

## ESTHER OLIVER HALL - Fairbanks and Central

August, 1973

REEL 1

Mrs. Hall spends her summers in Alaska and her winters in Sacramento where one son and his family live. She hopes to return to Alaska for good to finish her life where she started it.

Esther Hall was born in Douglas, Alaska and grew up there. She was born Aug. 31, 1899. Her parents had been married in Sitka by the Episcopal Bishop Rowe.

At Central this year she is staying in a cabin belonging to Henry and Delle Choates. She mentions Agnes Schlosser in Elfin Cove who taught in 20 or 22 different Alaskan villages. She is retired now.

Mrs. Hall graduated from high school in 1916. Other person was Ruby Johnson (still living in Arizona...Yuma..in winters). She went to Bellingham Normal School and got a two year teaching certificate. She also attended the University of Washington two summers. She returned to Douglas and got a teaching job at the Perserverance Mine about 10 miles up in the mountains from Juneau. She taught there the year of 191801919. She describes how one got into the mine (and out of it) in the winter months when the trail was closed. Entered the mine, rode flat car, took passenger cube up shaft, and down tramway to the shore. From shore she rode the "Lone Fisherman" boat to Douglas. Same boat transported people back and forth between Juneau and Douglas (pre-bridge days).

The next year she went to the Esca Coal Mines out of Anchorage to teach. She describes Anchorage in 1919. She took train to the mines. Mrs. Sumner Smith met her. Mr. Smith was mine superintendent. She met John B. Dixie Hall there. Taught there two years and then went to Chikaloon to teach for one year. Describes the new town of Chikaloon which the U.S. Navy built.

She and Dixie were married in Anchorage in 1922. Dixie got his name when some wag asked him (he had southern accent sort of) if he was from Dixie (he wasn't) and the name Dixie stuck all his life. She said Dixie came to Alaska in 1915 to Anchorage. They were just surveying the town then and laying out the streets. No houses were built then. Col. Meares was the railroad superintendent. She remembers Donald McDonald the railroad engineer (later highway engineer). Tells about being in Nenana when President Warren Harding and Herbert Hoover visited. Grand reception. But the music left something to be desired. Cap Jones ("HurryUp Jones"), engineer on the bridge job. organized a band. Many of the men in the band had not played an instrument for many, many years. But they practiced and played for the president. The Halls laughed about that band incident for years and years.

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