

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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Title: [Personal reminiscences of Willis Grafe about his experience surveying for the construction of the Alaska Highway]  
Narrator: Willis Grafe (WG)  
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**Abstract**

See <http://yukon.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/144/FIL/LIST/SISN%207951?SESSIONSEARCH>.

**Transcript**

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**WG:** Willis Grafe, made in 1982, December the 6<sup>th</sup>. I review the diary of my experiences on the Alaska Highway in 1942. In March of 1942 I was working at (\_\_\_\_???) Maintenance for the Columbia Aircraft Company of, of wartime industry making bomb bay doors and other arms in old terminal Number Two at the foot of Southeast Washington Street in Portland [Oregon] – (\_\_\_\_???). This job was one I had obtained in the defence industry as I was awaiting my draft call and was not necessarily geared towards a career. I was boarding in Portland at the time with a lady whose husband was the guard of the plant and did not have much to do evenings and I heard rumour that the Public Roads Administration was hiring people to go to work on the Alaska Highway. That time the Public Roads Administration division office was in the old Post Office building at the foot of the Broadway Bridge in Portland. Division Engineer was William Lynch who later gained fame as being the man who sent Frank Andrews up to build the Alaska Highway. I went over to the Public Roads Administration Office and submitted an application and I was warned by Mr. Bill Schofield that this was going to be a rough job that you might be living in tents etc., but I told him that I thought I could handle it since I had worked on fire crews during the summer while living at (\_\_\_\_???) in Oregon, and had done a lot of camping earlier. I was called and told that I would be called within a few days and so I took all my clothes I could find down to have them washed and already to go. About two days later while my laundry was still in the – at the, at the laundry – I was called and said I should report to work on the following morning at the Portland Office. Meanwhile I had been able to buy a sleeping bag at the Oregon Outfitters for 37 dollars and 50 cents (\_\_\_\_???) a foot locker into which I stuffed all my clothes, after I retrieved them from the laundry during the afternoon.

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We went to Seattle [Washington] as a group, though I don't recall the details of the group, and stayed at the Frye Hotel in Seattle where we were preparing to leave from the port of embarkation. We were put through quite a bit of indoctrination, including taking our shots so that we could go to Canada. I don't know what shots were given to us although I do remember the biggest congress boy on the crew passing

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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out cold at the time we were taking our shots. According to my record it was on April the 22<sup>nd</sup>, as I recall in the afternoon, that we left Seattle on boat christened the "Eli D. Hoyle" which was a wooden boat constructed in Bellingham [Washington] during WWI and had been used to transport cannery workers back and forth to and from Alaska. The old boat had a few state rooms on the upper deck, a gangway or a passageway along each side below the superstructure and all of the people I went with from the Portland Office were bedded down in the hold. And of those I came with there were a large number of people from San Francisco [California] with us and in the States, State rooms was a group which had come from the Ogden Utah office. We, with the exception of the crew and the armed guard crew which manned the guns at both ends of the ship, it was all Public Roads Administration personnel. I remember the old ship and looking around inside the hold in the murky dimness we could see the ribs and the, the planking and in, and in some spots could see where we could pick dry rot out of the ribs so it didn't leave us with a great sense of security. The old boat was powered by a triple expansion steam engine and made about seven knots. The (\_\_\_\_???) ship was manned by an army crew since it was a part of the Army Transport Service and the mess hall was presided over by I believe, army personnel. At any rate the door to the mess hall through which the food was passed to the customers was on the side and we would march by with our metal five compartment – trays – and have the food put on the cold metal trays and then stand out along the rail to eat. This was not so bad for the first day or two but as we proceeded north it got so that whatever we ate it turned cold, and one day when we had turkey it truly was cold turkey.

