

H97-175-28

Jack Brooks

Fairbanks, Alaska

February, 1961

Harrie Hughes and Frank Young, interviewers

^{Brooks}
Jack Young talks about firing boilers in Chicago and working in the mines in Montana for four years. He came to Juneau in July, 1895. That winter he and Joe Goldsmith went into the outback country. They had nine dogs and 1500 pounds of stuff. They got beyond Dalton's post. They prospected all winter until spring. They returned to Chilkat. The next summer he ran into Jack Dalton. He was packing supplies for his post. Jack has a son named Jim who lives out near the college. In the summer of 1896 he returned to the outback country with his partner. Jack helped them to pack their supplies in and they helped him with his pack train. His partner was hurt and they returned to Juneau after a week. In 1897 Jack Dalton brought cattle in over the trail. They started out at Pyramid Harbor the mouth of the Chilkat River. They were headed to Carmack, but because the Yukon was low they went through Selkirk. They built a raft and brought the cattle down. Harrie asked again where the trail started. Jack said it started at the mouth of the Chilkat River at Pyramid Harbor. The trail ended at Selkirk. They got down to Dawson in August. It was the first beef cattle brought into Dawson. Harrie asked about the Dawson stampede. Jack said the first gold came out in 1896. Jack staked a claim on O'Neil Creek above Bonanza Creek. Everything else was staked. You only had the right to claim one site on each creek system. Jack met Carmacks. He thought McQuestin had gone out by then to the Fortymile Country. His partner was Mike McCale. They had a claim on Fifteen above on the Bonanza Creek in 1897. They worked all winter there. His partner developed scurvy so Jack cleaned up the dumps while he was in the hospital. He bought a claim on French Hill. He did find a ten dollar nugget there. The ground that he worked he leased. He worked it with a wood fire. In the spring they would put it in a hopper and shovel the water in. It was all done with a bucket. He talked about the size of the shaft. They had a little cribbing at the top of the shaft. The ground was frozen solid. They did run into a water pocket while they were mining that they had to bail out. In the winter of 1898, Dalton's brother had a claim on Gold Hill in Dawson. Jack timbered up his shaft for him. It was at the junction of the Eldorado and the Bonanza. He went to Nome in the summer of 1900. He talked about the many people that were working on the beach. He thought there were 300-400 people working there. There were other people working in the hills. He asked about Rex Beach. Jack said he knew Rex Beach and some of the characters from his book. Jack talked about illegal activities in Nome. He lived in Nome for three years. Charlie Lane was one of the miners in town. Jack had a butcher shop in Nome. There was a group of soldiers in Nome at the same time Jack was there. He thought the soldiers were protecting McKenzie and his gang. A United States deputy marshal came and arrested McKenzie. They tried McKenzie and his group in San Francisco. President McKinley pardoned the whole group.

After Jack left Nome he came to Fairbanks. He staked a claim on Fairbanks Creek but never did anything with it. He knew Barnette and Wickersham. He knew Mrs. and Mrs. Pedro and Frank Cleary. Jack said most of the stamperders came over from Circle. Jack thought he was going to prospect but he ended up going into the ice business in

Fairbanks. Harrie asked when the town was incorporated. Jack thought it was incorporated the year before he got to Fairbanks. He said they didn't elect the mayor -- he was just the person that got the most votes in the election. It was a matter of honor. He served on the city council for two years. They started electing a mayor after 1910. He thought it was Sam Bonnifield. He had a reputation for being a gambler and was known for his poker playing. Jack talked about gamblers who came in from Montana to try to beat him at poker. Jack said he had a mine in Juneau. He lost money on the mine. He played poker in Circle and got enough money to pay off his debts in Juneau. He came to Fairbanks. Frank Manley got together 50,000 dollars worth of gold dust and they started the First National Bank. That was in 1905. Sam Bonnifield left for Montana and got involved with another bank. He was killed by an auto accident in Seattle along with his sister. Jack talked about Barnette loading up all the money in his bank and going to Circle. Harry thought Frank Goine "the Goine Kid" managed to get some of the money back from Barnette. Barnette ended up going to Mexico. John Barrack had a lot of money in the bank and it was returned. Jack thought the smaller depositors never got any of their money back. Jack and Harrie talked about Frank Cleary. Jack said he knew Barnette in Montana.

Jack said he stayed in Fairbanks for seven years and then went to the Fortymile country. He had claims on Chicken Creek. He used a rocker to mine gold. After he left Chicken he returned to Fairbanks.

He is ninety years old. He was born in 1870.

Jack talked about buying a ticket for a trip on the steamer called the Independence. He came from Nome and when they got to Saint Michaels they had to dig out the boat and there was no crew on the boat only an engineer and the captain. They all ended up working on the boat even though they were paying passengers. When they got up to Chiltag they loaded up with wood. The night watchman was Anderson. Anderson fell overboard and Jack got into a little canoe and went looking for him. Anderson was floating on a stick of wood. The boat didn't have anything to eat or drink but when he got back to the boat everyone had a bottle and wanted to give him a drink. The next day a dog went overboard and he went to save him, too. This was in 1903.

Jack talked about traveling to Haines. They were blown in at Skagway. They stayed there for three days. It was all timber at that time. In 1899 he went Outside. When he returned to Skagway it was all built up and all the timber was gone. Harrie and Jack talked about Bobby Sheldon. Jack said he packed a gun in Skagway because of Soapy Smith.