

INTERVIEW WITH ED ESTES, MOOSE PASS, JUNE 15, 1981
BY STEVEN PETERSON, BLM & JOHN MATTSON, USFS.

Ed: Statements was like it referred to the Crow Pass area and I didn't know if he was referring to the trailhead at Crow Pass or

Ed: That was my step-dad when he was twelve years old and that's his mother - and they was headed to Nome. That's in Seward..you see.
(In 1905).

John: I'm glad to see that Ed...very few people that write on their photographs what's going on.

Ed: Oh my mother used to do all that stuff.

John: Roy Croft that was you're step-father,

Ed: Yes that's him there, his mother's in the sled and they was heading to Nome.
1905.

Steve: Did he ever have an account of making that trip; did your father ever keep an account or anything. A diary of that trip..

Ed: No...here's just some old pictures... this used to be the old place old place - Collier's old place out here Mile 38 where you turned down to Kenai this side about a mile this side of ranch then we had a place over on Devil's Creek. _____ that's where Bodrin's and Polliks and them are all staying now.

Steve: Where is this taken...here... a little different today..

Ed: Oh yes it is.. Quite different....this is our first cabin here up on the hill let's see..yea that's the old cabin...that was taken at 40 below zero.

Steve: Nice old photos..

Ed: yea

John: Were horses very much in use when you first got up here Ed?

Ed: Definitely.

Steve: When did you start running trucks?

Ed: Huh?

Steve: When did you start running trucks.?

Ed: Well there's 1927 wasn't it..that one there...this here's a Model A Ford The come in here in 1924 and started building the road to Hope. That's my step-dad there.. Then this is, this is some of the survey party; this is my brother Bill, the survey party being ciphered, few of the fellows, there's a dog team... There's a load of logs for the Lynxs Creek

Steve: Mine?

Ed:No that eh -

Ed: No when the Canyon Creek dam washed the bridge out..going up Lynx Creek

These are my brothers; this is my brother Bill and his wife; brother Sam and here's some of the old Conke and my brother Bill; Bill and his kids; a lot of water went over the dam since then....and it's not coming back over neither.

Steve: doesn't back up does it... just keeps going.

Ed: That's the roof of the old garage we had..that's the roof...

I had to take it off when the ...now they talk about snow slides...this is right up there at 38 that's a snow slide across the highway

Steve: Is that right.

You can look right up there and see the island..the Kenai cutoff is right over there. Come down the hill on this side of that knoll..go around. This is the old store, Ivan Earhouse?, he got it after George Ruhl.. there in Hope. That's quite a picture.

Steve: It is. I'm not so sure that what I haven't seen that picture before.

Do you know if anybody else has copies of that?

Ed: No I don't.

Steve: Seems to me I've seen that

Ed: big Willard Dunham, Willard might have,

Steve: Seems to me it might be in the Historical Museum in Anchorage.

Ed: Could be.

Steve: Sure, I remember a sled and I remember that building with the sheer diaphragm (diagonal lumber sheeting) exposed.

Ed: Well if it isn't there it should be or a copy of it anyway. By golly that's a historic shot. Now we're headed to Nome.

Steve: They made it alright?

Ed: I guess, see her husband was up at Nome at the time... mining.

Steve: uhhuh!

Steve: Well I guess we've gotta get this man back to his employment. Thanks a lot for your time Ed.

Ed: You bet.

Steve: We'll get you a copy of our report when it's all done.

Ed: That's kind of interesting, those old stuff, when they bring them back to life, you know.

Steve: Yeah! Well it's kind of you know the stuff.. historically ten years ago maybe it wasn't that significant but we're just far enough away from it now that all of a sudden it's pretty good history.

Ed: Well like a lot of people took pictures and a lot of people didn't. You know. Lot of things I wish I'd of taken pictures of. Just like today, ordinary living today ... you get in your car and you get in your aeroplane, I get in my aeroplane or somebody else and they fly to Anchorage. No big deal. But back then if you wanted to go out to the summit you put on your snowshoes; you didn't go a damn bit faster than I did; I could put on a pair of snowshoes and hog out there the same but it was no different. But today snowshoeing across some of those passes and one thing and another is historical. Just something that seems fantastic at the time but that was the way of life.

Steve: That's how you got there.

Ed: Hooked up a horse to a sled and away you went. Today, you go to Hope, go from here to Hope, just stick your toe on the carburator and if there ain't no cops you can make it in 45 mins..back then you made it in three days.

Steve: And then to go all the way to Nome over a trail like that that's...

Ed: Yea it's a long ways.

Steve: People now they'd have to

Ed: How far would it be from Nome to ...

Steve: Seward?

Ed: Seward.

Steve: Figure about 940 miles.

Ed: Must be more than that.

Steve: No. It's pretty straight. The race they say is 1,049 but it's just about 940 miles. It takes a lot of shortcuts..they don't go the way the race goes.. You get out there out of McGrath and it's a straight shot to Kaltag the way the Historic Route went...through the Noko area..where the race goes they go way north to Ruby and down the river, they go way south to Anvik and . Yeah it's; yea we're uh, we've being try to kinda figure some of these mileages out.. you look at a map it's one thing but a lot of it is up and down so there's more miles there than what a map will show you.

Ed: Yeah..will show you..

Steve: With all of the connecting trails and such you're probably looking at a couple of thousand miles of trail. You know.. the ones that are really important or major trails..

Ed: Are they interested in putting in old historical trails?

Steve: ..you know Dan Sevee, Mike Monahan, Monahan, from Seward? They got with the City Council and what they're talking about doing there's putting in a foot trail that parallels the railroad on that route up through that valley up through the Placer River up there, glacial river.

Ed: Yea..

Steve: The railroad coming out of Portage trying to get something that's not on the railroad tracks through there. Through this area where the highways are and such you probably you know sign it, put signs up, make brochures and such.

That'll be the primary route through that area and I don't know as far as fixing up some old cabins they will probably do that in some areas too. You can't fix them all up there's just too many of them. Most of them people can't even get to...

Ed: Oh yea..they've no use for them either.

Steve: They talk about putting in some sort of interpretive center/museum in Seward maybe in the old depot rightthere.. 'cause that's the start of the Iditarod Trail or the government winter trail, whatever you want to call it. One there and one at Nome. We're just kind of at that point now we've finally got a pretty good handle on where the trail went and what was along it and everything and now we got to figure out what do we do, if anything.

Ed: Yea. Are you with the Forest Service here now?

John Mattson, USFS: Yea, I'm in Anchorage.

Ed: Oh you're in Anchorage.

John: The supervisor's office there.

Ed: Who is in Seward now?

John: Fellow by the name of Jeff Wilson..District Ranger.

Ed: What happened to

Steve: Carey Martin.

Ed: Yea....

John: Carey is still there he's the new supervisor's right hand man.
Yea, Carey is still there.

Ed: That Carey is a good guy.

John: Yeah, you bet.

Ed: But you're out of Anchorage...

John: Right. I'd just as soon be down in Seward.

Ed: You flying out of Anchorage?

John: Yeah.

Ed: What outfit?

End of conversation with Ed Estes June 15, 1981, residence of Moose Pass along with his brother Bill Estes now residing in Seattle. Came into this area in 1923 I believe ; stepfather and mother; he mused over the Iditarod Trail all the way to Nome. Ed has a photograph of them leaving Seward in 1905, to go to Nome where his stepfather was a miner and had claims in the Nome area.

(Moose Pass the Gilpatrick Mine southern stretch by Summit Lake evidence the old trail remains in several places.)