....she was part of a church group that did this volunteer work. Reason Forbes was in the hospital was m "yellow Jaundice"...recalling that he was"the yellowest white man you ever did see".

The were married in 1920. After being discharged frm the Navy Forbes went to Akron, O. and worked for Goodyear Tire Company. Later he went north to Michigan (I think) and worked for a while.

In 1921 the Baker's first child Evolyn (now mrs. John Melville of Fairbanks) was born. The trio headed north to Fairbanks where Forbes' had a job offer. They traveled to Skagway by ocean vessel from Seattle...then by Whtie Pass RR to Whitehorse. Then by river boat to Dawson. They took the last through boat (Dawson to Fairbanks) that ever ran the complete route.

In Fairbanks Forbes worked for the Northern Commercial Co. machine shop (which he and another man opened up after a long closing period). He also worked for the Alaska Railroad in the machinist shop. While he worked for the Alaska RR he began helping out at the News-Miner(mechanically). The lineotype operator was sick much of the time so the editor talked Forbes into learning the business of setting type. He worked for the NewsOMiner for 17 years as lineotype operator.

He is a charter member of Dorman H. Baker American Legion Post in Fairbanks. Named after Forbes' brother Dorman who died in World War I.

He was secretary of the Masonic Lodge from ~~1940~~ 1939 until his retirement

(more)

from the post in ~~1959~~ 1969--------a total of 30 years. His wife Hertha was similarly active in the womens' lodge.

Forbes belongs to the Pioneers of Alaska and hs gone through the chairs in that organization, serving as ~~a~~ president one year.

After quitting the News-Miner Forbes worked in the machine shop at Wien Airlines for several years. Then he went to work in the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) shop. In 1959 he retired from that federal job.

In 1960 he ran for the House of Represnetatives and was elected He served 1961 throug 1965 with Jim Binkley and Ed Baggen and was known as one of the "three B" in the House.