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Vide Bartlett

November 22, 1965

Fairbanks, Alaska

At special meeting at Jim Cassady's home

Vide Jaustad Bartlett's father was born in Norway. He arrived in North Dakota at the age of ten. During the Spanish American War he headed west and wound up in Alaska instead of in the war. He joined in the search of gold. He was joined by Tony Trossett. They mined together for many years. They first mined Hunker Creek above Dawson and then moved to Cleary City in 1905 or 1906. Her mother came with the Rogers family who arrived in Skagway in 1902. Mr. Rogers was the superintendent of the White Pass and Yukon Railroad. Her mother was a companion for Mrs. Rogers.

Her parents met and married in Dawson. Vide was born a year later in Dawson. They followed the strike in the Fairbanks area. They mined on Two Above Cleary for two or three years. They made a living. In 1909 they bought Ten Below Cleary and they were very successful. She remembers Halley's comet on Cleary Summit. Cleary City was large at the time. The Nordale Hotel was there. There were many stores. The women would dress up in long skirts, gloves and hats. They would go berry picking in their dresses. The women did not wear men's clothing. She remembers young girls wearing overalls.

She talked about Dr. Danforth who rode a horse from Chatanika to Cleary City twice a week. She didn't like seeing him coming to town. He had an office in both towns. He finally moved to Iditarod. Dr. Sterns would sell notions up and down the creek. He would dye his hair. Big Erik or Red Erik Nelson lived in Cleary. He would drive the stage from Chatanika to Cleary in the summer and the winter. She talked about the stage in winter. They would go to dances in Cleary City. The AB Hall was the place for the dances. AB was the Arctic Brotherhood. It existed until 1912. They were a social organization. The children attended the dances, too. They had all night parties. Christmas was spent at the AB Hall. There were just a few children in the area and they were showered with gifts. In the winter of 1910 they traveled Outside. They went to Los Angeles and invested their money in a grapefruit ranch. They did not like living in Los Angeles and returned to Cleary. They did not have a lot of money. In the winter they moved to Fairbanks so that she could attend school. They had a cabin at Ninth and Lacey. The birch trees that her mother planted were still alive at the time of the interview. Vide continued school in Fairbanks and attended Main School. In 1921 they traveled to Los Angeles for her mother's health and graduated from high school. She remembers the cold days when she attended school in Fairbanks. She described the clothing and shoes that she wore. Her coats were handmade by her mother. She remembers one coat made out of a blanket and was lined in rabbit fur. She was an only child.

She talked about the Norwegians taking the name of the town they were from. There is a town of Jaustad near Oslo. Her paternal grandfather was the head farmer in the town of Jaustad.

Fairbanks from 1910-1925 was a very small town. She thought there were about 1200 people in the town. There were two hospitals, St. Joseph's Hospital and there was an Episcopal hospital near the site of the church. The Episcopal church closed down about 1918. She remembers the big fires in Fairbanks. There was a saloon on First and Cushman that burned for two or three days. Everyone went down to watch it burn.

There was a famous bartender in town named Bill McPhee. Harry D. Brown also lived in Fairbanks. He would carry two guns and collect bills. Vide said he never fired his guns.

Vide liked going to the mines in the summer. They were drift mining with large crews. Every mine had a bunk house and a mess hall. You would get the best workers if you had the best conditions. They worked a twelve hour day. In the spring they would get a litter of piglets. The pigs would live off the scraps of the mess house and would be butchered after freeze-up. They would keep the meat in old shafts in the winter. In about 1915 there were several cases of trichinosis in Fairbanks. Helen Durand and her mother both had severe cases of trichinosis. The Durands were on Little El Dorado Creek. Vide's family would also raise chickens for meat. From the Fourth of July on the miners would buy beer from perhaps the Fairbanks Brewery. The beer was delivered in bottles that were placed in large barrels. The barrels were kept in the front of the mess house. This would usually last through the month of July. There was the Festival of the Midnight Sun in Fairbanks that was a three day celebration. The ball game was started at this time. They played the game at midnight. All the streets were decorated. There was a society called the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden North. They always had a decorated float. She described the pin of the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden North. The society passed a regulation that required members to be born in Alaska. It was the end of the society because so many people were born in Dawson. It was revived for a short time in the 1920s. The Fourth of July celebration brought many people in from the creeks. The hotels would be filled. The men came in with plenty of money. George Herring was one of the great racers. Vide mentions Stella Herring, Boyd Herring, Mary Miller Bergland, Cliff Bergland, Charlie Guise, and Dorothy Readdy (Mrs. Ray Readdy) Someone asked about teacher's names. Vide talked about Mrs. Harris who was a strict principal. There was a citizen's committee to clean up the city of Fairbanks. Mrs. Harris was involved with them. Miss Carpenter was a sixth grade teacher. Miss Myrick was a Latin teacher and principal.

