

Idaho Panhandle Oral History Project
Interview with Henry Janusch
October 19, 1979
324 15th, Coeur d'Alene
Interviewed by David Barton
Questionnaire Information

HJ = Henry Janusch
DB = David Barton

Tape 3; Side 1

DB: There was only about two minutes on it. But you said in terms...just to go back over that...that most of the prostitutes lived down in Kellogg and in Wallace. That most of the men here were the marrying kind of people.

HJ: Yea

DB: I see.

HJ: There wasn't many single men around here.

DB: What ah...Now you were talking about the Chinese. There weren't very many...there wasn't any one here until the Korean War. Why was that?

HJ: Well, they mined up there and then take over a boat and go back to China. The white men, they couldn't go for that, I guess the word got around that there is a place out here on old highway 10 that's the old original road that Captain John Mullan built, and they caught the Chinese there and hung them. 15 of them. To the tree.

DB: When was that?

HJ: Oh, that must have been 1910, around that.

DB: Was there any special reason why they hung the Chinese, do you remember?

HJ: Just because they were exposing the country.

DB: How about the blacks? What did people think about the blacks around here?

HJ: Well, the blacks never got a foothold in here. And there's still not very many yet.

DB: Why was that, do you think?

HJ: I don't know. We had one black here, he was a shoeshine--Old Tom. And he was...and his wife--they were both old, and no kids. And now, every once in a while, a family will come in here, they'd live about six months, then they go back to Spokane. I guess. I don't know.

DB: How about the Italians? Were there many of them around here?

HJ: Oh yea, there's quite a few Italians. There was a settlement--there's still a settlement--north of town.

DB: What area is that?

HJ: Up around Twin Lakes.

DB: Twin Lakes? I see. Were the Italians thought to be any different from people around here?

HJ: No, I don't...you see, they come in, they come from Italy, and they built the NP railroad through. They were on railroad building gang. And when they got over here they liked it pretty well here so they homesteaded ground and bought it up there.

DB: Were the Italians miners, ever? Did they work as miners?

HJ: Well some of 'em, I suppose, the Italians worked in the mines. I think most of the Italians, did very poor in the mines.

DB: Did the blacks ever work in the mines, where there any blacks out in Wardner or Kellogg?

HJ: I don't know. They had Japs here for a long time. They were here during World War II, and they had they took them from here and put them in camps somewhere in Coridon. They were gardeners, and various vegetables.

DB: I'm interested in some of the stories about logging, that you might have. How were the new loggers initiated--the greenhorns, the new boys? Did they have special pranks that they would pull on them, or...?

HJ: Oh yes, they'd see that they get a ducking if there was mud around or water.

DB: They'd see that they get a...?

HJ: Ducking.

DB: Ducking. OK. Did you ever hear about skyhooks?

HJ: Skyhooks?

DB: Where there were...

HJ: Oh yes, they'd send a guy for a skyhook. I tell you what you want to know; you get a Paul Bunyan book--stories of Paul Bunyan. And I know one, one story, that they tell. In the early days before jammers got into effect to deck logs...

DB: What's a jammer, now?

HJ: A jammer is a double drum outfit that's powered, gasoline now, diesel; whatever you have, engine and drums that hold this long cable, the boom... they used, what they called a decking line--a decking line was a chain and it had a hook on it looked like the picture, and you'd hook that on the log up on top and then it goes through a single block and a team on the end, and the log would be laying on this chain and roll it up just a one chain and then they'd have a good man with a cant hook who, just like a peavey without a spike, he'd catch 'em and cut them back at the head, to keep them even so'd they wouldn't run off the deck. They tell this story about this fellow who got hurt, and he wanted to know what happened to Big Tom. Oh, he was setting up with schoolmarm, it snagged into the crotch and kicked back, knocked Tom down and fell on top of him. And, the schoolmarm is a crotched log and it come to a kind of head. That's one of 'em.

DB: That's good. We talked yesterday how hard loggers worked. Did they ever complain about their work? About how hard it was?

HJ: Oh yea, they complained about hard work. Boy, I bet I was out there with some of the fellows that--especially the hookers, the feller, that's the jammer where he just stands there and pulls levers but the feller down below puts the choker on the log, the choker's a cable, and boy, the shirt's just soaking wet and then the dust settles on that--they got different colored backs, then they have otherwise.

DB: Did you ever hear any stories about a guy named Walkaway or Down-the-Road Dugan? did you ever hear stories about someone just coming to camp for a couple of days, and then just walk on out?

HJ: Oh yes. They were just bums--camp bums.

DB: Did you have names for them?

HJ: Well, I don't know, I never heard any names.

DB: Just bums.

HJ: Just bums. They were feeding off the lumber compaines.

DB: Did they have any special names for the wood bosses, guys who would be in charge of the team?