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I remember the first, first night out early in the morning about 4 o'clock we woke up and the ship was pitching up and down and one of the San Francisco men was very, very seasick and we found later that we had crossed the mouth of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and had proceeded on up behind Vancouver Island [British Columbia], and apparently this is the notoriously rough piece of water and in any case I can vouch for the fact that it was that night. All the ship was in a blackout condition of course and even the hold, the hold hatch cover had to be stayed closed at night and we had one man who had a severe case of claustrophobia and who always made his bed right at the foot of the ladder so we had to be very careful not to step on him as we walked around. There were lights of course in the compartment and the normal poker games ran almost continually. The crew consisted of quite a number of, of either very young men like myself or older fellows who had been on surveys and construction work for many years and so it was an interesting study and some real crusty characters who had come out of the woods during the war. Our first and only stop on the way up was at Annette Island [Alaska] where we were allowed off the ship after a lecture by the a young First Lieutenant to all these people how to behave themselves, because there were Indians around and we needed to behave and not get ourselves in trouble. This caused some consternation and smiles on the part of some of the older men and they wondered among themselves really what kind of a group he was talking to, it was certainly not a bunch of young army recruits. Anyway no fuss, but only interesting comment.

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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We arrived at Skagway [Alaska] after a long and not too interesting voyage although very scenic and to me it was a real thrill to go up the Inside Passage; it was spitting snow some of the time and a lot of porpoises jumping and the normal thing which I guess to most of us was routine but to me the Inside Passage itself was an exciting thing to see, even though the weather was cold. At Skagway [Alaska] we were told what different hotels we were to stay in and five of us were sent up to the Pullen House which was in the far northerly end of town and operated by a Mrs. Harriet Pullen who was a, who was a – in her own time she had a mint on the gold rush and raised some boys and ran a freight wagon and had run the, had run the house for some time. At the time we were there a granddaughter was staying with her and I remember having we had been downtown and didn't find a place to eat and Bill Gellenwater [sp?] a cook who was with us, had said well why don't we just buy some food in the grocery store and we'll go back up and put some sandwiches together or something like that. At any rate when we came in the door Mrs. Pullen and her granddaughter were in the kitchen and she saw us and she greeted us with "Hello boys, how are you?" and we went in for a moment and then she said "What do you have?" and we told her we had our dinner in the sack and she said "Oh why don't you lay it out here and have coffee with me this evening." So Bill laid our food out on the counter and we had dinner there with Mrs. Pullen, which is an experience I will never forget. I believe since that time the building is no longer in use and in fact burned some years ago.

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In the morning all the contingent from the "Eli D. Hoyle" plus quite a number of army people, army personnel with the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineers went out on the White Pass Railroad which was at that time operated by the Army using steam engines. Ours were I think some of the original ones, at least they were had the stove in the corner and all the old wicker [seats] which reversed back and forth depending on which way the train went. I believe they are still run to this day on the White Pass although they may not be the originals. The stop was made at, at Bennett [British Columbia] on the way in where dinner was laid out for everyone. I recall sitting down to the lunch meal there and I don't have any idea how many people there were involved but on the table was, was peach pie and cheese and pickles which we did not know we presumed was the dessert or something, but at any rate as we waited around and finally realised that that was the lunch meal and so everybody had pie, cheese and pickles for lunch and we proceeded on our way toward Whitehorse [Yukon] along Lake Bennett to Carcross [Yukon].

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We arrived in Whitehorse [Yukon] along with I am not sure how many others were billeted in the old White Pass Hotel, which if I recall correctly was almost just across the street from the railroad station. It was not geared for quite the pressure it was under at that time, and I recall in the dining room, sitting there and the water running down the walls because there were plugged up drains in the bathroom. I guess that is the most vivid memory I have of the place. In Whitehorse [Yukon] we were advised about the limit on the amount of baggage we could take and we were told to sort our things out and leave or

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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store whatever we could store in an old church building in town. I don't recall the location. In any case I sorted out to my sleeping bag and a duffle bag and left the foot locker with any books, papers etc. there in town.

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The North itself was to me a fascinating place, the river had just had just thawed out and the boats were still on the ways in the shipyard and I wandered around all over among the places down to the shipyard looking around. I knew something about steam engines and I just wanted to see what was underneath that big plume of steam that kept getting kicking up into the air, but I was in there with the camera and got some pictures but I was advised to leave. I my record I was being kicked out but I wasn't absolutely but I was and I don't recall some of the things I don't recall.

