

Summary for H75-09

Heine Schneider, Edward Keyes, A. Capewell, and B. McKanna with unidentified interviewers in Anchorage and Fairbanks, AK 1946-48

SIDE 1

Heine Schneider is interviewed on October 1, 1948 by an unidentified interviewer in Anchorage, AK. Schneider is a member of the Pioneers of Alaska, was the President of this organization at one time, and is Grand Chapman of the Grand Lodge of Pioneers of Alaska.

Schneider arrived in AK in 1909 as a steward aboard the steamer Dolphin. He wanted to see what AK was like. He commonly worked on boats before settling here, and says he "sailed before the mast." He had once worked on an Italian sailing ship, the Esmerelda, going from South America to Russia in 84 days.

He signed off the Dolphin in the Skagway port and took his payroll. He walked over the White Pass/Yukon Route, got a small boat on Lake Laberge, and floated down the Yukon River to Dawson. Though Schneider says larger gold strikes were over at that time, while he was working as a waiter on the riverboat Schwatka, the Sushanna gold strike took place, and he deserted his job on the river to mine at Sushanna. He made some friends while there: Jack Almond and Anthony J. Dimond (who are still living in Anchorage at time of interview). Schneider's mining was under the employ of a man named Hanshaw, and he didn't make very much money.

By the time he finally had a little money saved, the First World War had broken out, and he decided to join Boyle's Contingent and voyage overseas to fight. He traveled to Spokane, WA, where an aunt of his lived, and after being disqualified for service on account of injuries he'd received during the war in West Africa, he took his savings and sent for the "best goldmine" he'd ever possessed, the current Mrs. Schneider.

In 1916, he and his new wife landed on the mudflats where Anchorage is currently located. He worked several jobs on the Alaska Railroad, as section boss, and was finally "resigned by request," started fur farming and did quite well. At present he's interested in mining property in the Willow Creek District, the High Grade Mining Corporation, with his partner, Al Dotson, lessee and vice president of [an unintelligible] firm.

Schneider and his wife, Alice, raised 4 children in the Wasilla area. Their only son, Lincoln Peter, died, but their 3 daughters have given them 10 grandchildren (and almost 11) at the time of the interview.

Schneider is very impressed with all the crops grown in the Mat-Su Valley. On the train ride to the interview he saw fields of wheat, oats, and barley. As far as fishing goes, he believes the creek and lake should not be fished too intensively, for example in all seasons, because "that's burning the candle on both sides."

The interviewer talks about a lake on the road to Knik, possibly Lake Lucille, where he never caught a fish, though in the evening he could see the lake "boiling with fish." Schneider says fishermen have been catching fish right and left there, and he drifts into a commentary on the abundance of nature (ducks, fish, etc.) passing away with the coming of human civilizations, and the old days when he used candles for light, and a Yukon stove made out of two 5-gallon cans. Along with modern conveniences also

Hess describes climbing the Chilkoot Pass. An aerial tramway had been built to convey goods to the top of the summit. Hess and his outfit contracted with the Dyea-Klondike Transportation to take outfits to the summit for 5 cents/lb.

Lake Bennett? was still frozen when they arrived. They whipsawed logs to make lumber to build a boat—a pretty good boat. They had no problem in making it to Dawson. The boat had a square sail. When they were halfway across the lake, the wind of their particular section of the lake stopped. Hess could see more than 150 boats becalmed, moving about. Assuming each boat had 5-6 people aboard, that made 750-900 people in that flotilla.

They made it through the Whitehorse Rapids largely without incident. One man on the bow caught his oar in the current and came near to being thrown overboard, but recovered.

Dawson City was very crowded. The shore was lined with boats 4-5 deep for a mile or more. To get ashore, you had to climb over 2-3 other boats. Hess considered the prices very moderate on the Chilkoot Trail, taking the freighting conditions into consideration. Food prices in Dawson then would not have been out of line with food prices in Fairbanks in the 1940s. From Seattle to Dyea, 1st class steamer fare was \$20.00 and freight was \$16/ton.

