

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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Interviewer: Linda Johnson (LJ), Yukon Archives
Interviewee: Bill Hare (BH)
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Abstract

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Transcript

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LJ: Linda Johnson of the Yukon Archives talking to Bill Hare former resident of Mayo [Yukon], Elsa [Yukon], Dawson [Yukon] and Whitehorse [Yukon] and a photographer for many years in those places. This is August 10th, 1976. Bill I wonder if you could tell me first a little bit about where you came from, when you were born, and how you got to the Yukon?

BH: Well I was born at the turn of the century in 1900 in Simon's Town, it's a suburb about 40 miles from Cape Town in South Africa, and during my youth I was very, very interested in stories by Jack London and of course it instilled in me a wish, a desire, to see some of the country that Jack London wrote about. And when I reached my maturity, if you can call 21 years maturity for a young man, I decided to head to Canada and try my luck in the north. I arrived in Whitehorse in 1922, approximately in June, and there were two other chaps along with me decided to go down the Yukon [River] with one of the small, Whitehorse manufactured row-boats, about 12 feet long. We loaded all our baggage in the, in the boat and believe it or not it only had about four inches of freeboard. We got down to Lake Laberge and one chap claimed that he knew the way and just around the next point would be the river and we wouldn't have to row anymore and we could drift. Well we were getting tired and went straight across Lake Laberge, beautiful day, calm, sun shining, came around the point that was supposed to show us the river and there was miles of lake ahead of us and I said, "No more, let's call it a day." So we pulled ashore and made camp and we weren't ashore more than 15 or 20 minutes and that lake was white from one end to the other. It was fortunate that we were onshore at the time or I'm sure we would never have got through with four inches of freeboard. And that was our start down the river to Dawson. Took us about five or six days I think, of steady drifting and rowing. Fishing, by the way was very, very good at the various streams coming into the Yukon; grayling was our main diet and we arrived in Dawson looking for work there, it didn't seem too promising and I was referred to the new mines at Mayo, at Keno Hill Limited. And again luck was with me as George Reynolds and his partner, Schaeffer [sp?] had a gas boat, they were travelling to Mayo very shortly, they offered me a ride with them. Being a mechanic of sorts, I accepted the invitation to go along. So we travelled then up the Stewart [River] to

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Mayo. The first job I got in Mayo was the long-shoring with the White Pass and for this I think I have been always very grateful, it enabled me to meet and know some of the Indian people in Mayo. The Indian lads used to come up from the Indian village and do the long-shoring and I was very fortunate in getting a job, much needed as money was running low, and worked with them until the opportunity came to drive a truck for the Keno Hill Limited. They had this big monster that had apparently never been very successful before. Being young, and brash and cocky, when asked if I thought I could drive it said – why sure. So, I hadn't driven much in the way of heavy equipment such as this three ton monster, solid rubber tires, four-wheel drive and with solid rubber tires you can imagine the lack of traction. So I immediately set to work and got some logging chains and with baling wire and logging chains made four sets of chains, one for each wheel. Front wheels drove as well as the back so it needed four sets of chains. And from there we carried on to Minto [Yukon], our first stop and on up to (_____???), Van Cleve's Road House and then on up to the mines at Keno. But the, some of the recent literature speaks of the road being built, especially at that time, classed it as a good road built by the government and automobiles could make it in a matter of hours. That I disagree with [chuckles] because I know it, it took me four days that first trip on a matter of 40 miles and that is rather hard to believe, but I think if you check some of the photographs in the Archives, which I am leaving with you, you will see the reason why – the truck is shown with all four wheels, with heavy chains on them, up to the hubs in mud – pushing mud in front, dragging mud behind – and that was the condition of this good road which could be made by automobiles in a few hours. No, no, don't believe it [chuckles], I've driven it; I did drive it many a time. The trip up Keno Hill was quite an eventful one. At that time they were doing some maintenance work and fixing the road to the approaches into Keno City, and a lot of old timers were working on it, a number of them old time Teamsters and I think I could have made a clean-up – they all wanted to bet me their month's wages that I would never make the mine. Well, to cut a long story short, I did and started hauling ore. Three tons was the load on that truck but normally, being such a steep hill, the only amount that I allowed to be put on the vehicle was a ton and a half. If any of you have seen the Keno Hill Road, the one to the Guggie [Guggenheim] Mine at the top of the hill, as it was called, you now have a rather nice easy switch-back, but the road I travelled zigzagged in and out of a straight pole line that went from Duncan Creek to the mines and it was almost straight up the hill. Quite frequently the truck was in the very lowest gear that I had and believe me that truck had some very, very low gears. We got to the top of the hill, or almost and got bogged in some quagmire and it's rather strange to find such soft, boggy ground on the top of a mountain. But anyone who knows Keno Hill realises why. A lot of this country has been glaciated and a lot of the glacial muck is still left behind, strangely too, on the tops of some of our mountains. We got bogged down, at least I with Mr. [Alfred K.] Schellinger who was along with me on this trip and we had to walk to the camp, a matter of a mile. Knowing that we had the mail aboard the boys were only too anxious to come from the mine and help us get out of the mud hole we were in, and with a lot of jollyng we finally arrived at the mine. From there on it was more or less routine, if you can call mud and slush and snow and white-outs and different conditions that that truck was called upon to go through. We did succeed in hauling ore from the mine down to the river bank at Mayo.

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LJ: Up to that time, how had they transported the ore?

BH: [Jack] Pickering and [James] Greenfield had a contract and they hauled most of the ore from the hill by team. They travelled in pairs, six horses to a team, the ore was loaded on the sleighs in the winter time, this of course could not be done in the summer time, whereas the truck I was driving could be used in summer. All of the ore came down to Mayo by sleigh, approximately 18 ton to a sleigh, and two teams together. When they reached a steep hill one team was cut loose from a sleigh, hitched on to the front of the other team and 12 horses used then to climb the hill. And then they would go back and bring the second sleigh up. And it was quite an excellent production. But then following that and the finish of teaming and horses the Treadwell Yukon in the winter of '22 [1922] and '23 [1923] brought the first Holt Caterpillar tractors into the country and that was the end of hauling with a team as they cut the costs considerably. Four heavy sleighs were usually handled by each Cat and in this case, instead of doubling up, which they did occasionally, they merely dropped two sleighs or three sleighs, and took one up the hill. Usually they could manage two and then they would come back for the second load and hitch on, and carry on. The company eventually had about I think three, 10 ton gasoline Holt Caterpillar tractors. The Holt enters incidentally, was a tractor company in competition with another outfit called the Best Tractor Company, these two eventually amalgamated and today they are known as the Caterpillar Tractor Company; the origin coming of course from the Holt Caterpillar.

