

H97-175-36

Charles Larson, William Harrison

July 23, 1962

Fairbanks, Alaska

Charles Larson is interviewed by Harrie Hughes. Charles lives in Washington state. Charles G. Larson was born in Sweden and came to the United States in 1900. He worked in California for five years. He left for Alaska in 1905. They took the White Pass Railroad to Whitehorse, Yukon. They then walked to Dawson over Lake LeBarge. They arrived in good condition. After being in Dawson they got a job on Hunker Creek. They worked for Charles Freedman. In 1907 he bought a share in the mining plant and they shipped it down to Fairbanks. This was late in the fall and it was snowing sometimes. They tied up the boat at night and just traveled in the day. They arrived in Fairbanks and stayed in the Third Avenue Hotel. They stayed there a few days. They were looking for a place to mine. They went into partnership with John Butrovich. He had a lease on Fairbanks Creek. The following year they bought Butrovich out. They mined for eight years in that area. Their final year Freedman went down to a different strike. He mined his last year on Boulder Creek. In 1911 he met his wife at the Nordale Hotel. Her name is Ida Harlock Larson. They were married on July 18, 1912 at the Nordale Hotel. They have been married for fifty years and have returned to Alaska for a visit. They had four children: Carl, Hazel Anita, another son who is in the Air Force, and Jane. They have ten grandchildren. They left Fairbanks in the fall of 1914. They bought a dairy farm in Washington. Charles talks about his trip to Fairbanks and all the people who have made their trip enjoyable. They searched the Fairbanks Creek area for their camps and cabins. They visited Deep Creek, Bear Creek and Fish Creek. Ida Larson talked briefly about her time during Golden Days in Fairbanks during the past week. She enjoyed the parade and the flower show.

William Harrison Loerpabel

July 25, 1962

Fairbanks, Alaska

Irving Reed, interviewer

William Loerpabel was an early-day pioneer from Nome. He now lives in Tucson, Arizona. He came to Nome in 1900 with his father and mother. His father was a gold miner in Nome. He had worked in the Black Hills and in Dawson in 1898. His father worked the beach about three miles west of Nome. It was very active with all kinds of mining machinery. They lived in a small cabin built from drift logs for about two years. He was a young boy and doesn't remember a lot. He remembers landing at Nome. There were many tents on the beach. They had to pick their way among the tent posts. There was a sand spit that was covered in tents and some buildings. He attended school on the sand spit in Nome. Irving Reed talks about Nome. His father then went out to Iron Creek where he mined for many years. He and his

mother joined him later. They worked a claim on Dome Creek which was really a part of Iron Creek. They returned there for a number of years. His father left in 1918. He left for school in 1911 and came back to Nome in 1914 for a summer. Irving asked how they got to Iron Creek from Nome. Harrison said they traveled overland. It took them three days to walk the distance. It was about fifty miles. Even in later years they had to walk even after the railroad was constructed. The railroad was not in operation every year. The trestles would be washed out in the spring when the rivers broke up. They would go out every spring until freeze up in the fall. They lived in Nome during the winter. He attended grade school and high school in Nome. He attended school some of the time with Irving Reed. Jimmy Doolittle lived next door to them in Nome. Jimmy left Nome about 1906. He attended school on the sand spit for one year and then attended school in Nome. Irving asked if there was horse or dog transportation out to Iron Creek. Harrison said they did some walking every year no matter if the railroad was working or not. There was some horse transportation but they were a lot of upkeep. Some horses were used on Iron Creek but it was regular. One year he did come in with a team of horses but ordinarily they had to walk. They walked from Nome directly across to the mouth of Dexter Creek. There was a roadhouse there. Then they walked up Buster Creek. They then crossed over a mountain. They crossed the Flambo Creek to the Eldorado Creek and up the Venetia Creek to Iron Creek. They mined by placer mining. They mined to a depth of 6-8 feet. He describes his father's method of mining with a drain. Later years on Iron Creek they mined a bench. They had water coming in a ditch. The bench overburden was sluiced off and the concentrated material was worked in sluice boxes. It was almost all hand work. They moved material with hydraulic nozzles. In the creek bottoms it was all hand methods. It was all done by hand and that was the general practice all along the creeks. At the mouth of Discovery Creek they had more extensive hydraulic work. They used horses but there was always the problem of providing feed for the horses. His father sometimes hired men to work for him. Harrie asked where he was born. Harrison said he was born in South Dakota. His father was a pioneer of South Dakota. His father was employed by the Homestake Mine for many years. Harrison was born in 1892. He came to Nome in 1900. Harrison asked about the way of life in Nome. Harrison said it was a primitive life. They used driftwood for fuel which was very plentiful. He said there was coal available but you usually used what was available. They used willow wood on the creeks. Chopping willows and hauling them into camp was part of his job. A lot of hardships fell on the women who came north. They deserve a great deal of credit. They cooked on sheet iron stoves. Their cabin they lived in for two years had been built by friends of his father. The willow was green and they used it. They had to mix the small willows with the large ones. He liked the smell of willows burning. They didn't have any indoor plumbing. They bought water or he hauled water from Dry Creek. It was his job to fill the barrels and bring them home on sleds pulled by dogs in the winter. The mosquitoes were a real problem in the early part of the season. They didn't have any repellants. They had a hard time sleeping at night. They would smoke the tent out in the evening to get rid of the mosquitoes. They were a problem for several weeks. They had a very small garden with lettuce but they didn't have much. They ate a great deal of fish. They fished on the Pilgrim River which drained Salmon Lake. It was about five miles from their camp. They caught grayling and dolly varden. They worked ten hours a day all week so there wasn't a lot of time to fish. They got reindeer meat in Nome, but not on the creek. They imported their bacon, ham and canned meat. They had fresh eggs in the spring. His father worked in the winter. He freighted supplies by dog team to camp on Iron Creek. He cut wood. His

father always worked for himself. He was a very experienced miner. Harrison's grandfather came to Wisconsin from Germany in 1840.