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Tom Jones

Fairbanks, Alaska

March 15, 1961

Tanana Yukon Historical Society meeting

Tom Jones talked about his father coming to Dawson in 1892. Tom came up to Alaska in 1911. His father was one of the early miners in Dawson. His family owned the Klondike Ranch. His mother ran the Klondike post office. He considers his father a pioneer. Tom said he has pretty much lived off the country in Alaska. He has trapped fur and bought fur. He has been in the wood business. He has chopped wood for a living. He has hauled it and sold it. He worked for the marshal's office for a couple of winters. When he was in Fort Yukon he had to accompany Marshal Spencer to pick up a mentally ill person. People were afraid of him, but he seemed perfectly sane when they brought him into town. In Fort Yukon in the early days there was a lot of illegal cohabitation. He had to subpoena the witnesses. They covered the Porcupine, Chandalar and Kuskokwim Rivers. The grand jury was held in Fairbanks. He had to round up the witnesses. He used a dog team for travel. He has always run his own business. He talked about being a member of the army. He married his wife when he was in the army. He talked about his wife adapting to life in the country and the trail.

Someone from the audience asked about how his father traveled to Dawson. Tom said his father and uncle came to Dawson way before gold was discovered. His father packed from Skagway up over the mountains. They then whipsawed his own lumber and built a boat to travel down the Yukon River. His father discovered gold on the Seventymile and on Broken Neck River in Alaska. He named Curtis Bar Creek. His father and a partner bought a few lots in Dawson and later sold them for a big profit.

Someone from the audience asked him where he met his wife. Tom said he met her in Illinois. This was in 1918.

Harrie Hughes asked about his father's gold discoveries in Alaska. Tom said his father discovered gold on Broken Neck Creek and he was doing OK. His father returned to Dawson when gold was discovered there. By the time he got back to Broken Neck in 1911 it was all played out.

Someone from the audience asked about his trip up to Alaska. Tom said it was a wonderful trip. He had never been on the ocean before. It was an enjoyable trip. He talked about walking out to ~~the~~ where he was prospecting. It was a thirty-five mile walk. Someone asked where he landed first. Tom said they came in through Skagway and went by the White Pass Railroad to Dawson and then into Eagle. He was up there for five or six years. He then went to Nenana and homesteaded. They supplied vegetables all over Alaska including Fort Yukon. He told a story about Fannie Quigley. His father knew the Quigleys in the early days.

Someone asked who came in with his father in 1892. Tom said his uncle, Jay Cook, came with him. He is buried in Fairbanks. They came to the country to mine gold.

Someone asked him about his life as a trapper. Tom said he trapped on and off in the winter. His brother was a professional trapper. He took his family out on the trapline. Someone asked about prices for the vegetables he sold. Tom said most of the vegetables were five cents a pound. He raised cabbage, cauliflower, cucumbers, tomatoes, celery,

*Paul Hugo*  
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and head lettuce. The tomatoes were grown in a hothouse. He sold to restaurants and the Road Commission, too. Someone from the audience talked about the size of the vegetables in Nenana. Tom said he won first prize with several things at the fair. One of his cabbages was twenty-six pounds.

Someone asked about the group that climbed Mt. McKinley. Tom said they were strong healthy men.

Someone asked how many people lived in Nenana when he first lived there. Tom said there were quite a few people living there. The railroad was being constructed. The boat business was pretty big. The Yukon steamer ran regular trips. He talked about the Nenana Ice Classic. He talked about the time he won the Ice Classic.

Tom Arlon Jones was born in 1888 in Wyoming. His father's name was Frank A. Jones. His mother was Stella Jones. His sister's name was Elizabeth. His brother's name is Frank K. Jones. His wife's name is Olive Crystal Jones. She was born in 1887 in Virginia.

Much of the beginning of the tapes is difficult to understand. Harrie Hughes talked about the plans for a memorial park in Fairbanks before the Chamber of Commerce Park and Recreation Committee including John Holmes, chairman. Harrie explains the progress of the resolution in the Alaska legislature.