LJ: What has been the history of mining in that area? When were the first discoveries made?

BH: Well I believe the first discovery in, in the Mayo area was made by a fellow by the name of Harry McWhorter and it was made on Galena Creek on the west slope of Galena Hill at what is known today as the Silver King. That was done, that was discovered in 1906, so the records imply. Nothing much was done to the property, it was allowed to lapse and then re-staked by Mr. McWhorter and leased to Jack Alverson and Grant Huffman, these chaps were the first to ship ore out of the Mayo area. There was approximately, just a little less than a hundred tons shipped to Trail Smelter [British Columbia] and it returned about \$280 to the ton, which at the price of silver and lead and stuff in those days, it was rather good, it paid well. Later the property was taken over by [Thomas P.] Aitken and [Harry A.] Monroe and they shipped about 2,000 tons to the same smelter and did exceptionally well too because the Silver King ore was rather a rich body of ore and did produce very well. Then things sort of died down, this was in 1914 – '13 – '14 when this shipment was made. Things sort of slept for a while. Then Louis Bouvette made the discovery on Keno Hill. Now the various government reports attribute that discovery to 1918 and 1919, so you can take your choice, it was in June or July of that year. The Yukon Gold in Dawson immediately jumped into action and secured leases on the property, or options, staked all of the ground and Keno Hill Limited was formed. They immediately started mining the property and shipping crude ore; there was no concentrator there at the time; concentration and milling came later with Mr. [Livingston] Wernecke at the Wernecke Camp.

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LJ: So [break in recording] So the Yukon Gold Company from Dawson was the first company to come into the area?

BH: That is right yes, there was Mr. [Warren] McFarland, Mr. Short, Mr. Reinhardt was the bookkeeper at the time, Mr. Schellinger was the assayer and engineer and they run a very tight outfit and I believe they really made some nice profit for the Guggenheims. It was the Guggenheim New York Company that actually controlled and operated the Yukon Gold in Dawson and also they, the Keno Hill Limited. The Company was in fact known locally as the Guggie's.

LJ: And later Mr. Wernecke came into the country?

BH: Mr. Wernecke moved into the company, into the country and operated the mines around the Sadie-Ladue, at any rate it's – what is known today or sure not in operation of course today as the Wernecke Camp. The company then of course built and operated a large concentration mill and I also was employed in that mill.

LJ: And that was the Treadwell Yukon...

BH: That was the Treadwell Yukon. And their headquarters of course were in San Francisco [California] but they were also the operators and owners of the famous Juneau Mine that produced gold for quite a number of years. (___???) it was on Douglas Island [Alaska] or it could be on the main, no I think it was on the mainland not on Douglas Island but in Juneau [Alaska] where their big mine was operating.

LJ: And who did Mr. Wernecke bring into his employ? Who was employed by Mr. Wernecke?

BH: I think at that time the Guggie's were about ready to pull out, they more or less high-graded as they call it, most of their property and they made a deal with Mr. Wernecke to take over the operation and mining of whatever properties they vacated and left behind on a percentage basis. Mr. Schellinger was then employed by the Treadwell Yukon to act as agent for the Keno Hill Limited; his head bookkeeper at that time was J.J. McCarthy, the office of course being in Mayo and later at the mine, at the Wernecke Camp.

0:15:54

LJ: What year did Treadwell Yukon take over from the Guggenheims?

BH: The actual year I am not too sure of but I would say it would be approximately in the '24, '25, 1924, '25 around in that area.

LJ: And did you transfer from Yukon Gold? Were you working for Yukon Gold and then transferred to Treadwell Yukon?

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BH: Not really no. The mines actually shut down and there was no further hauling for the truck that I was driving and apparently I was rather fortunate in getting a very nice recommendation from Mr. Schellinger and Mr. Short and Mr. McFarland to the Treadwell Yukon and I found employment with Treadwell Yukon then.

LJ: And how long did you work for them?

BH: I worked then for the Treadwell Yukon 'til, let's see, the price of silver was rather drastic at that time and dropped down to around 25 cents an ounce and the company could not operate under those conditions and the mine shut down. Now the actual year of their shutting down, I'm a little vague on. I can only guess that I think possibly that the statistic should be checked with the mining office and give you an accurate date. I was just trying to think of how old my youngsters were when we left there; it would give you some idea. I would say that Alex, our son would be about nine, or ten and that would put the period approximately in 1938 – '40, somewhere in that area.

LJ: So they closed down the operation in Elsa, or rather in at Wernecke Camp?

BH: At, yes, all of the area was shut down then until later when silver began to recover again and the mines were reopened.

LJ: Reopened. So from your experience in the area was the mining, the silver-lead mining the most important industry in the Stewart Valley?

BH: It definitely was. There were a number of small placer operators but they were a minor consideration, a very, very small percentage of the [recording stopped – restarted] you might say the money, the earnings, the wealth coming out of the Yukon from that area was strictly from silver-lead mining, that was the big thing at that time.

LJ: When was the smelter built?

BH: Not a smelter, there was a milling, that is the actual concentrator and the flotation system; it was built shortly after Wernecke took over. Immediately he saw the possibilities and it was operating when – I was married in 1926 and went to work at the mine and it had been operating then for at least two or three years, that would bring it in about 1924, '23 – '24 when the mill was built.

LJ: Did it bring considerable advantages to the company – to mill the ore down before sending it out?