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A few days after hauling freight from the storage depot and generally doing whatever there was to be done we got our notice that we were being put into a crew, a survey crew to go out and work to the west from Kluane Lake [Yukon] on northerly. I distinctly recall in Whitehorse [Yukon] when I was told of this and I was shown on the map where it was I called the lake "Kluain" and I was quickly corrected by one of the locals. The plane trip to Burwash Landing [Yukon] was on an old Curtiss Condor biplane and which I have recorded in pictures, landed on the ice at Burwash Landing [Yukon]. There was approximately four feet of ice there and the airport had been laid out and delineated with tips of trees out across the ice. In time the Yukon Southern Air Transport was I believe later merged with Canadian Pacific Airways. The original crew of 13 was bunked down in two bunk cabins and the office cabin. The office cabin I believe containing the chief of party and the assistant and then six others in one cabin and the younger fellows and five of the older fellows in another cabin. Quite a motley crew with every – every kind of diction, thought and attitude possible, total strangers from places like Utah, San Francisco and Oregon and later supplemented by our cook and some Canadians. Thus initially some early tensions between the San Francisco, the Portland and the Ogden office people which later I understood developed into a little bit of resentment on the part of the San Francisco people since they had been left without anyone truly in charge of the operation, and it had been operated at lower levels than some of the other division people. It started a little bit with the fact that the Utah people no matter what grade, age or status who lived in the State Rooms on our boat coming up, and the rest of us were down in the hold from the top of a pile of bombs as far as Annette Island, after which we were might be easy as we unloaded the bombs. The Southern section, the Fort St John [British Columbia] section, was supervised by people from the Denver office, the Whitehorse division was supervised by the people from the Portland office and the San Francisco division office people were scattered up and down the line not in any position of highway responsibility, at least in the early stages. I don't know what all the politics may have been later on. However J.S. Bright, the overall district engineer in charge was from San Francisco.

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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Our first initial surveying involved walking south on Kluane Lake [Yukon] for about five miles and then back up on the bank a ways and arbitrarily driving a survey point in the ground and starting down the road we, we keep Fred Johnson and Bill Asher, our transfer men later went back at night and established a bearing from off of a chart on the North Star, but by that time we had just started got going and, and never let up. The thing that stands out and caused us to get a late start one day was bush pilot Bob Reeve who had come – come to Burwash Landing [Yukon] and had landed on the air strip over from the cabin, over from the trading post and since it was so far over there he had been talked into taking off and landing on the ice over in front of the building which he did, landing the same way we had landed a couple of weeks before, except that as he taxied toward shore one wheel went, one wheel went tried to break through the ice and he cut the motor immediately and he, he ended up nose down right where the fuselage lying right on the ice. He crawled out the window and came ashore without any problem. Tonight he was prepared to get some instruments out of the plane and let it go but Gene Jacquot, the trader at the Post, convinced him that maybe we could get it out in the morning since, since we had all that manpower available. In the morning we – after the ice had solidified through, through the cool night it froze up more solidly we – we put two skids on the ice alongside the plane to build an A-frame and hung a chain-block in it and we would set a block across the skids, jack with the with a hydraulic jack under the propeller nose, jack up jack up the propeller take up the slack with a very lightweight chain-block, re-block it and continue this a few inches at a time until we were able to slide some planks under the wheel of the aircraft. At that time we took the propeller off, Jacquot took into the blacksmith's shop straightened it out as best he could and, and the next morning Bob Reeve was able to take off south to get his airplane. He told us at that time "don't you forget boys that if any of you see me any place let me know you were here and the steaks are on me." And as Bill would tell, he was never able to collect as I understand Mr. Reeve passed away a year or so ago.

