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Narrator: Earl Beistline, Master of Ceremonies; Leslie Nerland, Guest Speaker.

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Master of Ceremonies, Earl Beistline announces the annual memorial service in memory of Felix Pedro, and introduces the Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo 4, Fairbanks, Alaska. Meetings of Pioneers of Alaska are opened with an appeal for the divine guidance and he calls Reverend William J. Gordon, Jr., the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska to "give the invocation this time."

Reverend Gordon leads people in prayer.

Speaker says that the custom of the Pioneers of Alaska is to gather annually at this historic site [Pedro Monument?] to honor the memory of Felix Pedro on the anniversary of his discovering gold in Fairbanks on July 22nd in 1902. He speaks that this discovery and the honest toil of the pioneers built a lasting foundation for the society of Interior Alaska and for all of Alaska. They are going to play homage to Felix Pedro and the pioneers. He introduces a President of Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo 4, [unclear, possibly Lloyd] Pike.

4:00 Pike welcomes King Regent Bill, and Queen Regent Grace along with everybody else to the rededication of the Pedro monument. He speaks about how the long lasting memory of Felix Pedro will guide them into the future. He also welcomes everyone to the ceremony.

Beistline says that they will introduce a number of people and give flowers to appropriate people with the help of flower-girls, Sheryl [Cheryl?] Sharp and Kathryn [unclear]. [The girls probably walk onto the stage and people are applauding.]

Beistline calls forward Pike and Bill Cashen, welcomes guests from Fairbanks Pioneer's Home, and mentions that Tony Atracet [sp? Etracet?] who has attended nearly all of the meetings didn't come out today.

Then he introduces members of the Pioneer Women of Alaska, which is an organization founded on February 19th, 1916. In order to join the Pioneer Women, one had to have been in Alaska or in the Yukon watershed prior to January 1st, 1908. Each of the women has spent a full lifetime in Alaska, contributing to their family, city and state.

Beistline talks about Clara Rust, who is an Alaskan of 63 years and originally from Seattle, Washington. She left for Alaska in September, 1907. She married Jack Rust in October 1910 and they raised 6 children: 4 girls and 2 boys. She is a chapter member [?] of the auxiliary number 8, a telephone operator, she writes a news column to the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner about the happenings of the Pioneer Home as well as finds time to work at the Pioneer Museum at the Alaskaland. Other members of the Pioneer Women are: Adriana Curl [?] who arrived in Dawson in 1900 and in Fairbanks in 1907; Amante Hansen came to Chena in 1907, Fairbanks 1909; Dorothy Loftus, Fairbanks 1907; Mildred Nerland, Tonka in 1903, Fairbanks 1930; and honorary member, Eva McGowan. Three other members of this organization live in Pioneer's Home and didn't come out: Minnie Brewis, Louis Karsten, and Agnes Thomas.

Beistline also introduces King Regent and Queen Regent from Anchorage: Queen Regent [unclear], Auxiliary no. 4, Anchorage and King Regent Francis Bowden. Francis is also the Grand President of the Igloos of Alaska.

Beistline introduces other Grand Igloo officers: Grand Recorder Andy Schafer [unclear? Sp? Schaeffer?] who joined the auxiliary in January 6th, 1951 and is a life member and a past president and has been a Grand Recorder since 1955; Grand Trustee is Don Hering who is not present at the time [unclear, maybe Don was found?]; next grand officer is a challenge to the flower girls [referring to his tallness, since the flower girls seem to pin flowers on him] and to Lloyd Pike, Grand [unclear] Bill Cashen was born in Douglas, and he came to Fairbanks in 1933, joined the Igloo in 1956, and became a life member in 1965 and is a past president of Igloo number 4; Past Grand President, Adolph Stock who joined the Igloo number 4 in 1952 and is a life member, a past president of the Igloo, and he also served as a Grand President in 1969.

Members of State Pioneer Home Committee are introduced: Leslie Nerland and Alden Wilbur.

Two charter members of the Igloo number 4 are still living: Robert Bloom, 93 [years old] who lives in Seattle and decided not to come to Fairbanks this summer and John Wahlgren, 95 [years old] who is at the Pioneer Home. In past years the Igloo has invited honored guests who have live many years in Alaska. Three years ago special recognition was given to the members of Alaska Legislature from the Fairbanks area. Two years ago, Interior Alaska early day pioneer pilots were honored for their contribution for the State of Alaska and last year the Igloo selected for a special recognition those men who had served as President of Igloo number 4 and thereby perpetuated the objectives of the Pioneers. This year recognition was given to early teamsters, men who pioneered road transportation in Alaska. "It is fitting and proper that these men may be remembered" and about 75 names were identified as teamsters who had operated in the Interior Alaska for a period of time, ranging from 1903 to 1930. It would be impractical to read the long list but those present today can represent those who have passed on.

