

Robert R. Martin, Sr.
Interview by Conner Sorensen, 3 April 1986
Juneau, Alaska



Biographical Information

Robert R. "Bob" Martin was born in Sitka in 1914. He has lived in Juneau, Sitka, and Kake, except for short periods in Yakutat, and Cordova. He has had a career in federal service as a post master and as an enrollment officer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He is now retired in Juneau.

In 1928, while still a student, Robert Martin became the secretary of the Juneau Camp of the ANB, which at that time was headed by Frank Mercer, one of the founders of the ANB. Since that time, the goals and organization of the ANB have been central to Robert Martin's concerns. He has held offices in the Juneau, Kake, Glacier Valley, and Sitka camps, and in 1980 he was elected Grand President of the Alaska ANB. As a permanent member of the Executive Council, he continues to play an important part in the affairs of the ANB. His wife, Stella, is past president of the ANS, and she also devotes much time to its concerns and organization.

Robert Martin has served on the Board of Directors of Sealaska Heritage Foundation since 1980. In 1986, he was elected Chairman of the Board of Sealaska Heritage Foundation.

In the interview which follows, Robert Martin recalls the incident in 1934, when he, Walter Soboleff, and Gibson Young applied for work with the CCC in Sitka but were rejected on the grounds that the CCC program under the Forest Service was intended for the relief of non-Native enrollees. The ANB response to this incident and similar incidents led to the mandate, in 1937, that 50% of all enrollees in the Alaska CCC must be Alaskan Natives.