

Call Number: 02-00-31

Joe Ward Interview Pt. 2, X/X/1970

Summary created by: Jacob Metoxen

Date of creation of summary: 2/26/2013

Notes: Original on 7 inch reels. Master copy on CD.

The recording starts with a woman laughing. Joe Ward says something inaudible. He says this [food or coffee] is about the same the boys bring in. They are discussing the sweetness of the food or coffee they are enjoying. There are two people interviewing Joe. A man asks where Joe lived in England. Joe says Blackburn in the County of Lancaster. His father was the head woodman at a gentlemen's estate.

The tape cuts out at 1:12.

He says he worked with his father for a few months and he learned how to use an ax and saw. Joe's older brother worked too and knew how to use an ax and saw. Joe said he went to school at 4 am and finished between 10 and 11 am. Joe worked in the garden and grew plants and sold them. He got to the garden at 6 am and had to walk 3 hours to work and 3 hours back. Joe got paid a dollar a week for his work. Joe says he was hard to get out of bed. When walking to work, Joe could hear the work bell ringing when he was on his way.

Joe says something inaudible at 4:00.

Joe said he used to hear about the Indian stories in the States but he never heard of Alaska. He said he didn't think of Alaska until he got to California. Joe has two brothers and one sister. Joe is the youngest.

Joe says he got fired one time. He quarreled with the butler at the gentleman's estate and threatened to beat the butler. Joe had no money when that happened.

At 6:20 he says he better not tell a story he was going to tell.

Joe tells a story about how he met with a friend [Jack] and Jack says he's going to go to the States. Joe told Jack that he was sorry to lose a friend. Jack said he wanted Joe to go with him. Jack offered to pay the way and then Joe could pay Jack back when they got to the U.S. The first letter Joe got in the United States was from the Police Force in England. Joe came to the United States with a jug because he thought they were going frogging. Joe and Jack went to some place in the countryside. Jack went to Council Bluffs [Iowa] and it looked like he was looking for a job and so was Joe. Jack was a good man and he got work in Omaha, Nebraska as a carpenter. Jack worked there for about a month. Joe's brother landed in Canada. Jack gave Joe the money to get his brother. Joe says he was opposite of Jack, no good. Joe's brother came and they were working but weren't getting paid enough so they left for

California because they saw advertisements for work in the lumber camps. Both Joe and his brother had experience from their father. Joe was 19 at that point. Joe, Jack, and Joe's brother got work straight away. They were lucky because the camp they were working at shut down because there was too much water but Joe's brother got a new job in October at another camp and they both got a job there and worked at the camp all winter. It was a Redwood company. They'd go down fishing and he sent Jack his check and paid him as quick as he could. Joe never knew how much he did owe Jack. Joe figured he owed Jack 68 dollars. Joe sent Jack 70 and Jack sent the two dollars back.

Joe's brother got a job at the gardens at a gentleman's estate. He was working there and a little Scotchman worked with him. The Scotchman's brother came to visit and they got acquainted that way. Charlie, a big Swede, said he was going to Alaska and the Scotchman said he was going so that's how they got to Alaska. They rode a boat from San Francisco to Skagway for 10 dollars. The Swede had a basket that contained a lot of supplies, allowing the Swede to ride on the train. Joe and the Scotchman attempted to walk to Dawson and it took them three days to walk 110 miles. Joe had a summer sausage, a loaf of bread and a blanket. He saw the other boys start the walk with all the supplies they had in the world and they dumped their supplies after a certain amount of miles. Scotty flew out when they stopped to get some lunch. Charlie went to Whitehorse and he was fishing. They met people walking from Dawson who said there's no work in Dawson. Some people suggested they get on a boat and they will find some work. There were about 20-30 people including Joe. Joe picked out the ones that wanted to go. People who went included: George the Scotchman, Chips from Switzerland, an American, a Norwegian, and they put together about 35 dollars to buy one of those square boats. They got about two miles from Dawson and they parked the boat and took a walk to see how Dawson looks. There were old cabins and they went to live in one of those cabins. On the hillside there were a lot of greenhouses and so Joe went and asked the owner [Babbet] if he needed work. The job paid 75 dollars a month, the most money he'd ever seen in a month. George the Scotchman laid around for a while and he went out to the creeks and he got a job. Freddy came down and he and Chips went down to Cold Creek. Chips was a carpenter and Chips and Freddy stayed there all summer. In the fall Joe didn't know what he was going to do so he was approached and asked if he wanted to go prospecting and Joe said yes. They got George the Scotchman and Joe was willing to go. Joe wanted his wages from the greenhouse and the boss [Babbet] said he's not going to give the wages and the boss was known to be crooked. Joe took the boss to court and he was his own lawyer. Scotty [George] had been working for the same boss [Babbet] that Joe worked for. The court was full of people who knew the Joe's boss was a crook. Babbet was his name. Joe called George [the Scotchman] as a witness and he asked George "At what conditions were you hired by Mr. Babbett?" An Irishman was the judge and he said Mr. Babbett had to pay Joe. Joe went to the judge's house to get the money. They bought another boat and started down to prospecting.

They were going up to Porcupine [River] because one of them heard there was something around. They didn't have any idea about prospecting.

He says "I told you about that" and then tells the recorder to "Stop that a minute" and then "Didn't I tell you..." in a firm voice.

And we're back at 21:37

Joe said if you don't have character in England you'll get no place. Joe gives an example of when the head gardener was on vacation [when he was a gardener in England] for two or three weeks. Joe was put in charge and was by himself. Joe worked through it because he had to have a good reputation for future jobs. Joe calls letters of recommendations "characters" and how Joe recalls how he tried showing the people he was going to work for in the U.S. his "characters" and the employers said they didn't want to see them, they were going to judge Joe by his work.