Teamsters who are present are mentioned: Gus Uotila who was born in Finland and came to Seward with two brothers in 1913 and then went to the Iditarod country where they cut wood to the mines. He has mined for himself in recent years and has had his operations in Ober and Ruby Creeks. He married Ina Uotila from Montana and has done freighting in Iditarod. Frank Wellman was born in Ohio in

September 1908 and came to Cordova, Alaska in 1928 and to Fairbanks in 1935. During his many years in Alaska he was a teamster in Long Lake—Chitna—Kennicott—area. In more recent years he has worked in mining and is employed by the post office. With his wife Mildred they have three children: Nancy, Jeanie and David. Frank joined Igloo 4 in December 1960.

Auxiliary No. 8 of the Pioneers of Alaska was organized in 1947 and the first officers were installed in January 5th in 1958. President of the first group Mrs. Ruth Turnbull. She was born in Lynden, WA and came to Alaska in June of 1934 and was in Juneau for 17 years before coming to Fairbanks. She was married to Robert Turnbull and she works for the Northern Commercial Company.

Queen Regent in 1971 is Queen Grace Harkness who was born in Michigan a short lifetime ago, in 1881. She left Michigan and was educated in Idaho where she married Walter C. Harkness in 1909. They came to Alaska in June 1931 and settled in Fairbanks where she has resided ever since. She has raised four children Keith, Beatrice, Mildred and Shirley who all reside in Alaska. King Regent is William Schaeffer who was born in 1901 in [Unclear], Missouri. He came to Alaska in early '20s but didn't stay. He returned in early '30s and worked as a carpenter in Juneau for a number of years. He arrived in Fairbanks in 1943 and has worked on Canol Pipeline [?] and later at the Ladd Field as a carpenter. In April of 1971 he retired from the power plant of Fort Wainwright. He is past president of Igloo no. 4. He married his wife Linda in 1947 and has two step-sons Terry and Don Kirchner, and 4 grandchildren.

Beistline also introduces the mayor of Fairbanks, Julian Rice, his wife, and daughter. They also have another visitor from Anchorage who is a Grand Trustee [unclear]. Ted and Audrey Loftus who "manage to come in every year" are introduced.

Commissioner Elena Morgan Ely Better [sp?] is present with her husband George. Harvey Marlin is introduced and Anna-Beth [unclear?]. [Unclear, people introduce themselves.]

Their speaker today is Leslie Nerland, a pioneer in every sense of the word. He was born in Dawson, Yukon Territory, to Annie and Andrew Nerland who were US Citizens doing business there. He first came to Skagway, Alaska in 1902 and moved with his parents to Seattle where he received his education. He graduated from the University of Washington in 1924 and married his wife Mildred in 1926 and they moved to Fairbanks in 1930. They have raised three children: Jay, Ron and Ales [Alex?]. He has been involved in education and business of Fairbanks and has always helped his fellow men. He has been a Mayor of Fairbanks, member in the Board of Regents in the University of Alaska and a member of the Constitutional Convention Committee. He became a life member of the Igloo 4 of Pioneers of Alaska in November 1959. Today he is going to speak about monuments.

Leslie Nerland greets the audience and tells about how many Pedro Monument ceremonies have been marred by rain and so his speech can be made shorter if rain occurs, but if during his speech people start praying for rain, Nerland asks them to do so silently. Nerland opens his speech by asking rhetorically if more can be said about Felix Pedro after so many commemorations. He says that many of the conditions remain the same than they were 70 years ago when Pedro first discovered gold. They still have claim jumpers as witnessed by holes that have been dug in the vicinity of Pedro Monument by gold hunters who think there might be gold that was overlooked. Pioneer's Igloo members have urged that those

willing to do so should police the area and chase off intruders. Early day claim jumpers and gold robbers have been replaced by auto-driving desperados who take potshots at the Pedro Monument. Its plaque was just recently restored to its respectable appearance. It's doubtful that bronze plaques are going to be erected in memory of individuals who contributed to the economic development of Alaska.

Nerland believes that if it wasn't for the USSRM-Company's, known as the FE-Company's dredging operations that retrieved the gold that was too deep for the old pioneers, Fairbanks might have turned into a ghost town in the 1920s and the 1930s like Cleary, Fox and Chatanika. US-Mining Company left some monuments after their operations. It's likely that had the environmentalists been around at that time, the company would have been discouraged or delayed in their operations, but perhaps the ground too would have been restored into its old state after the dredges passed through. Discussing how Mother Nature is removing the scars that were left. If environmentalists had been prevailing in the 1920s, perhaps even the building of the Davidson Ditch would have been [unclear] on basis that it hindered caribou migrations and contributed to their extinction.