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All our survey crew was fed at the trading post dining room. Me and Jacquot and his Indian wife, the daughter of Mr. Dickson, the two of them ran the kitchen and we ate corned, corned moose, lots of potatoes, dessert. In general it was good food and the sandwiches they gave us for lunch were quite adequate. It was my first experience with ham which had a green tinge to it but the boys all were kind of suspicious of it in the beginning and we, we always started the bonfire and roasted the sandwiches before lunch taking the ham out and picking them on a green stick until it got well cooked. I don't know whether this, this was worthwhile or not. Being social events for the three weeks or so we were at Burwash Landing [Yukon] involved an old phonograph and the boys would go down to the mess hall and dance the one step with the Indian girls. The songs which I remember hearing, hearing there was one 'The Dance of the Roses' and the other one was a recurring theme which said, 'I am sorry that's all I can say'. I don't know what the name of that record might have been. There were three girls who served the tables, Buck Dickson, Buck Dickson's sisters and sisters of Mrs. Jacquot and their names were Bell Dickson, Babe Dickson and Ada Watt.

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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Also in addition to the people who were in residence at the trading post were two Pan American Airways radio operators who were part of the chain of radio op – radio stations which PanAm maintained through the Yukon and Alaska; their names were Hughie Stone and Gordon, whose last name I can't quite now recall. The transit already consisted of the transit man and a head chainman, a rear chainman, a rear flagman and whatever axe man we had available at the time. The axe men were hired Canadians (\_\_\_\_???) an axe man was Louis Lukevich [sp?] who was later replaced by Tom Kirkwood who I understand operates a big lodge down at Atlin [British Columbia] today. Behind these transit parties came two men, one running a rod and one the level to gain, to obtain the elevation on the point and behind this most of the time was a crew of three, our party chief and myself and one other who did all the running up and down the hill and everyone was worried about how being able to keep up. But Billie Bassett was working with me on this crew and we were on the run most of the time, both of us from working. Billy had been working for the Warehouse Timber Company on logging and logging railroad surveys, really knew his stuff and parted out with Everett Maclean [sp?] as our chief topographer, but but he was later replaced by C.L. Lacy who was a young man about my age but who would have had quite a lot of surveying experience, which was something I could never claim. For approximately two and a half weeks at Burwash Landing [Yukon] we came to the Duke River [Yukon] which was about five miles northwest of the landing and by that time was running high enough so that it was very difficult to cross unless with horses, to wade was virtually impossible, so it was decided to build a footbridge. Two men waded the river hanging on to a line so that if they got swept off their feet we could pull them into shore and then once they got across we threw the line over and they secured it. After that we fabricated two piers and tried to hold them down in the water by the logs with enough weight to make them stand there until we could – the operation on the next one. We ended up with two of these piers with a two pole bridge across and it took most of the day according to my diary we didn't get back to the landing till about seven and of course that was about an hour and a half of walking time. We got the bridge built. We thought we could get to work alright for a couple more days but we would need to move our camp pretty soon, we were getting to the point where we were doing all walking and no working. We built the bridge and supplies came in, started to come in from Whitehorse so and it began to look as if we would be moving soon.

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To Louis Lukevich, everybody but Louis had thought he was going to be the cook and we found it out this was the reason he went back home and we later got a cook which kinda took a load off my mind, as I record on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. Mail came in, that I'd gotten, since I left home about a month ago, on the same plane. It was a continuing confusion regarding the fly planes really we had accumulated our outfit. We finally made our move to camp on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May. After much fuss and worrying about the stove I later, I later found out that the big discussion between the trader Gene Jacquot and Fred Johnson about the stove was the cook stove which was provided by the Public Roads Administration was too heavy for Gene to allow one of his horses to carry it so he and Fred made a deal where he left, Fred left the cook stove at Burwash [Yukon] and we took two small tin stoves which I guess are classic for northern country