HJ: Well, sometimes they would call them big-stick.

DB: Big-stick.

HJ: Aha.

DB: What did that stand for?

HJ: Oh, they was the biggest stick on the job. I tell you, years ago the camp boss, he could...if I wanted to have been a camp boss, I could whip the boss and then I was camp boss.

DB: Was that back in the '20s?

HJ: No, that was back about '15 to '20.

DB: When did that go out?

HJ: Oh about the '20s, after that it tamed down more or less.

DB: What were the differences between working in the woods in Wisconsin and working here in Idaho?

HJ: Oh, Wisconsin--flat, and here tall hills where they cut the timber. Oh, there's some flat country, but not very much.

DB: Was it easier there or easier...?

HJ: Well, is some ways it was easier there, as far as cutting and being sawyers but the skidders they had it harder back there. Sometimes they had to use four horses to move one log. And then, in some places back there they'd use these big 13 foot wooden wheels with a yoke on them. Now that's when they even used oxen.

DB: Did you ever hear any superstitions about your last day of work on a sawcrew was dangerous? Did you ever hear anyone believe that the last day on the job they had more chance of getting hurt than any other day?

HJ: Well, no. I never heard that.

DB: OK. Were there any other superstitions about work, like if their hands were cold? You know, that they might be more in danger of getting hurt?

HJ: I don't remember that in them days they had any superstitions as far as getting hurt. Yea, they were sure that they wouldn't get hurt.

DB: What happened if a man did get hurt, in the woods, or died, what would they do with him?

HJ: Oh, they'd take him to a morgue.

DB: But would they wait until the end of day?

HJ: No, they take him right away, they had a coroner come out, as long as I can remember in the woods. And pret near every camp, see that was winter around these camps, pret near every camp had a fast team of horses and a cutter, and the man got hurt why...I know one fellow on the loading crew, the crotch line, that hooked the hooks hooked into a big log, come across his shoulder and his chin caught on the stake and it broke the breast bone loose from his ribs, and then packed him to where the cutter could come, and that was down river, and hauled him to town.

DB: What's a cutter? Was that a doctor?

HJ: No, no. Cutter is just a real light sleigh. Big high dashboard in a front, big high back, and it was used...it was cold and they had a little deal like a muffler on a car, had a little door in it put brickettes in there, made out of coke, and light them and set them under cover and they heat...

DB: What other kind of sleds did they have out in the woods, other than these fast cutters?

HJ: Oh, there were big heavy logging...and they were all built out in the woods.

DB: They were built in the woods?

HJ: Yea. They'd send a fellow out to look for trees that grew out in a natural curve and had, they used about that wide, they just cut the sides and flat on the bottom, and then the blacksmith, he would make the bolts and all the rings where they joined together and cut the pine to drive in where the bunk went.

DB: What's a bunk?

HJ: A bunk is what goes across the runner, then they have reeves first on the runners and then the bunk. Some of them were 12 feet long, and never had any stakes. But they load them logs up there, 12 and 15 logs high, logs about this big. And the wall would be straight, and then they'd go 15 miles for landing without spilling.

DB: Would they tie chains around them?

HJ: Chains, yes.

DB: I see.

HJ: The fellow that could load them, he got top pay.

DB: Were there any differences in the summer sleighs and the winter sleighs that they used?

HJ: Oh, they didn't use sleighs in the summer. Most of them log to the railroad and skidded to the railroad. They'd skid up to a quarter of a mile.

DB: That was the maximum distance about they could use?

HJ: Well, when they used these big wheels, they could bring out 10 ton of logs in a sling underneath. And one team, it could do it, because they just at the very back end of the log and drag them a little bit.

DB: Back to the stories, about the area. Have you ever heard any stories about buried treasure, in these parts?

HJ: No. But there was supposed to have been a lost mine back here.

DB: Where is that?

HJ: Nobody knows.

DB: It's lost.

HJ: No, the miners come out of this country and, went back up the line here, and the mine is...we have a creek over there that's called Lost Mine Creek, and I guess they had a burro and had two panniers on it and they were pulling a high grade gold.

DB: Was it ore or dust, or what?

HJ: Dust. That they, you know, that they panned out of the rocks. Some of it was pretty good size chunks, I guess. That was before my time too. And, one of them, the one that brought that in--one of them, oh, he got involved and got shot, and then the other one he went up--I guess that was about the time the Klondike was going pretty good--he went up there. I guess he just died, a year--two years ago.

DB: Who's that? What's his name?

HJ: I don't know what his name is.

DB: Have you ever heard of any haunted places around here stories about Indian ghosts, or anything like that?

HJ: No. Places out...There's one place out there that they called haunted--they call it Castle Rocks.

DB: Why do they call it that?