BH: Oh definitely yes, there was a lot of marginal stuff there that wouldn't pay to ship to the smelter, 'cause the outfits, transportation companies charge you just as much for a pound of muck as they do for a pound of silver. So the operation then of course was to concentrate the poorer grades so that you had a richer material to ship. A sack of ore for instance if it was just sacked the way it was wouldn't be worth more than five dollars a sack, but concentrated it would be worth – oh – 25 to 50 dollars a sack. Well that's no problem, and I usually took about 14 or 15 sacks to the ton, which would have made a nice

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healthy profit for the outfit – rather than pay for the freight on muck. You got your full value from transportation of good valuable ore.

0:20:03

LJ: How many people would have been employed – in the mine – and in the mill?

BH: The miners, including the families, I would say there would be almost a hundred people at the Wernecke Camp at one time. Of course the miners, single men, had their own, as we called them, the ram pasture, and the families, they were fortunate, the company had housing for them which was, which was quite adequate.

LJ: And how many people would have been involved in the actual shipping of the ore, driving of the ore from the camp down to Mayo?

BH: Well the Cat-skinners in the winter-time of course, and they did try some summer haulage with wheeled trailers and also with tracked trailers called the eighty trailer, and I would say that there would be involved in transportation to Mayo approximately half a dozen men, and later of course the companies got 10 ton trucks and then again of course they could haul a load every day instead of the Cat, it took much longer. With the trucks they could make a round trip in a day with no problem at all and then there would be approximately three or four drivers totally. Plus if the production was exceptionally high, sub-contracts to fellows like Bud Fisher, who had a number of one and a half, two ton trucks to jump in and fill the gap for excessive production.

0:21:35

LJ: Now where was Wernecke Camp located say in relation to present day Elsa and present day Keno City?

BH: Where was the...?

LJ: the Wernecke Camp?

BH: Oh the Wernecke Camp. The Wernecke Camp of course was situated on Keno Hill on the west slope overlooking the McQuestern Valley and up above the Wernecke Camp was another fabulous producer, the Lucky Queen, and from the Lucky Queen some of the very highest grade silver-lead ore, particularly silver, was shipped. In one part of the Lucky Queen operation there was a purest silver, known as native silver and that was a fascinating thing to see, it was just like balls of wool from an old sock, a fine interwoven – and some of it almost like matchsticks – beautiful stuff to see – if any of you could see a colour photograph of that it's a fascinating study to see. Rumour has it that one of the miners, being rather greedy, filled his suitcase with some of this stuff that he high-graded from the Lucky Queen. Got away with it too. Apparently took it out and made the finest little chunk of cash out of selling specimens to collectors.

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LJ: Is that so?

BH: I don't know the name of the guy but the story was quite strong at the time and everybody laughed about it, he got away with that anyway [chuckles], he was out of the country before anybody knew about it.

0:23:00

LJ: Now what was the history of Keno City? Keno City.

BH: Keno City. Well of course Keno City grew through the discovery of the mines on Keno Hill and that's a rather interesting story on this point too. The miners of course had their weekends and when they had a day off they could go to town and whoop it up and they discovered that if the mines, both mines, were to have the same off day there was trouble stirring, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] were a very, very busy crew. So the companies got together and decided that they would have this weekend for Treadwell Yukon, the next weekend for the Yukon, the Keno Hill Limited. That way the two crews were kept apart. [chuckles] Things were not too bad for a while. But any time the two crews got together, well [slap sound], I can lick you any day and that's a dare no miner will take.

LJ: And who lived at Keno City?

BH: There were several hotels there – Jackson's Hall [Jackson Hall] for one. It was a – you could buy beer there and it had a very good restaurant and they had a dance hall, and community hall. A number of dances were held there and quite successful ones and they had what was known as a 'jack-hammer' band. Jack-hammer of course is one of the mining tools used for mining the ore and that's the name they worked under, the Jack-Hammer Band. And another chap across the way was Harry Yamasaki and his wife ran a very reputable, very pleasant and clean hotel and restaurant. A rather amusing story was told there when the beds of course, or bunks as they were, they weren't really beds, arranged around the wall and when you wanted to go to bed you merely picked an empty one and crawled in – one of our dearly beloved residents in the area, Scotty Millet [sp?], had one leg, a wooden leg – he came through from the festivities of the night and he goes upstairs to find himself a bed – they are all occupied. So he nudges one character and says "move over, move over or I'll put me wooden foot to ya." And it so happens that he was talking to Mr. Livingston Wernecke at the time. [laughs] Anyway Mr. Wernecke apparently was good humoured, and it was a wide bed – he knew Scotty and very graciously gave him room to climb in. So the story goes and there are many, many stories of the North that are full of this Yukon humour that only a mining camp can foster.

LJ: Now would Keno City have been the place where you bought groceries and supplies?

BH: Yes, that is true. Taylor & Drury had a small store there, also another operator was Palmer and he was a real gambler from the old days, he would sit in on a game of poker any day or panguingue [a card game of the rummy family] and that was one of the favourite games of the miners. And I found him to be a good friend to people who really needed a friend. There were several other small stores and of

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course the government had their store in town too; I don't think you need to be told what type of store the government were operating; liquor was much in demand up there, in fact Keno had a reputation for consuming per capita more liquor than any other town in Canada. Not alone in Yukon or B.C. or any other province, but the entire Dominion of Canada.

LJ: Quite a reputation.

BH: It's a reputation I suppose that's no town is proud of but at the same time it seems to have brought prosperity to some and one instance there that is rather interesting is one of the cooks, a Japanese cook who for quite some time had been trying his best to save up enough money to go back home to Japan but inevitably he would get mixed up in a poker game and go back to work again. And now comes the interesting part of the story, in any mining camp, of course you all know, there are ladies of the night and they got together, and amongst them, put together the amount needed to buy the ticket for Kay Yasunaga. So Kay was headed for Japan, he was not given the ticket but he was escorted to the jitney [privately owned taxi cab or vehicle for hire] as we used to call it, the taxi, headed to Mayo, his ticket and the money was turned over to the Purser on the White Pass & Yukon riverboat, he was taken down to Stewart, transferred to one of the Yukon riverboats and from there escorted to [break in recording] to continue he was escorted to the boat, the ocean liner at Vancouver and headed for Japan. In each instance his ticket, his extra money was given to the Purser and was doled out as required for the trip and thus Kay Yasunaga, who I knew personally as a very fine Japanese gentleman and a wonderful cook, got home to his people in Japan.

