

H97-175-30

Adriana Coyle

February 23, 1961

Fairbanks, Alaska

Tanana Yukon Historical Society meeting

Adriana Coyle left Tacoma, Washington to come to Alaska. They left the first part of July and arrived in Dawson on the thirteenth of July. The White Pass Yukon Railroad was not connected at that time. They had to take a little boat down Lake Benjamin and Bennett. Her father and uncle were working on a mining claim on the El Dorado. She remembers putting her tongue on a steam pipe in the winter. In 1902 they moved to Dawson. She started in a new school. She remembers going to the dances on the weekends with her parents. In 1907 her father was mining on Dome Creek and they came to Fairbanks for a visit. They returned to Dawson in the fall. In the fall they walked from Dome to Cleary. They took the small train back to Fairbanks and got the last boat. When she returned to Dawson she learned to dance from a Scotch dance instructor. They practiced in the fire hall which later became the town museum. They always celebrated the fourth day of May with May pole dances. Another celebration was the midnight sun celebration. People seemed to make their own entertainment. They were always busy in the winter. They used to slide on the hill in the afternoons. The water man would water the hills down and it made excellent sliding. They used to use a dishpan to slide down the hill. The older people would go bobsledding at night. They would slide all the way down to the river. They lived near Robert Service. He always had something to say. In the early days of Dawson there were thousands of people. By the time they left in 1910 the population was much smaller. Her father mined on Thirty Above Bonanza which was seventeen miles from Dawson. In the summer they would bicycle up to see their father. She said they never thought about bears. In Dawson they never had to use head nets but when they lived on the creeks they did. Someone from the audience asked about some of the people that lived in Dawson. Adriana said Judge McCally's son and Judge McConnick's daughter attended school with them. She remembers saying prayer at the beginning of the school day. She remembers taking twelve subjects at a time in high school. They graduated in three years instead of four years. She thought it was more difficult back then. She attended school with Mrs. George Black. There was also a Catholic school in town. Marilyn Steinway was a friend of hers. Whenever the women went somewhere they took their children with them. They didn't leave them at home. There were always a lot of excursions in the summer. In 1905 engineers came to the Dawson country. She met her husband there for the first time. Adriana remembers meeting Chief Isaac. The Natives would come up from ^{Nome} Vetie. In the winter they had a skating rink for hockey and there was a curling rink alongside it. They had a swimming pool in the summer. Adriana talked about Phil Creamer. Someone from the audience asked about the rest of her family. Adriana said her father, Arnie Lutro, came up to Dawson before they did in 1897. He came down the Yukon River and out through Nome in 1899. She and the rest of the family, her mother and brother, Arthur Lutro, came to Dawson in 1902. Her father's brother, Olaf Lutro, was mining in Circle in 1894. He returned to the Outside in 1898. Someone from the audience asked about Robert Service. Adriana said he was a bank clerk in Dawson. They had some of his books in school. They

never thought he would become so well known. Someone from the audience asked how they dealt with mosquitoes. Adriana said they used brack and wore head nets when you walked out in the country. Because of the smoke in Dawson they didn't have to worry about mosquitoes. When you get down into the tundra there were a lot of mosquitoes. They also used citronella.

She said they did have electricity in Dawson when they first arrived. When they were on the creeks they used kerosene lamps.

They went Outside in 1904. They went back to Minneapolis for a visit. They stayed with her mother's family.

Adriana talked about the food they had in Dawson. They ate rabbits and ptarmigan. They could get beef in Dawson. They trailed the cattle from the coast into Dawson. They also had a slaughterhouse in Fairbanks in 1907.

Someone asked how they traveled when they went outside. Adriana said they took a boat up the river and then took the train in Seattle. In 1911 they took a trip and traveled over the ice.

Someone asked if life was hard for women in Dawson. Adriana said she doesn't remember any hardship. She said if it was -45 or colder they didn't go to school.

Everyone had gardens in Dawson. They lived in Dawson until 1911.

Adriana talked about Yukon Gold Company coming into Dawson and took up quite a few of the mining claims. A lot of people went down to Fairbanks at that time because a strike was on. Quite a few of them went Outside.

Someone asked if they used a gold standard for payment and asked about the cost of living. Adriana said they used currency then. She thought the cost of living was higher at the present time. They didn't have any food problems. They didn't have a lot of things fresh things up there. Nowadays everything is flown in. She talked about the different clothing they wore. They wore some fur.

After they left Dawson in 1911 she went out to attend school. They planned to live in Florida but they ended up in Mt. Vernon, Washington. She was there for six years. She returned to Alaska in 1917 to visit in Ruby. She was married in Alaska.

Someone asked if they could play this tape in Dawson. Adriana said there were very few people left in Dawson that she knew.