Vide said that Bob Bartlett was born in Seattle. He grew up in Fairbanks. His sister's name was Doris. As teenagers they would walk out to Birch Hill in the spring. They would pick crocuses and carry them back to town. They would have hay rides in the winter. They would travel out to Lazelle's farm. There were many home talent shows in town. Johnny Kelly was a performer and director. He would put on a variety show. One of the young teachers, Grace Clark put on many shows. Sam Godfrey put on a lot of minstrel shows. He also taught dancing.

Vide talked about the flu epidemic. She said it was a great disaster in Fairbanks. WWI was also disastrous to Fairbanks. Many of the young men never returned. Many of them left on the Canadian liner, the *Sophia* which wrecked outside of Juneau and all lives were lost. The flu took many lives in Fairbanks. The women who were not affected by the flu worked wherever they were needed. They helped to nurse the sick in the hotels. Many people took care of others in their neighborhood. She remembers helping in the hospital with Muriel Herring Johnson. The school was closed down. She stayed home to care for her mother and others in her neighborhood. She was fourteen years old at the time. She would make soup for everyone in the neighborhood. Vide also cared for Sam Papadapolis. He was always grateful for his care and would bring them fresh fruit. Mrs. Bunnell was also in their neighborhood. She was severely ill from the flu. There were many men who lived alone in the town who did not have anyone to care for them. After the epidemic there were many complications from the flu. Some of the doctors in town at the time were Dr. Sutherland, Dr. Hall, Dr. Dellaverne, and Dr. McCollum. She talked about Sister Romanoff.

Saturday night in town always had a public dance. Everyone would come to the dance. They lasted until five or six in the morning in the summer. She traveled to Livengood for a couple of summers about 1920. The post office was called Brooks. Brooks is now Livengood. She traveled by horseback once. Another time she traveled by the Carl White up the Tanana to the Tolovana and up to the log jam. The Carl White was a very small sternwheeler. Carl White was the owner. At the log jam they would take a tram to Brooks. The tram was fourteen miles long. There was a saw mill on the west fork of the Tolovana River about seven miles from Brooks. Her father bought the saw mill from Mr. Cascadan. The tram had open freight cars which were pulled by a modified dodge car. There were many porcupines that would get on the rails and cause problems. The saw mill was the only source of lumber in the area. There were big dumps of sawdust. Cy Perkins was a bootlegger who lived in the area. That was not his real name. He raised flowers and vegetables. He also had fighting roosters.

Cleora Cassidy Bachner also lived in Livengood after she married.

She had about thirteen people in her graduating class in high school in 1922. She had her last year of high school Outside. She attended school with Bob Bartlett. Bob attended the University of Washington and then attended the college in Fairbanks. She remembers meeting Bob Bartlett in 1912. He lived most of his life on Third Avenue near the cemetery. Dorothy Roth Loftus and Florence Roth Thompson were his neighbors. Vide's neighbors included Stella Herrington. She said many of the log houses have been covered. She remembers the first cars that came to Fairbanks. One of the first cars in town belonged to Clarence Bergland's family. Her father put together a car for her about 1920. Bob Bartlett's father was in the freight business. Bob's father was not a good driver. Her father started an automobile business. Her father brought in the first Franklin.