LJ: And he stayed there?

BH: Yes, he stayed there. He was quite elderly at the time and I think a lot of us were very grateful to those ladies in Keno who made it possible for Kay to go home.

LJ: That's a wonderful story, it really is. Tell me...

BH: The Yukon is full of these stories you know. Some of them I suppose are a little bit risqué and the ones we can't tell but amongst us old timers we do share these pleasant memories of things that we know of that happened in those early days in the Mayo area.

0:28:44

LJ: Tell me something about the activities of children in the mining camp; were there many families that had children?

BH: In the Wernecke Camp where my wife and I lived, we had two youngsters, Alex and Betty and there were the Whitney's and the Bike's [sp?], and a number of others there and they had average about two youngsters apiece. They got together and they had wonderful times. Now some of the Archives pictures that I'm leaving behind will show these youngsters and a lot of you old timers in the area might recognise the youngsters that you knew or possibly the youngsters you grew up with. They played around in the mud puddles as every kid will; I remember our daughter coming home one day,

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barefooted – “where’s your other shoe?” – pointing out to a mud-hole in the middle of the yard – “out there!” (_____???) out there it was. They’d waded out into the mud-puddle and got stuck and pulled their feet out of their rubbers and come toddling home. [laughs] That happened quite frequently. In the winter time of course there was the usual winter activities, building snowmen, having snow fights and the youngsters got into trouble occasionally throwing snowballs at the neighbours wash.

LJ: [laughs]

BH: Youngsters are youngsters and no matter where they are their always into mischief, looking for something to do.

LJ: Were they able to go to school in the community?

BH: Yes, they had a school in the area.

LJ: Where was it located?

BH: Trying to think of – now they – the one in the – where the building was. I remember distinctly the one at the Elsa Camp, and they had a wonderful teacher at the Elsa, it was Art Lanyon. In Mayo of course, where we also lived for a while it was Gordon McIntyre. When I first went to Mayo it was Dorothy Hoggan, that’s before I was married and Dorothy was the teacher there. And so it went on and on. Schooling in some cases was done by correspondence; they had a young chap in Keno for instance, young Ericson [sp?], took correspondence course and when he went out to UBC [University of British Columbia] to pass his exams he passed with higher marks than any city-bred and schooled youngster. And they were amazed at the training and education that this young lad had picked up strictly by correspondence. Where there is a desire for education nothing is going to stop a child from getting the education he wants, and young Ericson definitely wanted and got his education.

0:31:19

LJ: Let’s turn now to the activities around Mayo itself; the sternwheelers coming and going. How often would they arrive in town and when did the first boat come in for example, in the spring?

BH: In the spring right after the ice went out of the Stewart of course, they were waiting at the mouth of the Stewart to start up the river, and they would arrive in Mayo about the latter part of the last half of May and the steamboat would blow and everybody, everything, the schools, everything would close down, the first boat was arriving and it was quite an event. The boat would pull up and everybody would have a festive day greeting the first arrival of the steamboats, and in the high water there were as many as three large steamboats tied up in Mayo waiting to ship the ore, loading on to barges and to themselves. I remember one load and this picture is also in the Archives, the steamer “Canadian” was one of the biggest loads to leave Mayo – 600 tons on two barges and the steamboat itself. Then there was the, at that time “Alaska” a ship from the lower river which was afterwards renamed the “Aksala”, which is Alaska in reverse. The “Nisutlin”, later the “Keno” was on the run and that was a real jewel of a boat, it wasn’t very large, but the depth of the water it took was almost, you could say if there was a

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light dew, she could get by. But I think she took between two and three feet. I may be in error there but I think that was roughly the fully loaded draft that she drew, the amount of water she had to have. Occasionally they would get tangled up with bars but not too frequently, the pilots on the Stewart knew their river – they were good water readers and traffic, as the water diminished in the summer time of course to unload they had to be more careful and this is where the “Keno” really shone because she needed much less water than the bigger boats and made many, many trips into Mayo for ore which was hauled to Stewart City as it was called then at the mouth of the Stewart. Transferred then to the Yukon River boats and hauled upstream to Whitehorse and shipped by rail. Now of course everything is changed, all of the ore is hauled over the highway which joins Mayo to the Stewart Crossing and to Whitehorse; the day of the steamboat is over. It’s a pity too because there is nothing more relaxing and fascinating than travel on those old riverboats.

LJ: When would the last boat leave Mayo?

BH: In October, just before the freeze-up. Sometimes they would just be beating the freeze-up out of the country and once they, what I called pancake ice, started to form it was time to get off the river. At any moment there could be a jam and a solid sheet of ice, there would be no way a boat could get through. So they were very careful to get out of the river and off before the actual freeze-up.

LJ: Did you ever see any boats actually frozen in? Did they ever get stuck?

BH: No, I didn’t actually – not accidentally frozen in, but I remember one boat that used to be owned by Dave Fotheringham, the “Klondyke” it was called and it was private property. Dave used to run trips now and again – you might say in competition with the big goliath, the White Pass & Yukon. I travelled on it several times and in the winter time he had it wintering in a rather large quiet stretch of water just below Mayo, left it there during the winter, froze in you might say, apparently quite safe, and in the spring when the water started to rise, the “Klondyke” refused to float and yet it was free all around and no one could understand why. It was full of water, and no pumping could empty it! Well of course the break-up came and it was pushed on a little bit further down into this quiet water at the mouth of the Mayo River and stranded. After the ice break-up and the water started to recede, they were able to get aboard to find out why – and to their dismay they discovered there were three and four inch augur holes bored through the bottom of the boat. No one knows who did it, no one could be held responsible, but it had been done and the “Klondyke” was no more. She was never put back into service again. And that’s the only instance that I know of, of a boat wintering or being caught in the ice. It was actually you might say, caught in the break-up ice rather than freeze-up.

LJ: And that was the boat that used to go up to Fraser Falls?

