

FM: I pulled on board and I said, "Mort, what's the matter?"  
Oh, God, I tell you, he is the grouchiest looking man in the world anyway. But his face was so it would cost him \$9.00 for a shave, even in those days. After doing all this work, you know. And he spent quite a bit of money on it. He said. "This thing just won't steam." So, I hadn't been on it at all. And of course, I'm a steam engineer. And so I tied up alongside of him and I jumped on to look things over. And he had it hooked up pretty good. Good shape. I opened the firebox and looked. I said, "Mort," I said, "Christ, you couldn't even roast a weiner in there. You don't know how to build a fire." "Oh," he said, "I played with this thing for a week now. And I can't get steam from out of it." I said, "OK," so I said, ah...so, I poked his fire up, stoked her, and shut the draft off, you know. "Oh," he said, "your steam'll go down." I said, "Yea, I know it'll go down." Which it did, a little. "Well," he said, "this thing isn't going to work. I guess, I'll just have to pull this engine out." And I, "Just hold easy." About 15 minutes later the steam started coming up. I said, "OK. Open your engine wide open." "Well, hell, I can't go quarter mile until I have any steam." I said, "Yea, you'll have steam." So he opened it wide open. And about the end of the quarter mile we had the thing popping off. We had more steam than we could use. And that's the only time in my whole life that I saw that man smile.

DB: Did he figure it out after that?

FM: Hea. He did. He used it all through the war years. You bet'cha.

XM: Did they, like in the later steam, did they use oil or did they still use wood?

FM: Wood. They used wood. And ah, there was a little steamer on the lake here. Oh, I helped the old guy design it and build it. Oh, God, many, many years ago. And there is a barge. And right in the middle, it was built, just like this thing here, right in the middle here he had a box. About the size of this table. We pulled ah...that was his table. We pulled the lid off then he could fish right through his hole, see. Sit right inside and do his fishing, you know. He had a trap door in the bottom. When he got a bunch of fish he didn't want to skin or clean, he just close that door and dump the fish back. But he burned old crankcase oil in that. And so, he was a very, very, very dear friend of mine. And ah...

DB: What was his name?

FM: Poyntner.

DB: Poyntner?

FM: Yea. He had the machine shop where the Convention Center sits now. I worked for him when I was a little kid. And ah, so he wanted me to go out with him one weekend. So, we went up...I think we went up to the Beauty Bay area. So, we left the dock. And, here that thing was throwing black smoke, till hell wouldn't have it. The blower was on. And, and, not too much steam. So, I said, "Jack" I said, "I'm going to play around with your firebox for a while." And I remember seeing in the hold, half a dozen firebrick laying under the stern. So, I went and got those and placed them around on this firebox, you know. So where this oil would squirt in. First thing you know, there is more damn steam than you could need. There was no smoke coming out, and no blower. He couldn't stand it, you know. He put up with it as long as I was on there. And next trip out again he was smoking again and a full blower. And, it would burn one fourth of the oil.

DB: What were some of the peculiar names they had for different things on the steamboat?

FM: Oh, you mean things like carburetors and...

DB: Yes. Did they have any slang names for stuff?

FM: Well, yea. No. They had what you call the lubricator. There was a mechanical lubricator. It worked off an arm that was hooked to your crank, ratchet. And you had a whole row of ah...little glass covered bowls, with little spouts that come out like this. Each one of those was piped to a certain bearing. You could watch. And you could set each one to how many drops of oil you wanted. And ah, then there was the steam lubricator, which lubricated the engine. And it, it put...it had a little glass about this long. In fact, one blew up and put my dad's eye out. About that long, about that big around. And you set this valve. It come up this...like you use 600W oil. Set this valve in there, so'd this big glob'd come out, mix with your steam in there. This's what oiled your cylinders. And, other than that they had the, of course, the Johnson Bar. That's common on railroads or anything you have. That's what you reverse your engine with. And ah.

DB: On the Mississippi River they had; the pilot was in charge of getting the boat down river; he did all the movement around, and then you had the captain, who was in charge of the passengers, and he was in charge of the cargo, usually a part owner of the boat. Did they have anything like that here?

FM: No. Your skipper just ran the boat. You did have pursers. The Georgie Oaks carried a purser and I think the Harrison did, and maybe some of the others.

DB: What did the purser do?

FM: Well, he sold tickets and took care of the passengers and took care of the business end of it. So, the captain and the crew didn't have to do that. And ah, old J.C....no Elijah Profit. He was a guy that stood about so tall as I do now, and his belly was bigger than that table. And ah, nice old fellow. He was a purser on that until all the boats quit running and then he took care of the dock station in St. Maries for 'em until he died.

