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ORAL HISTORY
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ORAL HISTORY BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

NAME: Louis Lawrence RENNER
(first) (middle) (last)

(NICKNAME:) _____ (MAIDEN NAME:) _____

MAILING ADDRESS: 1312 Peger Road Fairbanks AK 99709
(city/state/zip)

DATE OF BIRTH: April 25, 1926 BIRTHPLACE Bismarck, No. Dak
(city/state)

SPOUSE: _____

MARRIAGE DATE: _____ PLACE: _____

CHILDREN: _____

ALASKAN RESIDENCY: since August, 1958

OCCUPATION/PROFESSION: Catholic Priest, Editor,
Historian Professor of German,
Emeritus, Univ. of Alaska, Fairbanks

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT IN RELATION TO ORAL HISTORY:

INTERVIEWER: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____ TAPE NUMBER: 315

Father Louis L. Renner

Father Louis Renner, S. J. wanted to come to Alaska ever since he was a boy. As a young seminarian in 1946, he wrote to Father Lafortune of King Island about the possibility of working and studying the native language there. However, Renner came to Fairbanks instead to teach at Monroe High School and serve as chaplain on the University of Alaska campus.

His superior, Father George Boileau, wanted Renner to study for a doctorate in history. Having received a master's degree in philosophy, Father Renner chose that field.

Father Boileau thought that it was important for Jesuits to teach in an institution of higher education. Since it was unlikely that the Jesuits would have their own school, they looked to the University of Alaska in Fairbanks as a way to achieve that goal. After receiving his doctorate at the University of Munich in 1965, Father Renner returned to Fairbanks and accepted a position at the University of Alaska, teaching German since there were not any philosophy positions open at that time. Father Renner had grown up in a German speaking home, learning English when he entered school.

Father Renner applied for a sabbatical leave during the 1975-76 academic year, spending that time to write a book about Father Lafortune. With Father Anable due to retire as editor of the Alaskan Shepherd, Father Renner was asked to step into that position. He left the University in 1980 to take on his new duties and to continue writing about pioneer Jesuit

missionaries in northern and interior Alaska. Since that time, Father Renner has written other books and published numerous articles in the Alaska Journal and the Alaskan Shepherd. In the future, he hopes to write a detailed account of the Catholic missions in Alaska, doing research in the archives from the west coast of the United States to the Vatican library in Rome.