HJ: Castle Rocks? The rocks look like a whole bunch of castles. And one little creek--Jordan, north fork of the main river, comes right through there; and when the winds blow in certain directions, it just sounds like somebody's playing music, somewhere around there.

DB: What kind of music?

HJ: Well, like violin music. The wind hits these different rock spires, makes a weird sound allright.

DB: Does it make you go home a little quicker, when you hear that music?

HJ: Not me. It don't bother me. Ha.

DB: He-he.

HJ: Are there any unusual names for places in this area? That you can think of?

HJ: Any which?
DB: Unusual names for creeks or places.
HJ: Oh yea, lots of funny names for creeks, around here.
DB: Was that one you said, Two Bit Floosy Creek, or something?
XM: That's away from here towards the north.
HJ: And, on the Joe there one creek here--Long Liz, and the other one's Big Tom.
DB: Long Liz and Big Tom? How did they, do you know how they got those names?
HJ: No. I think they got named when they put the Milwaukee Railroad through there. Both of those creeks are on the north fork of the St. Joe.
DB: Why do they call the St. Joe the Shadowy St. Joe?
HJ: Well, there's trees on both sides, on the lower end where it comes into the lake and big cotton woods.
DB: Was there anybody around here, in the old days, that was a particularly good storyteller?
HJ: Oh, not that I know of.
DB: Was there anybody that told stories about Indian Legends about the Coeur d'Alene Indians?
HJ: No.
DB: Did people ever believe in ghosts or witches, or anything like that?
HJ: Not that I know of. Well, they have a story going about, an Indian that drowned in Hayden lake, and they claim that he finally come up in Coeur d'Alene River. Of course, that's all possible because there's an underground current goes out of Hayden Lake, there's no other way for the water of coming out of there. And, there's one place, it's a kind of a whirlpool. You go out here in a boat and you can hear the water pouring down through into a channel below. And then, another story is about over a spirit lake--that's how it got its name. An Indian chief's daughter she was on a cliff on one side of the lake. Just because her Dad wouldn't let her marry one of the Indians. He had his own Indian picked out, she was supposed to marry. She jumped off the cliff, or something.
DB: Was she a Coeur d'Alene Indian?
HJ: I imagine, she must have been. Or it could have been Spokane Indians too. They don't know where the boundary was here.
DB: Do you remember where you heard those stories?
HJ: Oh they come up, every once in a while.
DB: Where do people tell stories around here?
HJ: Oh, usually three or four guys get together in somebody's home.
DB: Do you remember any particular stories about the history of the Forest Service, by any chance?
HJ: No.

DB: Or something that happened in the Forest Service? How about, which major fires do you remember, since you've been here? What were the big ones?

HJ: The biggest one I can remember since I've been here, was up in Kaniksu National Forest. That burned for six weeks. And, the fellows that were on that fire, all they had for three weeks was ham sandwiches for breakfast, for dinner and night. And no coffee--just water.

DB: Remember what year that was?

HJ: Huh?

DB: Remember what year that was?

HJ: It must have been...it was 1928, '29, somewhere around there. And the 1910 Fire burned that part of the country, too.

DB: Since the 1929 Fire, there been any big ones, worth mentioning?

HJ: Well, not around here. Well yes, we did have one that started in Sundance. And it started in a straight line and they just...well, the fire, they had it ringed but they didn't go along and clean up along the edge. And they got a big heavy wind and the fire jumped, and not only in one place but half a dozen places, and it just took two hours for the fire to run 15 miles.

DB: What year was that, do you remember?

HJ: Lets see. Should have been about 1940-45, somewhere.

DB: Did you ever work for the CCC?

HJ: No.

DB: No. You worked a couple summers for the Forest Service, though.

HJ: Yea, short. In the Spring mostly.

DB: And that was beetle control.

HJ: Beetle control, and one Spring I worked for a month blazing section lines in the corners.

DB: Do you remember what years those were, you worked?

HJ: That was way back in '28, '29, '31.

DB: In your travels through the woods, do you recall where the different CCC camps were located at?

HJ: Well some of them no. There was one up on Hayden Creek and one at Hudlow, and...

DB: Hutter? Is that the H-U-T-T-E-R?

HJ: Oh, H-U-D-L O W

DB: And then there was one at Magee and one at Jordan Creek, and one at Rock City. I have to tell you a good one about Rock City. The camp wasn't at Rock City it was on Senator Creek--that's where the camp was. Well, the native boys...they had quite a few Negroes out there, that been shipped out from the East. The native boys, one Saturday night, well, one said to another, "I think I'll hike down to Rock City." The Negro boy, right away: "What's going on in Rock City?" "Oh, lot of things. For one thing, they

got a big laundry down there, a lot of women working down there." And, the Negro boys followed him down to Rock City. Rock City was nothing but a big meadow, maybe 400 acres of meadow there. And then on the way back, why they were walking along and a big porcupine on the road. And they hollered "Bear, Bear!" And these Negro boys, they passed 'em on the road; they came in 30 minutes ahead of the white boys.