BH: Dave Fotheringham used to make odd trips yes, up and down the Stewart and I remember a bunch of us, Dave had some freight to go up to Bob Levac who operated a store and trapping, a trappers outpost at Fraser Falls, and a bunch of us took advantage of going up with Dave on this trip. On this occasion I had a canoe aboard the “Klondyke” and when we got to Fraser Falls I drifted back down by canoe, back to Mayo. A most interesting trip, quiet water and no dangerous water at all. After you pass

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Fraser Falls it is just a beautiful drifting trip down. There were a number of trappers along the way; one stop that we made was at Jack Royston's, a trapper and he had a beautiful garden. These trappers seem to be able to take care of themselves summer or winter. In the winter of course with their trapping; in the summer they had their garden, cabbages, carrots and anything, you never saw such fabulous growth. Cabbages up to five, six, ten, fifteen pounds some of them fabulous sizes.

0:38:00

LJ: Fotheringham's wife operated a hotel in Mayo, did she not?

BH: Who did?

LJ: Mrs. [Marie] Fotheringham.

BH: Mrs. Fotheringham, she had a little newspaper office there. She was a wonderful writer; she minced no matters with anybody. If she wanted to call a spade a spade she called it a spade and that was it. She didn't care for anybody's feelings, if she had an issue to put out, and she had the truth, she didn't withhold it. She got a few of the locals a little bit hostile, but it mattered nothing to Mrs. Fotheringham, she was writing a newspaper and a newspaper was there for the purpose of telling the people, and she told them. I was very fortunate in having Mrs. Fotheringham as a friend.

LJ: [laughs]

BH: Of course I might say fortunate in that respect that I found myself favoured as far as newspaper comment was rather in case of some people and having their shortcomings exposed and I managed to hide most of mine fortunately.

LJ: [laughs] Did she operate a restaurant, or hotel?

BH: No, she never had a restaurant there, not Mrs. Fotheringham.

LJ: There were several restaurants...

BH: There were several, all coffee shops. Mrs. Sullivan had one, and there was of course the Bennett's hotel and Oscar Letourneau's, several little old coffee shops here and there but those were the three that I recall. Mrs. Kinsey also had one. And then there was a chap that had a roadhouse operating on Centre Street, Joe McCaffery and there was the gathering place for most of us young bloods in the village. We were oh you might say in our early twenties, eighteens and so on – the young girls of the community used to get together and there was an old-fashioned Victrola that Joe used to play some of the music – favourite dances, foxtrots, waltzes and what have you and that was one reason why us young bloods used to get together and have ourselves a good time. Mrs. Fisher came in and she took over the cooking. Finally her daughter arrived and she married one of the miners in the – at the Elsa Mine. And these people are now are all away, gone. Joe McCaffery's old place I don't think is there anymore. During the big flood in Mayo it was under about four feet of water, some of those pictures too

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are in the Archives if any of you are interested in seeing what Mayo was like during that terrible flood in 1938, I think it was – or around in that area. I'm not too sure of the date on that as during a recent session with the archivist in Whitehorse I was continually pounded with one question and that question I found rather embarrassing at times – "What year was that Mr. Hare?" And then I would have to stop and think, well now – that was before I was married; that was after I was married; now my son was about 10 years old – so that would make it in 1938. That's a queer way of putting dates on things but some of my early photographs yes I did have dates and sort of shook the archivist on one answer – "when was that taken?" – "That was taken on the 22nd of May 1923 at one-thirty pm in the afternoon." [chuckles] I said "would you like the seconds?" She said "no, I think that's sufficient."

0:41:58

LJ: After you moved to Dawson did you go back to Mayo to visit a great deal or...?

BH: We – our employment at – in the Mayo area came to an end and I did go down to Dawson City, I was employed there with the Yukon Consolidated at their Bear Creek maintenance camps and I was working mostly on their Caterpillar tractors and the heavy equipment at the Bear Creek shops. We were there for about twelve years and certain circumstances called for my resignation from the company and I moved back to Mayo for employment for one year with the Territorial Government in their maintenance shops in Mayo, and an offer came to me from Whitehorse for a position with the Northwest Highways system under the Department of National Defence. I accepted that and Mrs. Hare and myself with family moved to Whitehorse and our first station was at Brooks Brook [Yukon] – Mile 830 on the Alaska Highway. Two years there and then I transferred to Marsh Lake [Yukon] at Mile 883, from there to Whitehorse where I stayed for eight years and then the final transport to [Mile] 1202 for a two and a half year stint at the end of the highway, the Canadian section at Beaver Creek. I worked there until 1965 and terminated, as the government so delicately call retirement, until 1965, December the 28th. It's rather an amusing thing in some ways; although harsh I think in others, I was notified that my date of employment would be terminated on the 28th of December 1965 at 5pm because on the 29th of December I became 65 and therefore retired. Our trip then of course to move out to B.C. where I retired to in '65 was rather harsh because of the condition of the road and the weather. It was 40 below zero at the time we left. I had a trailer and an aluminum cabin boat I was hoisting, hauling behind and the road was quite slippery and we had a little problem but we finally arrived in Salmon Arm [B.C.] and that is where we live now at on the Shuswap Lake, Salmon Arm is our home.

0:44:59

LJ: You worked in two different mining areas of the Yukon – did you find a great deal of difference between mining in a silver area like Elsa /Mayo and then the Dawson gold mining operation.

BH: Not really no, as far as your own occupation is concerned work is work and if you're what is commonly called a grease monkey, or a monkey wrencher, why you have the same type of work to do, the equipment is pretty much the same. I worked on the first Holt Cats, the tractors that came into Mayo in 1923 was my first introduction to heavy equipment and then the employment of course in

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Dawson was along similar lines but with much more up-to-date Caterpillar tractors: the 2s, the 4s, the 6s, the 7s and the 8s, ranging in size of course from the tiny little D2s that replaced the horses in Dawson up to the big D8s, which was used for road maintenance and for some of the operations around the dredges building dredge ponds and well, the heavy equipment did it much better than the tiny stuff like the D2 which was useless for that job. It all meant heavy work so that actually working for the mines, hard-rock mines in Mayo and for the gold producers in Dawson, pretty much the same.

LJ: Were you aware of much opportunity for labour organisation; were there unions in these mines?