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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use. They were two feet long with a fire box in one end and the oven on the other, small, all bent thin sheet steel. Then would go on each side of the cook, of the horse very conveniently, it didn't weigh very much. Group consisted of three 10X12 tents and then another 10X12 tent for the office, all gabled tents which we slept (\_\_\_\_\_???) a tent plus two in the office tent and cook in the back of the cook tent which was, which was somewhat larger, must have been probably a 14X16. So the tent was heated by what we called a Sibley stove, or some call a Yukon stove but at any rate it was a cone from the bottom of the door and a sloping side and the stove pipe up the centre of the top. Setting them up we, we would dig, dig a shallow hole and set them down in it and then dig a hole underneath the edge so that the air could come down in, in and come in underneath the fire. To open and close the draught it was really a matter of laying something over the hole which was underneath the edge of the stove. It was quite effective and we used them down to 30 below later on. We had flies over the tent which we had set up as well to protect from the rain. Any equipment consisted of one transit, one dumpy level, and a hand cranked Marchant calculator, and a typewriter. The dining table was a roll of flats about a half inch by two inches wide bonded together with the canvas and it would roll up into a roll about 12 to 14 inches in diameter and as long as the width of the dining table and it must have weighed 40 lbs. when it was done, but it was possible to build a frame with slabbed off logs and you just unroll it and you would have an instant table. In the diary now that the cook tent was 16X20 foot tent, 13 feet high.

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The survey party which was recorded on May 30<sup>th</sup> as being at the landing and working the other way I believe turned out to be under the supervision of Dell Early [sp?] and they used the boat from Burwash Landing [Yukon] to go down the lake to work on. Going down the lake picking up the marline and working on southeast along the lake shore. I do not know how far they ran their line before leapfrogging over us to the other side of the White River [Yukon]. At the end of the season we had folding wooden canvas cots and mattresses which as, as the season developed, in August we had to leave behind because we went on a little faster trip than that and we slept on the ground, this was in the days before air mattresses. The time during, during the survey work I was despatched to help with the packers. I had packed some on fires and knew how to unpack and the Indians requested my help from Fred so it gave me a little bit of variety, which I didn't mind. I have hardly ridden a horse since however. June 11<sup>th</sup> I comment that Clyde Hill cut his foot pretty badly with the axe. Clyde Hill was the office boy in the San Francisco office, a young man who was about six foot three, a real nice young man but he had never been off – off the pavement before in his life and we learnt early to stand back when he was swinging the axe because we were never sure where it was going to go when he relaxed that grip after it hit the cut. Boots had been cut with near misses a number of times and we all knew it would just be a matter of time until he wounded himself. After he cut his foot he was on light duty and helped working around the camp as flunky because he could not exercise it, it would irritate it and open the wound.

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I noticed there was a lot of planes going over and this was directly on the ferry route between the Watson Lake [Yukon], Fort St. John [British Columbia], Whitehorse [Yukon] and Fairbanks [Alaska] where

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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the Russians were picking up the P-40s or P-39s taking them to Russia. Our white tents apparently showed up very well out in the wilderness because they were always diving over us and at one time they almost clipped our tent or our stove pipe at Pickhandle Lake. I see on June 21<sup>st</sup> that Gordon the radio operators name was Warren. He really was the chief locating engineer for the Whitehorse division mentioned in the June 21<sup>st</sup> entry. This man had been on the initial location for the Alaska Railroad way back in Alaska and passed away at age 95 in about 1980 I believe. (\_\_\_\_???) prior to that I would have to check that out. Anyway he shows up in some of the pictures. Mosquito nets continually both on our, on our heads during the day and over our beds at night. We were in a very swampy area much of the time and they were a continual pest.

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July 1<sup>st</sup> we note that the transport party rode to work on the horses and this was a real breakthrough for them as none of them had been on horseback for all summer and had taken Louis Jacquot along with us to attend to the horses all day and he had cut the horses to running and needless to say he was pretty heavily threatened by the crew. Later they were pretty badly blistered and bruised over it. It didn't bother me that much because I had been riding much of the summer but some of the older fellows were a little bit distressed with him and threatened to throw him in the lake. On July 6<sup>th</sup> it mentions putting a toe-cap on the boots. The problem we had with our boots was walking in moss which was underlaid by volcanic ash and our boots would slide through and fall through the moss and the abrasive sand on the moss would wear the toes right out of the front of the boots. It's why the hob nails were needed for the front. When I refer to wearing choke boards it is riding breeches of which I had a pair, along with some 16" high boots which I did not want to wear but I was finally forced to do.