At the present, oil companies are working on plans for the pipeline that will preserve the environment. It's assured that when the pipeline is built, it will be so damage proof that the fears many people have will be forgotten. More about research on pipeline's effect on caribou migrations: men are taking pictures and film when the caribou start migrating, and no ill effect on the caribou have been detected. Some people say that the same results [that caribou don't mind] could have been obtained by watching the caribou jump over the Davidson Ditch.

Klondike was at the time of the Gold Rush under Great Britain who have also benefited Alaska's development and now the British Petroleum are developing the North Slope. [Unclear about BP, mining and their stocks.] Nerland reminds everybody that he is not qualified to give anyone tips on the stock market.

Nerland says that he is not here to talk about oil-related issues, but of Golden Days that are all about nostalgia. "It's fashionable these days to dwell on things long ago," and as an example Nerland mentions movies, songs, and dances. Golden Days in Fairbanks replaced the formerly popular Ice Carnival due to various reasons: The general theme is more interesting, July is more comfortable than March, and the Golden Days give people a chance to reminisce about the days gone by.

Felix Pedro is a symbol of Golden Days but there are other well-known miners who strike it rich on the early days of the Klondike, Fairbanks, Nome, Iditarod, as well as Ruby and many other mining camps. How they used their riches was their own business, since their fame is in finding the gold, not in their use of it.

Nerland wants to talk about three men who didn't become rich but who contributed to the development of Alaska and who are symbols of many who came to Alaska for various reasons: some to find gold, and failing that, making the state greater place to live in. These three are businessmen, laborers and miners. Speaker's father, Andrew Nerland started a diary when he left to Klondike. He had been born in Norway and migrated to America as a young man of 18-years, in 1888 and after a brief stay in Minneapolis moved to Seattle where he worked in a painting and paper-hanging trade. This led him to

Guatemala for the World's Fair and while there, he participated in decorating the Royal Palace and returned to Seattle shortly after discovery of gold in the Klondike. He had been impressed as a small boy in Norway by a visitor from America who displayed a \$5 gold piece which looked very good to him. Perhaps that inspired him to make the trip to Klondike. His diary started in Tuesday, March 8, 1898: "Left Seattle on a steam ship [unclear] to Dyea, Alaska." Next day the ship stopped at Victoria, B.C. and there was a rush to go up-town to obtain miner's licenses. Andrew was the first at the office door. On March 15th they landed on Skagway and went on to Dyea where they were sorting out food and supplies everyone was required to have with them. In a few days they started towards Lake Bennett with their outfit in sleds they pulled by hand, carrying from 200 to 1000 pounds. 5 days later they arrived at Canyon City, only 10 miles away from Dyea. Many trips were required to move their supplies, and 4 days, on March 27th, they moved to Sheep Camp and [unclear] 6 feet of snow. The next day they explored the summit and found it steep and due to bad weather they were unable to do any packing. On Sunday, April 3rd, there was a snow storm and over a 100 people were buried in a famous snow-slide. He helped digging out those that were still living as well as those who had suffocated or frozen to death. After many days of packing they arrived at the Lake Bennett where they were going to build their boat. The next day, [unclear] 28th, 1898 he reported a war declared between U.S. and Spain [possibly Spanish-American War]. Then they cut timber, whipsawed and drawing lumber. He recorded that he and his partner were the top sawyers of their camp. On May 9th they laid the foundation of the boat that was to be 30-feet long, 6-feet wide, and 40 inches wide. On May 24th they launched the boat. No champagne was opened but the boat didn't leak a drop. It was also a Canadian holiday, it being the Queen's birthday. Following days they rafted the river's still famous points, such as White Horse Rapids, Lake Laberge, 30-mileRiver, Big Salmon, Little Salmon, 5-Finger Rapids, Pink Rapids, Fort Selkirk, and the Stewart River. They finally arrived at Louse Town, opposite of Dawson on June 10th, 95 days after leaving from Seattle.

Nerland wonders how many of us [his present audience] would have come to Alaska if they were faced with 95 days hard journey. Andrew made trips to various creeks around Dawson, but most all of the ground was staked whether it was good or bad. Jobs were scarce too since there was an over-supply of labor. Each steamer that left Dawson was filled with people who have come disillusioned in their search for gold and a few who had struck it rich and were leaving to enjoy the southern climates.