BH: The – one of the sore points yes, in fact my resignation from the, the Yukon Consolidated in Dawson was due to an oversight on the part of both management and the union. The boys had gone out on strike for higher wages, the contract was reviewed, a new contract was drawn up and a raise in pay granted by the company to various categories; but during the negotiations one category had been overlooked and that was the mechanics in the repair shop. So that the mechanics, of which I was one ended up with the old rate of pay with no increase in pay, which I thought was rather unjust. I approached the management and they said no, we can't alter the contract, the contract with the union is signed and this is the agreement, we must abide by it. Well I said from my point of view I think it is rather unjust and if the company wishes to reconsider fine, but if not, my resignation becomes effective on the 30th of June. No reconsideration was made so 30th June arrived and I resigned and went to work for the Territorial Government. Unions, I think are a great organisation. As far as the companies and the men are concerned they are there for negotiating fair treatment, but I am afraid my belief in unions today are sadly shaken because the unions have become too powerful, too dictatorial and they are doing far more harm than they can possibly do good unless their policies are changed. From a very staunch union supporter I'm afraid I've become a little doubtful of their integrity and their usefulness anymore.

LJ: Were there unions right from the very beginning when you arrived in the Yukon?

BH: No, the country was free of any unions or any bother. Anybody who wanted to do any, any negotiating with the company did it entirely on his own and the companies were quite reasonable about it, in fact my first encounter with the Keno Hill Limited was driving the three ton duplex truck, my first day on the job, on the road, driving with Mr. Schellinger from Mayo to Minto Bridge our first stop, the next morning I got up checked over the truck, Schellinger came to be ready for the next jaunt on the road, he says, "You are not working for the same rate of pay today as you were yesterday." I said, "How come, what's that." "Well the company has decided you are worth your pay and we've raised it from five dollars a day to six dollars a day." Now imagine the rate of pay that people are getting today, I worked for five dollars a day for a 10 hour day to start with, and then raised to six dollars a day for a 10 hour day – 60 cents an hour. How many of you today would work for wages of that kind, and it was harder work and we earned every penny of it when we got it then. Can you do the same today? Is that your pride?

LJ: When – when did unions first begin organising then?

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BH: I don't know the real date; no I couldn't put a date on that. But there was a strike at the Wernecke Camp and we were – not at the Wernecke, I beg your pardon, at the Elsa Camp, and there was an immediate walk-out. The Superintendent at the time was [R.J.] Bob Boyd and Mr. Wernecke made a special trip in. And the arrangements were made very rapidly and we all went back to work again. But the unions at that time were not too unreasonable and the company was quite understanding and we got together very well. But the dates of the first union operation, no I'm sorry I couldn't put a date to that.

LJ: At that camp was it a local union or was it affiliated with a larger international...

BH: It was affiliated with a large international. In fact they sent one of their representatives in, I believe, to organise the miners at the camp. And quite a lot of us were not altogether in favour of it, but the argument was good, they thought that the fellows, the miners, should get together and have a little solidarity and togetherness instead of going each one his own way.

LJ: And when you went to Dawson, was the union already established at YCGC [Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation]?

BH: The union, yes I believe it was when I first moved down there. They of course were a much older camp you might say than the Mayo area and the unions had things, I think fairly well under control in the Mayo – in the Dawson area.

0:51:59

LJ: Turning just briefly to one other large organisation that we are all conscious of now – government – were you conscious at that time of 'government' and especially the government at Dawson, did you see many of the officials travelling about the country?

BH: No, not too many. I did have of course when I was employed by, and this is rather a thing and I suppose the Territorial Government has heard quite frequently – a lot of us old timers used to call them the 'terrified government' and I imagine a lot of you working for the same organisation have heard that name over and over again. But I met quite a number of them in Dawson, and working in Mayo, and I found them very, very nice people to work for, not hard to get along with at all.

LJ: So the principle people that you would have been involved with in the communities would be the liquor store, then the...

BH: I beg your pardon...? [laughter]

LJ: ...and the Post Office and the...

BH: I didn't do too much with the liquor store at that time... [laughter]

LJ: ... and the school and the hospital I suppose would be run...

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BH: The hospitals yes, I knew quite a number of the Matrons that were at the hospital. Of course the affiliated doctors who came in approximately for a two year stint. When they took over their internship, I always liked to call it because they weren't really established, they were freshly out of medical school; some of them wonderful doctors, some of them who made a name for themselves later on as – top surgeons and the government officials of course that I was connected with mostly were connected with the road maintenance and the chaps like that. And the names at the moment do slip my mind of one or two of them that I was associated with but I do recall a rather interesting thing that happened in Mayo when I first went up there to take over the maintenance shops in Mayo. I waited for the first month's cheque, it didn't arrive, the second month went by, still no cheque, the third month came along and I still hadn't received a pay cheque. So I went over to the radio station and wired the office in Dawson a very terse telegram: "Am I, or am I not on the terrified government's payroll? Have received no cheque June, July or August." I am not too sure of the months but at any rate there were three months involved. The answer came back immediately: "Apologies, cheques immediately being mailed." Through some oversight my name had not been put on the payroll. So that was rather – a bit of a shake-up and I told the operator at the radio station – by-the-way, send that telegram collect. [laughter]

0:55:09

LJ: Did people grow their own gardens and hunt and so forth to supplement their income?

BH: Heaven's yes. I remember Nora [Hare] and I had a place just about two miles, three miles out of Mayo at the time and we had – grew stuff there, peas, and all the garden vegetables, carrots about a foot long and about two inches around, beautiful stuff. Cabbages so huge that some of our youngsters there, our son and daughter and their cousins had difficulty picking them up and carrying them over. A movie that I have shows that. The – another interesting thing – I'd like to ask any of you have you ever heard rhubarb growing? Well now that isn't a silly question to ask because we have heard it growing and I'll tell you how that's done. In the spring when rhubarb is starting to grow, we took one plant and the old fashioned wooden barrels that cork bottles of beer were shipped in, we used to get one of these, knock top and bottom out and put one around a plant and then the heat and protection of this barrel would create terrific growth and on a hot day you could put your ear over the barrel and you could distinctly hear the rustling of the leaves as they grew and rubbed against one another. And that is no, no joke – or falsehood. My wife [Nora Hare] will back that up and several people who disbelieved me are converts now because I took them over to hear rhubarb actually growing.