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(\_\_\_\_???) McGill (\_\_\_\_???) referred to on the July 12<sup>th</sup> entry was one who did the original reconnaissance through this area in company with the army all the way through and filed a report and there is a report on this trip I believe in the Department of Transportation Library. McGilvery (\_\_\_\_???) is still thriving I called him a few days ago and he is now 89 years old but he has no material from the Alaska Highway experience. On July 12<sup>th</sup> it mentions that the boys all had to send in their guns to be registered. This became in through Skagway [Alaska] and Whitehorse [Yukon] we had guns in our sleeping bags, inside our duffle bags not realising that Canada had a thing about guns and one of the boys had a German Luger handgun which is very much prohibited inside Canada. In any case we were given the freedom to take them with us to Whitehorse [Yukon] because nobody realised what was happening and I had even sold one to one of the radio operators in Burwash Landing [Yukon] not knowing that it was illegal for me to sell it to him - illegal for him to buy it. I believe he got away with it without any problem. It was a little .22 which I sold him for 15 dollars. At any rate we sent in all the guns and the only gun we had in camp was Tom Kirkwood's .30-30 carbine until we got them back later on. One was our Canadian axeman.



YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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July 20<sup>th</sup> we broke our last, cable, our last good camp on the Donjek River [Yukon] and prepared to cross the river but the river was up from all the rain and we find ourselves on that night camped out under our tarps on the bar of the river with all of our equipment either shipped across the river or still packed up except for the sleeping bags. Time the cook was up waiting with limited resources and cooking over the campfire with limited equipment and finally we had decided that he was going to take off home, so we packed up his dog with a little bit of stuff on and was all ready to go it was finally talked out of it. He was a long ways away from any place and no outdoors man at all. I don't know what he would have done had he been allowed to leave camp. Finally on the 23<sup>rd</sup> the Indians found a way to cross and the river had gotten down and other than a little bit of quicksand it wasn't bad.

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Camp on the 23<sup>rd</sup> was on Hard Luck Creek by a (\_\_\_\_???) as I recall. Our survey crossed the Donjek River [Yukon] approximately at the location of the present bridge but the Army crossed much upstream with a series of bridges and came in not too far from the trail which we took to our camp and came into our survey line approximately where our old camp was where we crossed the creek. Where we camped was worn from the creek which flowed out of a lake well above the camp which was referred to later in the diary. We could swim in the lake and it was, was a deep mud and organic material bottom which if you stand up and wiggle your feet you would go right down to the permafrost. But otherwise, but the insulation from the mud and organic bottom appeared to be enough to keep the water so that it was tolerable for swimming. At least there was a chance to keep clean most of the time.

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Lieutenant Firman [sp?] referred to in the August 7<sup>th</sup> entry of the diary was the Lieutenant in charge of the survey party for the 29<sup>th</sup> Engineers who were doing the reconnaissance for the Army and following us on our survey. There was a constant bit of friction between Fred Johnson our party chief and John McGilvery the supervising locating engineer and I recall on August 9<sup>th</sup>, the date which John came in on the plane, and Jack Edwards and I carried him in when we got back to camp and Fred showed up when we narrated this little story to him. He told us, 'why didn't you drop the so-and-so on the lake while you had a chance.' But later he was a good friend and I found out that he had worked on – in western Oregon on some of my home country. Camp on – that we made on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August on Lake Creek was where Graf Creek comes into Lake Creek. Supplies which I had received on August 27<sup>th</sup> I believe were mailed from my father in Oregon, I remember the shoes were a pair of cork boots I used to wear for logging and they stirred up an awful lot of dust when I worked and moved in the cookhouse. (\_\_\_\_???) Johnston [sp?] our packer who was drafted to cook on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August had cooked for some years off and on for Jacquot in his hunting parties and was acquainted with quite a number of influential people. He and Jimmy Joe each had a model 70 Winchester rifle which had been given to them by departing hunters. I believe – I know they were calibre .30-06 but they were the latest thing and fine guns. (\_\_\_\_???) about the raft on August 30<sup>th</sup> documented on one of the rolls of 35mm pictures.

