

Idaho Panhandle Oral History Project
Interview with Ole Jennestad
October 23, 1979
317 First Street, Sandpoint
Interviewed by David F. Barton
Questionnaire Information

OJ = Ole Jennestad
DB = David Barton

Tape 5; Side 1

OJ: ...This is my daughter.

DB: Hi.

XF: Hi.

OJ: She's from Seattle.

DB: And, I am Dave Barton, and this is Dale Martin. To continue the questions we started the other day, when you would go out to the log camps to get the measurements of the people, were there names of the log camps? Or, what company were the people working for?

OJ: Humbird Lumber Co.

DB: Were they all Humbird camps?

OJ: Yea. All Humbird camps, except once I went up to Montana.

DB: What camp was that, do you remember?

OJ: Well, that wasn't really a camp. It was a place...they had a car...the people lived in the car.

DB: In the railroad car?

OJ: Yea. A man there...there was a foreman, he was living on Pend Oreille, just three miles west of here. He said "If you come up tomorrow to Paradise; you can get a lot of orders." Of course, he had a crew working there. So I took the train up, and I just had one hour, from the time I got up there until the train went back to Sandpoint. On the Northern Pacific. And I took 10 orders, measurements, in one hour.

DB: Oh boy. Do you remember any of the names of people who were in the logging camps, back then?

OJ: No, I can't.

DB: Can't remember.

OJ: If I look back in the books I might find some.

DB: How did you record the measurements? Where would you record them?

OJ: Well, I had an order book, as big as your sheet there. A little bit more. And, so, I had a stub, like you find when you write checks, see. With all the measurements.

DB: What measurements did you take?

OJ: Well, I took all kinds of measurements. Chest, and waist and height, and arm lengths, and all the rest of them. And I never had one mistake.

DB: Never had a mistake.

OJ: There were \$800 orders I took.

DB: \$800 orders?
OJ: Yes.
DB: Generally, what kind of suits would men order back then?
OJ: Well, the range was from \$15 to \$48.
DB: What would you get for \$15?
OJ: Well that's what I sold them for. I didn't make much--about three dollars.
DB: What was the difference between the \$15 and \$48?
OJ: Well, the quality of the material. The \$48 suits you had to pay \$300 for now.
DB: What price range did most of the men get?
OJ: About \$25 to \$30 .
DB: What would they use the suits for, when they got them?
OJ: Well, when they came to town they always...in fact they didn't get them till the Fourth of July. And in the Fall, in the winter I took the measurements and sent that to Chicago. They came down just before July. And they came in the store and they got fitted.
DB: Did you do the alterations, yourself?
OJ: Ja. But there was not alterations to be done. But I did what ever little there was; I'd press them or something.
DB: Where would people celebrate, in Sandpoint, on the Fourth of July?
OJ: Well, they celebrate like they do everytime.
DB: Did they have fireworks?
OJ: No. I don't think they had fireworks. Remember once, when President Roosevelt was here, on the Fourth of July. There was 5,000 people there to meet him. He even gave a speech at the Rink Opera House.
DB: Where was the Rink Opera House located at?
OJ: Well, it was one block down and one block to the right.
DB: Do you remember where the old Humbird Company log railroad was?
OJ: I don't know, unless it was down to the....well, the mill was up about one mile from here.
DB: Was it right on Lake Pend Oreille?
OJ: Ja, right on Lake Pend Oreille.
DB: And then, where was the company store in relation to here?
OJ: Well, that was up on the..Third Avenue. This is First, and then Second and Third...and two blocks north. And, that's where I started my store, just two blocks from them. On the same street.
DB: Did you have the same kind of customers as Humbird had?
OJ: Yes. A lot of people had been trading with Humbird and I could sell them just as well.
DB: Did you ever take credit, or those slips that the people got at the Humbird Company?
OJ: No. I just sometimes trusted them, of course.
DB: How did...you say trusted them, how did you work that arrangement?

OJ: I merely said charge it.
DB: Did many people do that?
OJ: Well, I, of course, charged more...I didn't always trust them, see. But I didn't give credit from the beginning.
DB: I've got a map here. I was wondering, you think you could point out some of the places where the old log camps were, where you used to go to?
OJ: Well, no. I can't. There was, I think it was seven miles north of here--Selle.
DB: Was it near the town of Selle?
OJ: Yea. And, then I'd walk from there up to the camps.
DB: What direction would you walk?
OJ: Well, sometimes north and sometimes east.
DB: Well, do you remember how many camps there were?
OJ: No. But I think they had almost a dozen camps.
DB: A dozen camps?
OJ: Yea.
DB: Were they located along creeks?
OJ: I don't remember about any creek.
DB: What did the camps look like?
OJ: They were very nice and clean. And they always..the foreman always invited me to stay in the office and sleep over there. Didn't cost me a penny.
DB: What kind of food did you eat there?
OJ: Just like the other people. Very good food.
DB: Do you remember any of the kinds of food?
OJ: No, I can't say that I do.
DB: How long would you stay in each camp?
OJ: Oh, I...I just...sometimes a couple of days; everybody wanted to get measured for a suit.
DB: Would you measure them in the evenings?
OJ: Ja. Any time that they had time. I couldn't keep them away from work.
DB: And, usually what kind of buildings did they have in the log camps? Do you remember?
OJ: Well, I can't say that I remember very well.
DB: You said that they had an office.
OJ: Ja.
DB: What did that look like?
OJ: Well, that...the end of the building where they had the office. Kept the books; the records of all the men.
DB: And, did they have barracks where they slept? The men.
OJ: Well, they had, they had...yes, double bunks.. Had a bed this high up and then about six feet up, they had another.
DB: And, how many men would sleep in these houses?
OJ: Oh, probably, about 25 to 30.
DB: 25 to 30. Did they have a place where they ate--like a mess?
OJ: Yes, yes. They were very, very clean. They had good food. Good cooks and good food.

DB: Good cooks and good food. Where there any other buildings that you remember, in the log camps, besides the mess hall, and the place that they slept, and the office?

OJ: Can't say as I do.

DB: When you rode the train up, to get off near Selle and then walked to the camps, was it a passenger train you rode?

OJ: Yes.

DB: Where was that--the final destination of that?

OJ: Well, they had to get out to the Grey Mountain Depot here. That's about two miles from Sandpoint. I got on the train and I got off at the place I wanted to walk.

DB: Did you walk up to the Great Northern Depot?

OJ: Yes, I had to.

DB: And then you took the train up near Selle, and then you walked out through the woods. Were there roads, to the camps?

OJ: Yes there were roads.

DB: What kind of equipment did the men use out in the woods, do you remember?

OJ: Well, I guess, the same kind of equipment that they use right now.

DB: Did they have horses and sleds?

OJ: Yes. They used to pull logs, you know, the horses. They were enormous. You wouldn't think that a horse could pull it. Two or four horses.

DB: What did the roads look like back then, the old pole roads, do you remember?

OJ: Well, they were working for many years, they had pretty good roads.

DB: Do you every remember any stories in these parts about Chinese men, Chinese laborers?

OJ: No, I don't remember--Chinese. Could have been one or two in the camp.

DB: How about blacks, do you rembmer any blacks in Sandpoint?

OJ: No, I don't...I don't think...I, I suppose they had blacks.

DB: Do you remember any Italians?

OJ: Italians? Well, yes. I think there is practically every type of race here.

DB: I see.

(END OF TAPE 5; Side 1)