LJ: That's fascinating. Makes you wonder when we have so few farming activities now in the Yukon there certainly were farming activities then.

BH: Oh the soil around here with proper treatment, proper water, just grows terrific stuff. Joe Vinegar, a chap, an Italian that used to run a farm just close by the airport at Mayo....

[break in recording]

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0:57:32

LJ: Photography was a hobby for you but from looking at your photographs they certainly are very, very well produced and just excellent in composition. When did you begin your photographic hobby?

BH: I started in rather young, I think I was about 12 – 13 in age and my first camera, like a lot of cameras for youngsters was the old box Brownie and from that I finally graduated into a little better one which was the folding pocket Brownie and some of the pictures that I took back in 1918, the day the Armistice was signed, were taken in Cape Town. And there are pictures showing the early gathering of the crowds on the street, the main street in Cape Town, Adelaide Street and starting to impede the traffic. Taxis, any car, it's just loaded with celebrants and the old clock on the wall at the Post Office I think shows two-thirty. Our time was slightly different from the eleventh hour, November the eleventh, but the news had just reached Cape Town and these were the first photographs that I took with this pocket Brownie. Those negatives that I did, developed, and printed myself, the negatives are still as wholesome and as good and clear today as I took in 1918, a matter of – well, almost sixty years ago and I'm quite proud of the processing that I had then.

LJ: Where did you learn your techniques, how did you learn?

BH: Strictly from books. The Kodak Company had pamphlets telling you to develop at so many minutes of total darkness for this particular film. And not necessary total darkness in those days because panchromatic film was not known, so that you could use a deep red, a darkroom lantern and your processing was, strictly in my case a see-saw deal and a tray and you just held the film and just see-sawed it through the tray and from there into the rinse and into the hypo or the fixing salts and then one of the things of course that I learnt early and fortunately practised all my life is the necessity of thorough, complete fixing and then thorough and complete washing so that the negatives would have permanence. And those negatives, as I say, show the result of careful processing. So all of my photographic efforts have been along that line, to be as careful in the processing with the negative, especially once the negative is ill-treated, improperly fixed, it's gone, it's lost. But a print treated that way, you can throw away as long as you have the negative you can go back to it and make another print. But at the same time, why waste time making a print, if you are not going to have it last. Don't plan on making another one but do a good job of processing. Now a lot of the processing today is what I call meat-grinder processing, the processor gets your film, they put it in an automatic machine and it's just like turning the meat-grinder what comes out the other end is what you get. And unfortunately on a number of occasions the work has not been adequately done, permanence is not there and after a few years, the negatives or the prints, start to fade, turn brown, and are useless. But to do your own, it pays to be careful and follow instructions – and a little beyond. If it says 10 changes of water give it 12, if it says 12, give it 14. Those two extra changes isn't going to take you much extra time and the rewards are permanence and good quality, and your finishing work.

1:01:31

LJ: Now when you came to the Yukon did you bring a camera with you?

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BH: I did yes, that folding pocket Brownie that I mentioned came with me and I did take one or two pictures coming down from Whitehorse, one I remember and the negative still is good, is a picture of our first camp on Lake Laberge, just beating the storm on the Lake, which I certainly wouldn't have lived through if we had been out in the middle. And fools that we were, we didn't follow the shoreline, we were coming straight across the middle of the lake, but our first picture was taken at this little cove, a nice sandy beach that we camped on. And another one I took was the one of my companions sitting in this little 12 foot boat tied up at the dock in Dawson. And I used it here and there for some of the shots around Mayo. Later I was fortunate in being able to secure the Kodak agency in the Mayo area and with that opportunity I was able to purchase photographic equipment at wholesale and sold quite a number of stuff so that the profits I made from the sale of photographic equipment went to the purchase of better and various pieces of photographic equipment.

LJ: You had a small developing lab at Wernecke Camp?

BH: The opportunity came to me to meet and knew Mr. Schellinger; he was a very keen photographer too. Introduced me to some other systems of photography which at that time were entirely new. Some of the first colour processors Lumière Autochrome and I was introduced to by Mr. Schellinger, for years the National Geographic used Lumière Autochrome for their coloured illustrations in the National Geographic, this was followed by Finlay Colour and Dufaycolor and eventually in 1931 two musicians, strangely, amateurs, developed the Kodachrome process. 1935 Kodachrome was introduced to the public. That was the death-knell of every other colour process on the market. Today Kodachrome does have some competition but it is the preeminent photographic material for colour work – both in prints and in slides, and movies. The – when the Kodak dealership of course I had advanced information on new equipment, one of them was an 8mm movie. I thought now that looks like it had possibilities, so I ordered one for myself together with black and white film, colour had not been put on the market at that time. So the first black and white colour film in 8mm was taken with this first camera to come into the Yukon on the 8mm size. Later, a Kodachrome was available and the first colour film used in the Yukon was taken by me around the Wernecke and the Elsa Camp. The opportunity was offered me by the Treadwell Yukon then, through Mr. Schellinger, with the experience that I had gathered, to give my services to Mr. Wernecke. I was employed in the mill, at the concentrating mill at the time, so my spare time was given up to photography. Mr. Wernecke offered me the use of a room at the back of the assay office in Wernecke Camp for use as a darkroom to use for myself and any work I wished to do, providing I would do the company's work. Mr. Wernecke did a lot of flying, took a lot of aerial photographs of the Yukon Territory and I had the opportunity of developing this, and printing it for Mr. Wernecke. That of course gave me a wonderful opportunity of seeing a lot of the Yukon from photographs taken from the air. I would suggest that the Archives possibly get in touch with the Wernecke descendants and try to if possible, get some of this material for the Archives. One of the questions asked by Mr. Wernecke at one time was regard to finishing. He came down one day after a trip to Juneau, where he had done some aerial photography and the work had been developed and printed by a professional, or should I say commercial finishers in Juneau. He wanted copies made of certain prints taken in that area, so I hunted up the negatives to match the prints that he had in his hand and made prints of these negatives,