DB: What did people used to think about the Forest Service in this town?

FM: Well, I couldn't answer that. I know, I think there's a lot of malarkey down there now. These days. Of course you go out in the forest, all you see is a bunch of guys running around in pickups and you never see any of 'em out doing anything.

DB: How about the CCC? Did people...what did people think about that?

FM: Oh yea. It was kind of a must in those days. There were these kids without nothing to do. And ah, when...they had a mess of 'em up there. Now, this was 1933. No, it was '34. No. Well, it was the Winter of '33-'34. And they had 500 CC men up in the hills, above St. Joe. The railroads was flooded out. There was no roads into it. And they didn't have bulldozers and helicopters then, you know. And ah, they were runnin' out of grub. So, I pulled in. I was doing rescue work up there with the old steamer Pine Cat. In the St. Joe River Valley. So, I pulled in the dock this evening to take on a cargo of wood and some groceries, and stuff. And here come the army engineer man down. He says, "Who's captain of this boat?" And I says, "I am." He says, "I want you here in the morning at 7 o'clock to take a load of food up to St. Joe." Well, not being a military man, he didn't shake me up. He had ribbons and buttons all over 'im, you know. And I said, "Well," I said, "You call the home office. Coeur d'Alene". After we talked a little bit, told me what he wanted. I said, "There's a big jam up there. About a mile and a half jam. It's got houses and fences, and cattle and horses, and logs, and trees and everything in it." And I said, "I'll have to go through that." And, I said, "I don't think that's too much of a problem." But, I said, "You call the home office." He said, "I just don't have to do that." I said, "Yes, you do, if you want me to take this boat up river." And, ah, I said, "Tell, 'em that I'm reasonably sure that I can get this cargo up there without any trouble or problem." And then, I said, "I won't do it unless you call 'em." Well, he decided that he had a stubborn or foolish person, or something, on his thing, you know. He couldn't kick me around like he does his little boys, you know. So, he went and called them. He come

back. And I said, "What did they say?" And, he said, "Well, if you think you can do it, they give you their blessing. Go ahead." And then, he turned out to be a hell of a fine fellow, after that.

DB: What camp were you taking this stuff to?

FM: There was a...a 500 CC men from St. Joe they had to go about four miles on a railroad that was washed out and just hanging. On the ties, up in the air. These cars, these hand cars, you know. They had to go about four, five miles on those. It wasn't that way all the way but in places it was.

DB: Do you remember the name of it? Do you remember the name of the camp?

FM: They were just CC camps.

DB: Just CC camps?

FM: Yea. And ah, so, I put on four and a half tons of grub. And these trucks were laying there for four or five days trying to find a way to get this stuff up river. In winter, and pouring down rain. Pouring rain. They'd hand me a quarter of meat, all wrapped up in gunnysack, and the hands would go clear in the bone. I thought, "Hell, what's the use of hauling that up there." So, I just accidentally dropped it in the river. And ah, but, we got up there an' these, these...there were three of those army men there. They went uptown got a bunch of big T-bone steaks and a bunch of food, and stuff to eat, you know. So, after I got up through this jam...they brought me some dynamite. I said, "I need, maybe 2 or 3 cases of dynamite." And ah, but, I didn't have to use it. I plowed my way through that stuff. And, I got up to where I could grab a little time, so I started cooking dinner. And those guys ate like they'd never had anything to eat in their lives. And they swore to God that was the best meal that they ever ate in their lives. They turned out to be nice fellows, after you put them in their place. We got it up there, and this depot was way up on land. And this tug drew nine feet of water. And I ran the bow of my boat right up to that depot platform, and unloaded that stuff.

DB: Do you remember the name of the head of that CC camp?

FM: No. No. 'Cause I never saw 'im. And I wouldn't have remembered him anyway. You know, I remember some names--impressive. Ah...

XM: Yesterday we took a look at the town...what's left of the town of St. Joe, it's just a few houses...

FM: There's nothing there now.

XM: Where was the older town, was it down on the plain or was it up on the hill slope?

FM: Oh, it was just...you know, the railroad track runs through there, it was just south of the railroad track all along; that was the main town.

DB: Was there a store or anything?