Andrew Nerland left in a little over a month after his arrival in Dawson but he had decided to go into paint and wall-paper business with his partners from the Guatemala trip, the Anderson brothers. He left for Seattle in June 7th to buy supplies for his new venture and made the round-trip in 52 days, arriving back to Dawson in September 6th. He became a business-man and this later brought him to Fairbanks, Iditarod and Nenana. His participation in local and territorial affairs, as well as his business stands as a monument to him and he would be pleased that the fourth generation is now engaged in the business.

Frank Smith, with whom Leslie Nerland has had an association for the past 37 years, was also foreign born. He was from a small farm near Innsbruck, Austria, and was born on October 17th 1886. He left for the United States in 1901 before he was 15-years of age. Because of his youth and small stature, it was hard for him to obtain work but he eventually started as a "fourth cook" on a dining car in Pennsylvania, and that was the glamorous title that the dishwasher got those days. He worked in similar occupations

for years, and when he went to Juneau in 1912 he was still unable to get a job from the Treadwell Mine because of his small stature.

38:55 When he returned to Fairbanks in 1934, the US Smelting also thought that he was too light-weight to do the heavy work at the dredges or thawing points, but he did work on a section of the Alaska Railroad. Martin Pinske and Leslie Nerland were his main employers and they found him a tireless worker. Nerland tells about how he chopped tirelessly wood for their kitchen stove. On February 11th, 1946 he became a permanent employee at Nerland's where he performed valuable services as the maintenance and handyman until his retirement in March "of this year" [1971]. Frank was self-educated, well-read and he enjoys things of beauty. He has long been a member of the National Geographic Society and has been an interesting conservationist. He lives in the Pioneer Home where he is a self-sustaining guest, and he refers to the home as the [?]. Nerland talks about his hard work contribution to Alaska through his labor.

Charles Roderick Wackwitz also came to Alaska in 1912 in age of 24, on a famous steam-ship the Humboldt. He was born in Norwood, Missouri and he came to Fairbanks to work with his brother Frederick who was prospecting and mining on Pedro Dome – Ferry –area. Charles was essentially a hard rock –miner for most of his life, but worked in a placer mine for a while, having mined with his brother Fred for 3 years on Berry Creek, and also for a short time on 8 Above of Eldorado. Headquarters of the Wackwitz brothers were established on Bed Rock Creek, a right [unclear] of Cleary Creek where they successfully mined the gold bearing quartz vein of the Wyoming [sp?] Lode Claim. It was Charlie's permanent home for over 30 years.

He was a skillful miner and a rugged individual. At one time he had the contract to carry mail between Chatanika and Cleary post offices. It was customary for him to hand-shovel and tramp 16 cars of ore or waste from the Wyoming mine before proceeding on foot to Cleary to backpack the outgoing mail to Chatanika and return with incoming mail to Cleary City. Charlie received \$500 per year for making the twice-weekly trips. The ruggedness of Charlie masked his intellect that was recognized only by those who were closely acquainted with him. He was a prolific reader and his interests varied but he only read good books [I suspect he means that Charlie only read the classics]. He spoke intelligently about the subjects he had read about and it wasn't unusual for him to recite lengthy poems from classics. He also knew rocks and minerals and many prospectors sought his advice. Charlie and Fred dug numerous shafts on Pedro Dome—Cleary –area when they were searching for new bonanzas. His hallmarks are the numerous rocks on the dumps of these shafts and pits that were scarred by Charlie's pick when he dislodged them. The chances are that some of these marks will be preserved for a period only measurable in terms of geologic time.

Charlie barely eked out a living for the many years of toil he put on the Pedro Dome—Cleary Creek area but prospectors like Charlie and his brother Fred have contributed immeasurably towards the development of hard-rock mining in Alaska. Many have faith that it will become a major resource and it is Nerland's understanding that large interests are considering big-scale investments in the Cleary Creek area that may make fruitful the years of development work Charlie and others like him did.

Nerland read much of Charlie's history from an obituary read in his funeral after he passed away May 31st of "this year" [1971] This and other obituaries have been prepared by Bruce Thomas who is the historian of the Pioneer Igloo number 4, and have served as final tributes to pioneers whose memory otherwise would have gone unhonored. Nerland hopes that Bruce Thomas' successors will continue the fine tradition.

Nerland asks guests to honor also these men who found no gold in Alaska but who helped to transform Alaska from a gold-rush country to a wonderful place in which to live. He also thanks for being the speaker in this 19th annual commemoration.

Earl Beistline thanks Nerland for the speech and introduces some members of the Chamber of Commerce: Al Paris [sp? Parish?]. Wreath is placed on the monument.

[End of recording.]