Joe is asked by the man interviewing about how he stayed at the Porcupine River and then asked how Joe went to Circle. Joe says his travel was extensive because of going to lumber camps. He said him and a man named Bill stayed in a hotel in Porcupine River that night. Joe stayed up with an elderly man at the hotel and they were discussing prospecting. The man said he had found gold in South America. The Natives then showed up and took everything the elderly man had prospected. Joe says while he was out in Circle he was supposed to get a letter from the elderly man about going prospecting.

25:20-25 is inaudible.

Scotty and Fred had gone together to get supplies thinking they are going to get the word from the old man about prospecting. Joe never got the letter and he found out later that the old man had died.

Joe talked to a Frenchman who asked if he was interested in prospecting and Joe said yes so they got an outfit on the River Creek and started prospecting. They had one winter where they built 5 cabins and 6 wells [two of them 40 feet deep]. They lived with Old Webber who was an old man who lived there. Old Webber pulled the sleds out to Circle and they all went there to work. When they went out to Circle to work, Scotty [George] and Old Fred had gone up to another camp. Fred eventually got a job but that was on bedrock. Joe got wages so no matter what he got paid.

Joe said they were in Circle and walked out 50 miles to go up the creeks to look for jobs. Joe was in Circle through with prospecting. Joe and Fred met up at Circle to try and find jobs. Joe was paid 50 cents an hour and he worked 12 hours a day. He worked for Pete Anderson and Fred got a job in Bedrock.

At 30:30 Joe has a hard time remembering a word.

31:00 is somewhat inaudible.

Joe saw a Frenchman quit after half of day because the work was tough. Joe went up and worked in the dump box and he worked there until everything was over. They offered Joe a job next year. He worked there all summer and got 400 dollars when they were through.

Joe is asked where Rubber Creek is. Joe says Rubber Creek is 14 miles above Circle. It is the first creek above Circle. We went on the steamboat from Circle. Joe worked on the creeks twice. He was going to go out again but a man started a farm near Birch Creek. A man asked if they wanted to stay there and work. It wasn't like the creek but it was steady. The man who hired him was name Rueger. He got a lot

of experience "rib sawing" lumber. He was building a big saddle. Joe built a 20 foot square and they built a saddle and he used to fill the square with hay. They would send the hay on the square down the river where another person would catch the hay. One time Joe missed one so he went out there to stop it and he had \$100 bill in his pocket and that went down the river.

Joe is asked by the man if this is the same farmer that used to feed his pigs on fish. Joe confirms that yes he did feed the pigs on fish. The man's wife was a worker, a harder worker than most men. He grew vegetables and sold them at the creeks. Fred got fired up at the creeks and Joe got him a job selling vegetables up the creek. The farm was right at Birch Creek about 10 miles out from Circle.

In the summer people wouldn't have to get on the ferry because there was less water in the creeks. People would just drive their wagons down.

Joe is asked about trapping on the Porcupine River. Fred was the oldest of the group. Fred did everything but he just didn't know anything. While he was in Whitehorse he was supposed to know how to make bread and he didn't. Fred was a man that never learned and was lazy. Fred was a good singer and good entertainer.

Joe is asked at 39:00 if Fred taught Joe how to hunt caribou and Joe says no. They were supposed to be following tracks but they never did anything like that and Joe never fired guns. They followed tracks that they thought was caribou but they were rabbit tracks.

There is a loud beep at 39:47 and the recording continues.

Frank Fostrier [?] was the nicest man there's ever been. He was with Bootleg Bend and he couldn't make a living there [not sure what location Joe is talking about]. Frank went there and built a new cabin and waited for Mccenroy, the store keeper, and they went shopping. Frank couldn't make a living. Everybody would show Frank everything he wanted but Frank just never learned. Frank never took his citizens papers out either. Everyone was willing to teach him because he was so nice. Rube Nelson took Frank to the Canada side and Frank got sick and died...Alaska Frank. Joe is saying there wasn't a more intelligent man than Frank but at the same time Frank couldn't make a living. Anthony was something they say [?].

There is a long silence.

42:35 resumes conversation.

Joe was in Fairbanks for the trial. He set his traps out in November and he wanted to come back and see them. Also spend Christmas in For Yukon. He got mandolin lessons because he wanted to be a musician. Fred and Slim Bill [Ben?] were good singers. Joe went to Fort Yukon by himself. A man [name inaudible] came down and said "Ellen wants to get married to ya." Joe thought about it and said he knew her and they dance a little together but he didn't know about marriage. He went up and talked to her. He mentions the loneliness of living out in the woods as a break in the story. He went to talk to her old man and he asked what kind of hunter Joe was. Joe said he would get married as long as he didn't have to go to church. So they went to William Lulu's [?] house and got married. All they had was four

dogs and a trailer to travel 75 miles. Curtis had just came down [Joe's speech becomes inaudible]. Ellen was good and Joe and she got along fine. He wouldn't want anything better. Interestingly "It wasn't no love marriage" according to Joe. Joe has no regrets. Joe asks the interviewer if she would get married that way and she said "You never know!" emphatically.

Around the 46:00 minute mark the male interviewer begins shouting his questions at extreme levels as Joe continuously asks "What?", "What?" [Strangely, Joe seemed to understand the female interviewer perfectly fine when she spoke at a normal tone]

Joe says all he was looking for was fun. He believes only him and Peterson are the only ones who ever quit looking for a pension. He thinks he was a little different than other people because he liked to work. That was good for trapping and you get what you work for. If you don't work, like Fred, you don't make nothing.