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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On September 4<sup>th</sup> the record is of a trip when I went back to Pickhandle Lake with Private Lambert of the 29<sup>th</sup> Engineers to bring some food – the Army 29<sup>th</sup> Engineers ran completely out of food and we, we had to go to our base camp to get some for them. Picture of the Army soldier beside Pickhandle Lake with two or three horses is of this trip. (\_\_\_\_???) referred to on September 8<sup>th</sup> I believe was Lieutenant Colonel Hodge of the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineers and Major Webber, the dentist, had been up the Hoyt River looking at the native copper deposits etc. and the Major had a piece of copper which he showed us later. I recall that when, when Fred told me that I was going to have to be the cook, I told him I would do all the cooking but he would have to bake the bread because my bread leaked. It seemed that when I, we rolled it up in – in the pack boxes at night, (this was the old magic dry yeast and we had to keep it warm overnight in our fry pan and it was freezing cold every night,) so we would roll it up in the blankets and in the morning when we unrolled the blankets of course the dough had, had spread out all over everything and we scraped it off as best we could off, off the horse blankets and put it back in the pot keeping most of the dirt out. But it seemed like that I had always had such big holes that the jam leaked through, so Fred, I talked him into doing the baking if I'd do the rest. Collison was the bush pilot who made the trips, flew us out on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September back to Burwash Landing [Yukon].

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Comments about the dance that something is rotten in Denmark I think were the fact that the Army had infiltrated Burwash Landing [Yukon] and the – and the treatment that they gave to the natives there, it was not quite the same as we and our survey group had given, and I don't think that some of the people there were quite prepared to accept the difference in attitude between the Army and our own people. The camp we moved to on September 16<sup>th</sup> was the camp about five miles west of Duke River on the dry meadow and – and the road had already been built for that point so it was just like being downtown. (\_\_\_\_???) stopped in on the 17<sup>th</sup> September was the chief of construction for the Whitehorse Division and the assistant division engineer under Mr. F.E. Andrew. We got to our camp at Dry Meadow. We had a significantly better setup as far as food is concerned than we had with the pack string and this included dried eggs, dried milk and anything which was just beginning to come into use and which were not available when we had gone out in the spring.

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Sam and I were cooking one time during mid-September or late September, we got wondering about all the grease we had in the big cooking pans we had in the dried eggs and we found on the side of a dried egg package an ad, a recipe for doughnuts, so we thought maybe the boys would like to have some doughnuts. It ended up in the, in the traditional situation where you keep adding more flour and more, more whatever the liquid is until you get the right kind of a mix. And we, since we had lots of grease we ended up with a great dishpan full of doughnut dough and as I recall somewhere between forty and fifty dozen doughnuts, as a result of which we put a bucketful of doughnuts in every tent and we eased up on

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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the amount of meat used for several days. The boys were eating doughnuts as they take charge at night and finally we finally got rid of them, but it was kind of a classic experience.

0:39:29

On October 11<sup>th</sup> started days of digging holes for the soil surveyor, which consisted of every thousand feet along the survey line starting at the Donjek River [Yukon] we – we stopped and dug a hole down to where we could find the permafrost and also waited for the materials engineer, Mr. Simpson, to decide if he wanted more holes to be dug. Jack and I had been working all summer long and we were in pretty good shape, significantly better than the, than the soil surveyor. October 12<sup>th</sup> we walked, we finished our soil survey and walked straight out to the road and then the next morning when we started back Mr. Simpson thought that he had a short cut and decided not to follow our tracks back to the line. The London fog settled down around us so it was difficult for us to keep our orientation, even though I had a pretty good general idea of which way we were going but we, we kept working toward the south and crossed the survey line in the middle of an open meadow and didn't, since we didn't kick a stake we never saw and kept working toward the base of the hill until we, until we cut the fat trail by which time I knew then where I was because I had packed the horses, even though Jack didn't know where he was. So we then went back down to our camp at Murray Creek and followed that trail on back down to where it picked up the line and then soil surveyed the rest of the day. By walking back down (\_\_\_\_???) Creek to the road I estimated that we'd walked round about 21 miles that day along with digging holes. I never saw Mr. Simpson again after that time until about 1968 when he came to the State of Oregon Division office where I was working and as, as Division Engineer he came in early before being assigned to the area, and as he was being introduced to the staff he remembered and turned and said to the, to the people there, the last time he had seen me we had walked, we had got lost up in the brush up in the Burwash, implying I was the one that got him lost. He was a good friend though and I have no complaints.