Hess and his party stayed in Dawson about 2 weeks, traveled around the creeks, did a little panning and concluded that there wasn't any opportunity in Dawson. The party split up, with 4 of the men continuing on to Eagle, AK. At Eagle, after the court was established, Hess was admitted to the bar and later invited to join the district attorney's office.

Hess came to Fairbanks in 1903. The population was about 3,000-4,000. Tents were everywhere; there were few completed buildings. The only two buildings he remembers being finished were Barnette's Trading Post and a little log cabin next to that.

Sam Bonnifield asked Hess to form a bank in Fairbanks. In 1905 he and some other partners formed the First National Bank. Hess feels that the economic future of Fairbanks will be tied to how long the gold mines continue to operate and how long and to what extent the military post (probably Ladd Field, although he doesn't specify) is maintained. Hess is against statehood.

SIDE 2

E. B. Collins is not interviewed. Instead he talks about the history of early Fairbanks and the Pioneers of AK on 9/16/47. Chapters (Nome, Candle, and Saint Michael) decided to form the Grand Igloo in 1908. Otto Nelson, and several others who attended the initial miners meeting in 1902 to name the camp were still alive in 1947.

In 1909, there was a meeting held to form the local chapter of the Pioneers of AK; 278 people signed up. Bill McPhee was chairman; Harry Quib was secretary. Collins also goes on to list the distinguished members of Pioneer Igloo #4. The Pioneers of AK chose the Forget-Me-Not as the state flower.

Cecil H. Clegg (Judge) is interviewed by Al Bramstedt on 9/24/47 in Fairbanks, AK. He came to AK from CO. His 2 brothers had stampeded to Klondike and told him

that there would be an opening for an attorney in Nome. Clegg had just been admitted to the bar in 1899 and was working at the office of Charles H. Toll.

Clegg took the steamship Ohio from San Francisco to Nome in 1900. It had about 600 passengers. Leonard Seppala and Pete Peterson (guard at the Federal Jail) were both fellow passengers. Once they reached Nome, they were quarantined for a week or two because of the threat of smallpox from the ship to the town. Passengers could not go ashore until they had been vaccinated and some became ill from the vaccine—or the threat of being vaccinated.

He arrived in Nome in the latter part of June 1900. Clegg pitched a tent at the first handy place, which turned out to belong to someone else. The next morning he was ordered off. Clegg went to work in the office of Judge Charles S. Johnson for 14 months. The bulk of business was defending original stakers of Anvil Creek and Dexter Creek against claim jumpers. This case was described in Rex Beach's book *The Spoilers*. Clegg feels that Beach's description was very accurate. Clegg stayed in Nome 2 years.

Clegg was appointed by Judge Wickersham as the first U. S. Commissioner at Nushagak (Bristol Bay region). Canneries were surprised and none too happy to see a revenue cutter. The next year (1903/04?) he was sent to Valdez by Judge N. B. Harlan, U. S. attorney 3rd Division. From Valdez, he went to Seward as it was becoming populated due to the railroad.

He came to Fairbanks in March, 1907. It was a real town, largely rebuilt since the fire of 1906. Clegg was Assistant U. S. Attorney. He served as Special Assistant Attorney in Iditarod during the rush and at Ruby (1911-1912). He saw pretty much all the gold strikes that happened in AK after 1900.

Clegg was judge of the 4th Division for 12 years. He was instructed to go out to villages to naturalize citizens—McGrath, Bethel, Wiseman, and Ruby. He traveled by dog team and plane. The price by plane from Fairbanks to Bethel was \$1,500 round-trip.

Seventy-five to 100 Athapaskans used to live at Sakhakaket or Harding Lake. They all have (at the time of interview) died out. Clegg first visited Harding Lake in 1921. The Salcha Indians used to visit Harding Lake for fishing purposes, but had suffered so many drownings that they viewed the lake as being inhabited by evil spirits and kept away from it. Clegg pioneered Harding Lake as a summer resort for Fairbanksans, and a road was built to it.