

11:59 a.m. Wins For 58 at Nenana Ice Classic

By LEE UPTON

NENANA — For those 58 holders of tickets marked 11.59 a.m. A.S.T., May 4th 1973 was a very special day. This was the minute, hour, day and month the ice moved on the Tanana River and they were the lucky winners of the Nenana Ice Classic with this year's purse of \$110,000.

The watchman on duty at the time was Danny Ketzler who was born in Nenana and has seen 30 break-ups. When asked what was the most spectacular one over the years. Danny replied:

"When I was a kid back in 1937. The ice jammed that year. There used to be a wooden dock right where Yutana Barge Lines is now. The square timber pilings used to have rip-rap in between them. The ice lifted up the dock a foot or two and did quite a lot of damage."

Danny said that there was no definite indication when the ice was going this year.

"There was no water. The ice sort of rotted out, a piece at a time. There was nothing very spectacular."

He has worked in other jobs, such as being on the Round Table — the place where the manager checks off the numbers of sold as against the unsold

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tickets. He also worked as a typist, helped with the mimeographing and was also a watchman at the Civic Center while the work was in progress. This year he was watching the clock when the tripod started to move.

There weren't many tourists this year but almost all of the townspeople lined the bank. Because of habit? No. The break-up heralds the coming of Spring when the river is free of ice, and the people are linked by Alaska's own waterways with their people in the villages on the Tanana, the Yukon and all the other navigable rivers.

Ice Classic 1973 is officially over and Spring has arrived.