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delivered them to Mr. Wernecke. About half an hour after delivery Mr. Wernecke hot foots down to the assay office, bangs on the darkroom door, and I was busy at the time and said, "Just a moment." I had to put the papers and photographic material under cover so that the light wouldn't damage them, open the door, Mr. Wernecke stood there with a fistful of prints in each hand, he says, "I want an answer to this question." He says, "Why is there such a difference between the prints you've just given me and the prints done in Juneau?" Well I said, "Is there anything wrong with the work I've just done?" "No, on the contrary, but why is there such a difference between the work you've done and the work they've done there?" He said, "Look at this print, the foreground is black and dark, you can't see what's in the foreground and yours is quite clear, the middle is perfectly clear. Here you can't see the mountains in the background, and on yours the mountains are quite clear, why?" Well I said, "The opportunity, the stuff is in the negative it's only a matter of printing it and bringing it out." I said, "You must remember Mr. Wernecke that you are paying me by the hour to do this work, so I try to give you the best a negative can give. In Juneau it's a matter of production, you get what one print says [slaps], that's it, and you get nothing else." "Well how did you do this?" I said, "It's a matter of shading, this dark area doesn't need as much exposure as the background mountain area, so therefore with shading the light is cut off and gradually the exposure increased until you have two seconds exposure in the foreground, four in the middle foreground, six in the back foreground and eight seconds in the far distant. So there you have a balanced print." He said, "I want all of this stuff redone. That's stuff junk." So I had the pleasure of doing all the work over again for Mr. Wernecke – and that opportunity of working in the company darkroom was most rewarding. I was able to do a lot of my own work, I did a lot of enlarging both for Mr. Wernecke and for myself and it was very pleasant and being associated at the time with Mr. Schellinger, the darkroom too was used for the development of our Lumière Autochrome plates. They were not films in those days, they were a French product and done on plates. I still have some of those plates at home, enough to be compared with the modern Kodachrome, or Ektachrome or Kodacolor, but they were remarkable for their time and I think quite an education for people who think colour photography today is so easy, they should have tried it when Lumière Autochrome was available.

LJ: What was the process involved in...

BH: Well the process of course was firstly a perfect exposure of your original and then the plate was then developed to a certain stage and it was quite essential for a quick look to see when the first image started to show and from that you could calculate the length of total development. When total development was complained – completed, it was put in to a reversal solution which then changed the possibilities from a negative image to a positive image. You then put it in the final developer and turned on your lights, and with the lights on developed your positive image. Then your rinsing and fixing and so on was completed and you had your transparency. We worked with plates approximately three and a quarter by four and a quarter. Which I think in that time was called quarter plate.

1:09:05

LJ: What other kinds of equipment would you have had – for example what types of cameras did you have over the years?

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BH: The development in equipment of course carried on over the years and when I was working at the Wernecke Camp I finally got the urge to reach up for the top and I bought myself a five by seven Press Graflex and that could hold either a roll of film, 5x7" format or cut film or plates and there was a variety of material available for any photographic process you would care to name, this camera was capable. The trend today of course is to miniaturise, 35 mm cameras are now quite popular and becoming more popular and the 110 automatics and the 126 small format all much smaller. And this is mainly possible because of the development in superior films; the grain is much finer. In the old days of course if you blew a picture up as large as you do today, from your small stuff, you would have an awful hodgepodge of grain and the detail and sharpness would be lacking. But the films today are so much finer that you can use a 35 mm and blow it up to 8x10", 11x14" and still get good results that you couldn't possibly get with the films in the early days.

LJ: What were the types of films that you had?

BH: The early film was not, as I say, sensitive to red. It was an autochromatic sensitive to other colours than red, and during my work with Mr. Wernecke I got information regarding a new image film that was on the market and that was the Imperial Panchromatic. I immediately sent for a package; I think it was a dozen rolls to use in my postcard camera, which I had then later development, had a very good lens a Kodak postcard size with a F3-6.3 lens. This was an excellent camera and I used this first panchromatic film on it. I showed some of those off to Mr. Wernecke and because of his aerial work I thought it would be to his advantage to use it either in cut film or film-pack whichever he wished to use in his camera. He immediately ordered a supply of it and started to use it and I developed all of that first batch of films. During one of the visits of Ottawa officials Mr. O.S. [Oswald Sterling] Finnie of Ottawa dropped into visit Mr. Wernecke and he was shown some of his aerial photographs taken by Mr. Wernecke. Mr. Finnie was amazed. Why he said, "Our aerial photographers are not getting results like that. What are you using?" Well he said, "Bill Hare can tell you that" and I was called over to the office and introduced to Mr. Finnie and asked to give an explanation. So I introduced Mr. Finnie to the Imperial Panchromatic film, gave him all the information he required and on his return to Ottawa that film was then introduced to the Geological Survey. So I rather feel that I have done Canada a little service even in my, my amateur days.

1:11:58

LJ: Did you land much work as a photographer in the area? I know you took some portraits of people; did you do this as a sideline business?

BH: No it was not a sideline actually in that respect because a sideline more-or-less infers you are doing it for pay. Well at no time did I take on any commercial portrait photography. I did it because I liked it. I took mostly some of the older characters around Mayo and women, no, I didn't want to be mixed up with any portrait work. Too many of the women – there was a lot of them, many good looking in the Mayo area but – some of them just so-so – and too many of them wanted to look like the stars and I am afraid I was not patient enough to bother with that kind of work. I'd slap the man in front of the lens and took his picture and whatever came out I'd hoped for the best. And I think as the Archives records will

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show, there are some rather very interesting pictures of the old-timers: George Ortell; Nelson MacCowen [sp?]; Hector Morrison; Glen (___???) and a number of the old chaps who were responsible for the discovery and development of the early mines in the Mayo area.

0:12:58

[break]

Miss Johnson, I am sure you will agree that the preceding recording leaves a lot to be desired. It is quite obvious that the batteries are almost exhausted. This present recording was made on a Sony cassette recorder using AC connection and this is then at the proper speed. I can only hope that the fault is in the copy recording and not present in the original master tape.

[end of recording]