0:41:44

(\_\_\_\_???) referred to in the October 16<sup>th</sup> comment was the superintendent for the Elliot Construction Company later was a high ranking engineer with the Washington State Highway Department. Spent in the USO House at Kluane [Yukon] refers to an old building which was, was there once one time was a store or a had some kind of a counter top there I think it is now what was either a marten or a mink farmhouse or something, not far from Silver City [Yukon] at that time belonged to Jack Hayden I believe. (\_\_\_\_???) referred to in the October 21<sup>st</sup> entry was Eric Erhardt who was the chief locating engineer for at least a portion of the Fort St. John [British Columbia] division. He worked in the Washington Office and I saw him when I worked in Washington in 1969 and 1976, he had already retired at that time. What I came to on October 22<sup>nd</sup> was at Contact Creek south of Watson Lake [Yukon] where two of the engineering regiments had joined up on the southern section of the road. (\_\_\_\_???) referred to on October 31<sup>st</sup> forward was a man who had it within his authority to decide what to do on these surveys and may well have been the supervisor for (\_\_\_\_???). I may be mixed up on this. From the Denver division. (\_\_\_\_???) referred to from the November 12<sup>th</sup> entry was one of those who was referred to in

YUKON ARCHIVES SOUND RECORDINGS TRANSCRIPT

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the, in the bibliography of my manuscript who made the initial dog team reconnaissance in the, in the Fort Nelson [British Columbia] area and it is an interesting, an interesting narrative which is in the DOT [Department of Transportation] library in Washington. (\_\_\_\_???) the 16<sup>th</sup> causing me lots of trouble with watery gas. The truck we were riding on, that I was riding on, which was a big Ford dump truck full of assembled stove pipe had the (\_\_\_\_???) up alongside the cab and, and the Army dumps had their barrels on end until the water had run down inside the barrels and then got into the gas and it, and it would have gone through and freeze up in the sediment bulb exposed to the air and my truck driver would just take the sediment bulb off and throw it out on the road and touch a match to it and burn the gas out which would melt the water out, put the bulb back on and away we would go again. It had a metal bulb and not a glass one.

0:44:21

I believe my comments on November 19<sup>th</sup> talking about the Prime Minister, the Mayor of LaGuardia, Secretary Stinson, etc. may have been a little optimistic but it is a classic case of a rumour ran wild. I do believe that Grover Whalen was there, I remember him being pointed out to me, he was the official greeter for New York City during Mayor LaGuardia's time but I don't know that any of these other folks outside of maybe some generals were there and they wouldn't have been staying in our camp anyway. (\_\_\_\_???) mentioned in the November 23<sup>rd</sup> letter entry ran the Lodge at Teslin [Yukon] and as I recall our, a couple of our survey crews lived nearby there from time to time and were well acquainted with the family and had very fine words, they apparently, he was a, a retired Mounted Policeman and I think they had two daughters who had gone south to school. But they, they maintained a very highest, high standard, always dressed for dinner, were very fine folks. Thus ended a 1942 adventure on the Alaska Highway.

0:45:25

I went to Haines [Alaska] for the winter then back in the summer, spring of 1943 working out of camp a 152 miles west of Whitehorse.

0:45:37

This is the end of the Yukon discussion on this tape. It has nothing on the other side except whatever wasn't erased off when (\_\_\_\_???) what that is. At any rate if you folks can make a transcription of this for me I would really appreciate it and any other help I can be to you – why, please let me know.

[End of Recording]