FM: Oh, yea. There was a store an' a restaurant, and ah...kind of a general thing. Had rooms and stuff and...I think the last real good memory I have of St. Joe, I landed up there and...I and my helper went up. We wanted to go up, we thought we'd go up and eat up there at the restaurant, instead of cooking on board the boat. You know, we'd been out all the time, for a long time. And as soon as we got just...oh, a 100 feet from the door, to walk in this place. It was two story place. It had rooms down below. And a gambling room in the back. And a counter and where you could eat, you know. One of those early days things really, Jeez, I heard a big bang, come out of the building. And ah, by the time we walked this 100 feet or so, opened the door. Why, here was a guy about your size, a great big red-headed Irishman. He was walking around that floor and he had one shoe on and one shoe off. And everytime he stepped with that off-shoe the blood would go "kshew," clear across the room. And he was waving his arms. Jake was the guy who owned it, Jake Cobine. He said, "Jake, if you weren't so old and so damned crippled I'd just tear you apart." Old Jake was sitting right behind the counter with a .45 automatic right in his hand too.

DB: What had happened?

FM: Well, this bunch of young fellows got down there. And they got partying and wrecking his joint, see. They were tearing things up and raising hell. An' he gone down. Jake told me afterward. He says, "I went down four or five times and tried to plead with 'em." He said, "They're all good kids," he said, "But, god damn they're tearing my stuff up. And, I didn't like that." So, he goes out, he opens up the door. He's scared to go in there. Which I don't blame him, they were all drunk you know. He takes a shot on the floor and this guy got his heel in the way. It hit 'im right in the heel and it took half a bullet width out. But that tickled me: "Jake, if you weren't so damned old and so crippled," he had one leg. He said, "...I'd tear you apart."

DB: About how far up the St. Joe is it navigable for your steamers?

FM: Ah, well, you could go a little bit past St. Joe with 'em. Up to the railroad...up to the bridge up there.

DB: How about the Coeur d'Alene River, how navigable was that?

FM: Oh, I'd say to a very experienced person maybe, you can get to Cataldo, when it's fair water. In high water you can get to Cataldo but in low water you can't get more than a couple of miles past Dudley.

DB: Did, ah, did you do a lot of boating in there in the Springtime or was it most year around?

FM: It was all year around. When the logs start coming in the Spring that's when you are really busy.

DB: So that was the busiest time of the year? Did you ever directly load or unload from railroad?

FM: Oh, yea. Christ, I unloaded 100s and 100s of cars. But with a peavey. Trip your chains and roll 'em in. I don't know how people can survive that. That is, that is dangerous work. You got to be quick, gotta' have a quick eye and a quick movement.

DB: Would you take them one at a time, or would they all come piling out of there?

FM: Well, you never try to figure on one at a time; you'd try to figure on tripping one that would let the rest of 'em pretty well roll off.

DB: What are some of the stories you tell about blasting out some of the logs jams that are up there, in the St. Joe?

FM: I never did that, really. I've blasted out 100s and 100s of piling and things like that, but log jams...no, I never had to do that.

DB: What's the weirdest thing that ever got caught in your screw?

FM: Nothing more than a two line, I don't think. Maybe some farmer's fence or something.

DB: Never a cow or anything like that?

FM: Oh, they wouldn't get caught. No, hm-hm. If you'd back up into 'em roll them under, you might grind them up a little bit.

DB: What are some of the things you've seen floating in this lake, that are...?

FM: Well, after the '33 Flood. This lake was full of cattle, elk and deer, and sheep. I've had a great big cow all bloated up that big, floating in on my beach down here. Then there was several of 'em up here. I got, I'd just go up there and take three or four sticks of dynamite and put 'em on underneath and blow 'em so that they could sink. some of 'em I towed to town and they hauled them out. They didn't hurt anything in the water. They'd go down, give 'em fish food.

DB: Were there many people that drowned since you've been here?

FM: Oh. Yes. Yea.

DB: What were the usual causes?

FM: Oh, it's hard to say.

DB: Carelessness, I imagine?

FM: I'd say basically that is the main reason. Getting out in weather they can't handle with a boat. Things like that.

DB: Do sailboats turn over very much?

FM: No. Oh, yea, the small ones do. Ones like I have flips all the time.

DB: A Sunfish, or something like that?

FM: No, it's a Hobie Cat.

DB: A Hobie Cat?

FM: But these are sports type boats and you expect it, you know. You get goofing off and don't...  
DB: Start leaning back...  
FM: If you don't know what you're doing with a Hobie Cat, you're going to be swimming, I'll tell you that. Cause they are fast. They'll sail up to 30 miles an hour.  
DB: When were...were there always sailboats on this lake, since you've been here?  
FM: Well, when I first started here there wasn't over three or four sailboats on the whole lake.  
DB: When did they start getting popular?  
FM: Oh, they didn't start getting real popular till about 10, 15 years ago. Now the lake is full of 'em. We got more sailboats here than we've got mosquitoes on this lake.

(END OF TAPE 23; Side 2)