

H97-175-39
Irving Reed
Tanana Yukon Historical Society meeting
October 31, 1963
Fairbanks, Alaska

SIDE A

Tape starts with the business meeting of the Tanana Yukon Historical Society. Minutes were read from the previous meeting on May 24, 1963. Delinquent member dues were discussed. The minutes from the organizational meeting from October 24, 1963 were read. They were holding the meeting at the Chamber of Commerce's cabin instead of their usual meeting place. Paul Griemann talked about the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce taking part in the park project. There was a plan to use the proposed park as the headquarters for the centennial celebration. Paul felt that the community was now behind the park. There was a discussion about seeing if they could use the visitor's cabin for all of their meetings. Members voted on the motion. Election of the open position follows. Letters to the Tanana Yukon Historical Society are read and discussed. Someone suggested having a guest speaker every meeting. It was also suggested that the speakers be recorded. Discussion about tape recorders follows. Committee members are asked to report on any new information. Frank Young talks about the establishment of geographic names in Alaska. A discussion of geographic names follows. Charles Keim talked about a memorial for pioneers. Bill Cashen comments about the centennial celebration for the state of Alaska.

SIDE B

Irving Reed arrived in Alaska in 1900. His father was a lawyer and judge. His mother was Ida McKinny Reed. He was born in Seattle. Irving said there was a discussion in 1924-25 in Whitehorse Smith's roadhouse in Fox about getting buffalo into Alaska. At the time he was surveying claims for the FE Company for patent. Irving talked about Sam White and a discussion they had about deer. Sam was setting up triangulation stations for the Geodetic Survey. Sam had commented about having deer in Maine despite having five feet of snow on the ground and cold winters. Irving thought it was a good idea. He returned to town in the fall. Jack Warwick and Frank Duphrene had come from Nome and they introduced Irving to Larry Palmer. They had several talks together about introducing game animals. In 1926 they had a meeting of the sportsmen in Fairbanks and they formed the Tanana Yukon Game Protective and Propagation Association. It was later called the Tanana Valley Sportsmen Association. Irving, George King and Lou Joy were officers. They decided to ask the territorial legislature for money for the introduction of white-tailed deer. Someone suggested introducing elk. Donald McDonald suggested buffalo. In the fall of 1926 Fred Johnston was elected to the territorial legislature. He got deer, elk and/or bison on a territorial stocking program and procured \$12,000 for the program. The Alaska Game Commission was to secure the animals and to disperse the money. In 1927 Irving was appointed to the Alaska Game Commission. In November 1927 they were told that bison

would be the only animals available for introduction in the spring of 1928. He was contacted by the superintendent of the National Bison Range and told to send someone to transport bison to Alaska from Montana. Dick Perkins was chosen to do this. They brought up 23 buffalo by the Northern Pacific Railroad and then transported on the steamer Northwestern. They arrived in Seward and transported by the Alaska Railroad to Fairbanks. They used trucks to take buffalo to the Big Delta River region. Three animals were kept in Fairbanks. Irving described unloading the buffalo. The animals were held in a corral for a couple of days. In the late 1930s there were 500 head. There are now about two hundred animals. In 1952 there was a planting made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Copper River Valley. They were brought over one by one and it took a few years before they formed a herd. There were about fifty of them by the 1960s. Irving said the buffalo were actually a reintroduction in Alaska. In response to a question from the audience Irving talked about buffalo being raised by ranchers along with cattle in other states. Irving talked about a state biologist blocking the introduction of elk to Interior Alaska. Irving talked about mule deer being found on the Stewart River.

Irving talked about the introduction of musk ox to Alaska. In 1906 he was working on the Stewart Peninsula and talked with a hunter who had killed a musk ox. One of the miners told him about musk ox on Chandler Lake. Irving read a lot about musk ox. In 1919 he talked with Charlie Brower who told him about the last musk ox that was killed south of Barrow in 1865. In 1921 he saw the collection of musk ox at the Bronx Zoo. He talked with Dr. Hornaday. In the late 1920s the Eskimo reindeer herds reached about 500,000, but they didn't have a market for their meat. President Bunnell was advocating native settlements in the hills behind the college and thought musk ox would be a better animal for them. Irving talked about Bill Albee and his wife who was a weaver. Bill was anxious to teach the Natives how to weave cloth. In 1928 C.C. Dickinson and a congressional agricultural committee came to Alaska. Irving had a conference with Dickinson and his party about musk ox. Senator Norbeck introduced a bill in congress for musk ox introduction in Alaska. President Hoover signed the bill in 1930. Musk ox were obtained in Greenland. In 1930 the musk ox arrived in Fairbanks via the Alaska Railroad. There were 17 calves, 16 yearlings and one two year old cow. In 1935 musk ox were shipped to Nunivak Island. The animals produce from 6-8 pounds of wool per year. Irving talked about John Teal.

In 1919 the Canadian looked into the domestication of caribou and musk ox. Teal considers them the most intelligent animal of all the herbivores. Teal had a ranch with musk ox in Vermont. Most bulls weigh about 900 pounds and the cows about 700 pounds. Teal had a bull that weighed about 1200 pounds. Irving shares photographs of musk ox. Someone from the audience asked about the musk ox on Nunivak Island. Irving said they had about 150 head on the island at one time before they were hunted. The hunting was stopped and they increased to three or four hundred. People asked if they were selling any wool. Irving said Teal wasn't selling any yet. He talked about the value of the wool. They can't shear the wool it has to be collected. Irving said John Teal wanted to bring his musk ox to Fairbanks. Patty was interested in getting a grant to bring them in and have an experimental station. They never got the grant. Teal got his musk ox from Canada. He made the film Arctic Roundup.

Someone from the audience asked about the yaks. Irving said he didn't have anything to do with them. He thought the yak experiment started about 1917. Someone else thought

they came to Fairbanks in 1929-30. Irving said Fred Johnston had charge of them in town. They crossed them with Galloway cattle. The cross was called a Galloyak. Irving couldn't raise the money to support them. The Department of Agriculture brought the yaks in originally.