

[Taped in lobby of the Travelers Inn, Fairbaks. There is background noise, but it was expedient that Forbes be taped before leaving for winter. Was difficult getting together with him]

Forbes Baker was born Jan. 1, 1893. He came to Skagway, Alaska in 1902...6th of May, 1902. His father had come up north in 1898-99 and had hiked over the Chilkoot Pass with his gear. He went on to Rampart with two scows of food and supplies for the Rampart mining camp. At Rampart he sold the scows for the sawed lumber in them.

Forbes' brother Dorman and Forbes (and some other kids) walked to Dyea and up the Chilkoot Trail. He also hiked up the White Pass. No road between Dyea and Skagway...just a foot path. Dyea never had a wharf. Goods were lightered into shore.

Rampart discovered in 1896...same time as Klondike.

Forbes father (Walter Childs Baker) received groceries and supplies from Ross Higgins several seasons and took them on to Rampart for sale. He walked out over the ice once (going back through Dawson and Skagway). Two other years he went out via the Yukon. E.R. Peoples (stores in Fairbanks and Skagway) built a river vessel, the "Tana" and hired Baker to pilot it since he'd had experienc on theYukon. Baker went to work for Peoples store in Fairbanks. In 1904 the father sent for Forbes and Forbes arrived about July 1st, 1905. In 1906 Dorman and Mrs. Baker came up from Skagway. Forbes recalls that he landed in Chean and took train to Fairbanks. There were no coaches. He sat onaa bench on a flatcar. The family lived in apartment over Peoples' store which was located where the Nordale Hotel stood for so long.

Father: Walter Childs Baker  
Mother: Evoleanno Duffy

Forbes recalls his first 4th of July in Fairbanks...grease pole, foot racing, fireworks. Fred Johnson's brother trying to walk the tight rope (cable) across the river and falling into Chena River. Johnson later drowned in the river.

(more)

Forbes left Fairbanks in 1910. His father had died in 1907. Mother re-married Roy Ferguson in the winter of 1910. Forbes worked for the Northern Commercial Co. When he left Fairbanks he had a transportation pass from the N.C. and \$40 in his pocket.

He wound up in the Army.....chasing Q Poncho Villa up and down the southern U.S. boundary. He was in the Army signal corps and they needed communications troops on their hunt for Poncho Villa. Shipped 700-800 to southern California, Arizona dn. and New Mexico. Troops lived "under canvas" all during the year they were trying to locate the Mexican bandit (never did catch him). Back from the border he was assigned to Ft. Shafter, Hawaii and then back to the United States. Was mustered out just before Christmas, 1912.

In their communications network, the Signal Corps men would tie their lines into the barbed wire fences. Farmers used the second wire from the top for communications. They would run the wire up and over gates and through the fences to neighboring farms. The Morse Code played havoc with farmers' conversations.