

BENTLEY (BEN) FALLS - Livengood

July 1973

REEL 1

Ben Falls was born in London, Ontario, Canada (about 100 miles from Toronto). His father was Henry Falls. He's named after a minister. Mother's name was Jane. Ben was the youngest. Sisters: Elizabeth, Lilly, Rose, Emma. Ben's mother died when he was about two years old. When he was 17 he left home. He rambles on about the farm in Ontario.

Left home and went to Vancouver. Worked in sawmills or farms or anything to make a buck. His mother died of TB. His father spent lots of money on his mother's health and as a result lost the family farm.

Ben came to Alaska in 1903. Worked in sawmills in Ontario until he had enough money to go west. Landed in Vancouver in 1898, he thinks. Worked there for several years...mostly sawmill work. In 1903 he headed for Skagway and Whitehorse. Got job as a carpenter working on boats in Whitehorse. Then he took a river boat and worked on it (carpentry) to Dawson and on down to the Koyukuk. Then he went up the Koyukuk to Bettles, the head of navigation. Took on a broke partner at Bettles. Bought a partially finished poling boat at Bettles and poled 100 miles or so up to the Hammond River. Then he poled to a mining camp at Cold Foot.

Ben was born July 20, 1879.

Ben rambles back and forth between Ontario and the west and Bettles and the up-river trek.

Purpose of our visit was to celebrate his birthday which we thought was July 12, this date. His birthday is eight days later. At any rate, we had a birthday party...complete with cake but beginning with a bottle of Calverts which we passed around a few times. Ben finally turned up his hearing aide which improved things a bit...noise wise. Present for this party were Carl Parker (another gold miner in the Livengood area), Alaska Linck and Jack Linck (and Jack's puppy Gillhouley) and Mike Dalton. We had brought, besides Calverts and beer, fried chicken, potato salad, beer, cake, sandwiches and fruit.