DB: Well, how much has Coeur d'Alene developed, since you have been here? You said that there were about 7,000 people when you first got here?

HJ: Yea, about 7,000. Not quite 7,000. And right now, it must be about 18.

DB: What were the different events that happened that made the city grow like that?

HJ: Well, I don't know. I can't see what the people move in here for, outside of getting away from another place. There is no work, there's no jobs here. Of course now, big stores, from Spokane, putting outfits over here. And then, we have a lot of Canadians, come down here in the summer, to get away from their country, up there. And I guess they have a...their bagpipes work pretty good here, by the lake. They claim anyway.

DB: Who told you that?

HJ: That's in the papers, every once in a while.

DB: Let me run some work by you and see if you recognize them. These are words by an Eastern logger. These are things that are in the vocabulary. Did you ever hear the term appleknocker?

HJ: No.

DB: It's a part-time logger. How about, barber chair?

HJ: Yea.

DB: What is that?

HJ: A barber chair is, where they cut the notch and they don't cut the corners and the trees lean, and they split up, and....

XM: (ENTERS) Oh. Hi.

DB: Dave Barton.

XM: Gene Hall.

DB: Hi, Gene. We are just going over some old words.

HJ: Hea. And that, the barber chair was split up a long ways and you could sit on part of the stump, and lean against what's left. I made one of them once.

DB: Where they ever dangerous?

HJ: Oh, they were really dangerous, they were almost the most dangerous things in the woods.

DB: What would happen?

HJ: Well, you see, these here log would split up, right up on this here chair, chair and then break off up there. And, sometimes shoot back as much as 20 feet. And, they

would come off to the side, and if you hadn't figured out a trail of escape, why it would smash you down to the ground. That's where most of the fellows got killed.

DB: How about the term buckler? Buckler?

HJ: A buckler, now he was the guy who sawed the logs out of the trees after they were felled.

DB: I see. How about bull? What was a bull?

HJ: Boss.

DB: How about a chaser?

HJ: Chaser? Lets see, he put the chokers one.

DB: OK. How about a choker? What was a definition of the choker?

HJ: Choker is a cable with an eye in it, or they have row they have a button. Now I call it a squaw cunt. Huh.

DB: OK. How about a choker setter?

HJ: He puts chokers on the logs.

DB: How about a climber? Who is he?

HJ: A climber? He puts the rigging up in the tall trees.

DB: Did you ever hear of a Coose Bay splice? C-O-O-S-E, Coose Bay?

XM: Coose. Coose Bay. Northern.

DB: Coose Bay.

HJ: Coose Bay.

DB: How about corks?

HJ: That's the spikes you got in your shoes.

DB: Why do they call them corks?

HJ: Why it ain't corks, its caulk caulk.

DB: But they spell it here cork.

HJ: He, I know that's the way most of them pronounce it. But the fact is caulk. Its the same as that they put in the horse-shoes; caulks. And its caulks that they put in the boots. As you buy them, they come in a box, and that's the way it's spelled on the box.

DB: What was a crummy?

HJ: A crummy was a no good bum.

DB: OK. How about a faller?

HJ: A faller, a sawyer...

DB: What did they call crew vans or trucks they used to take them out to the woods? They have a name for that?

HJ: Crew van?

DB: Did they have a name for the trucks that would take them out?

HJ: No. No there weren't any that I could remember. The only one I can remember was out on the river, was wannegan.

DB: Wannengan?

HJ: Yea. A boat one was built for eating, one was built for sleeping.

DB: How do you spell that?

HJ: Wannengan? W-A-N-N-E-N-G-A-N.

DB: What's a gut hammer? Did you ever hear that term? Gut hammer?
HJ: No.
DB: In here it's a dinner bell.
HJ: Oh.
DB: What they use the term gypo? What did that stand for?
HJ: Gypo, works by the piece.
DB: So that would be an independent?
HJ: Yes.
DB: What's a haul back?
HJ: ~~It's when they use that decking line, then the haul back~~ would always be pulled back by the man. That would be a haulback.
DB: What's a haywire?
HJ: Haywire gypo. Heh. Just gets by with a lot of haywire. You know, they had a lot of horses and the hay, come in bales. And lots of haywire.
DB: Did they ever use that to talk about a real small gauge wire? Haywire? A real tiny wire, smaller than they cables that they used for the...?
HJ: Well, they called...we still have some out here, who are called haywire loggers. Their rigging was...well, I wouldn't work with their rigging.
DB: What's a hooker?
HJ: He puts the hook in the logs.
DB: What was his rank in the hierarchy? Was he high or low in the...

(END OF TAPE 3; Side 1)