



1010-30060

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

The Elmer E. Rasmuson Library  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-1005

ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, Fred A. Beeler, of  
name

1700 Bronson Way # 252,  
street or P.O. box number

Kalamazoo, Michigan 49009,  
city state zip

transfer to the University of Alaska Rasmuson Library my  
title, interest, and copyright to the interviews recorded  
with me on July 17, 1991, 19    ,  
month/day yr

to be used for scholarly purposes.

Fred A. Beeler  
signature

July 17, 1991  
date

Fred Beeler

Like many students during the early days of the University of Alaska, Fred Beeler met President Charles Bunnell before arriving on campus. The two met on a boat the summer of 1928. Beeler arrived in Fairbanks that fall semester to study mining engineering.

In exchange for room and board, Beeler worked the kitchen, peeling potatoes, filling the coal buckets, or whatever chores the cook, Ann Luke, had in mind. He lived in the College Dorm, a two story wooden building near the administration building.

Money was tight in those days. To save taxi fare to town, Beeler and his friends walked the train tracks, straddling the rails tight rope fashion. This route also was a couple of miles shorter than College Road.

Dean Ernest Patty found a summer job for Beeler at the Kennecott Mine north of Cordova, Alaska. He later worked for the F. E. Company, (Fairbanks Exploration Company) for \$175 per month which included room and board.

Students had petitioned President Bunnell to eliminate Christmas vacation and dismiss classes earlier in the spring. Most out of town students could not afford to go home for Christmas anyway. Bunnell and the Board went along with the request for the most part which allowed students to start work earlier in the summer.

Between work and school Beeler and friends managed to have fun - "as long as it didn't cost any money."

One January day in 1929, he wanted to liven things up a bit on

campus and suggested forming a new club. P. J. Doheny suggested a "billiard club." However, the club bore little resemblance to billiards except for the members' shave heads painted with red numbers. Such notoriety extended beyond campus; a picture of the club reached the Seattle newspapers.

By his senior year, Beeler lacked just six hours to complete his undergraduate degree. The college needed someone to teach a math class. He accepted and taught full time the next two years, forsaking mining engineering for teaching, a decision he has never regretted.



ORAL HISTORY BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

NAME: Fred A. BEELEER  
(first) (middle) (last)

(NICKNAME: ) \_\_\_\_\_ (MAIDEN NAME: ) \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: 1700 Bronson Way #252  
(city/state/zip)

DATE OF BIRTH: 3/8/08 BIRTHPLACE Bluffton, Indiana  
(city/state)

SPOUSE: Isabel Jackson Beeler

MARRIAGE DATE: 8/29/36 PLACE: Allegan, Michigan

CHILDREN: None

ALASKAN RESIDENCY: 1928 - 1933

OCCUPATION/PROFESSION: Retired teacher

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT IN RELATION TO ORAL HISTORY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER: Margaret Van Cleve

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 7/17/91 TAPE NUMBER: 344