

H97-66-59

Jack Sullivan

Fairbanks, Alaska

Audrey Loftus

No date, before September 1960.

Parts of the recording are difficult to understand.

Jack Sullivan was born in Wisconsin in 1871. He came to Alaska in 1897. He came on the old Alque boat. He was working in Tacoma and a group of four men decided to come to Alaska. They heard about the strike in Alaska. He had been working for a street car company in Tacoma. They brought one horse and bought a couple of more horses in Skagway. They arrived sometime in July, 1897. They traveled over the trail and stopped at Bennett. He carried about one hundred and fifty pounds on his back. They got all of their equipment over to Bennett and then went over to Dyea. They went over a pass (he called it the Valdez summit) and took a boat on Long Lake. They built two scows and whipsawed their own lumber. They had eight passengers with them. They had to steer coming down the river. He had built some boats before but hadn't built a scow before. He describes how they used a whipsaw using a pit to cut the lumber. The whipsaw was about nine feet long. They carried a whipsaw with them as part of their equipment. They carried about twenty tons of equipment on their scow. Whitehorse Smith was with them on the scow. Jack talked about the different benches around Dawson that were mined. They didn't stake any claims when they first arrived. They built a roadhouse at Fox Gulch. He bought the horse that was used to construct the roadhouse. He started carrying the mail from Dawson to Sulphur. The following year he went to the Koyukuk because there was a gold strike there. One of the original group went back to Tacoma. Jack went up to Dawson and then moved to Fairbanks in 1905. He did some freighting with horses when he was at Dawson. He came down the Yukon River by way of Circle City. He drove his horses from Circle to Fairbanks after freeze up. He hauled wood for the rest of the winter. He stayed at roadhouses along the trail from Circle to Fairbanks. Miller House was in operation at that time. It was the first house out from Circle. He left Circle and then took freight over to the Hot Springs. He carried a few people with him on the trip. It was a very cold trip. Jack talked about Whiskers who started one of the banks in town. The first bank in Fairbanks was the First National Bank started by Sam Barnaky.

Jack said there were cabins when he first arrived in Fairbanks. Wickersham was already holding court.

Audrey asked him about his time at the university. Dr. Bunnell asked him to come to work at the university. He was the building engineer. There were two buildings on campus at the time. They were burning wood for heat the first year. They cut wood on the hill including help from Dr. Bunnell. They got coal to burn, too. The first heating was in the basement. They lived in part of one of the buildings. He worked all kinds of hours. Their first boiler couldn't make enough steam so they had to get another boiler. It was a big building and it was hard to heat. Audrey said the students came dressed warm since they had to walk up the hill to get to the school. Audrey mentions some of the first students in the school. She asked if the students worked on campus. Jack said they gave them as much work as they could. Jack talked about one of the students that worked on campus. Audrey thought his name was Donald Morgan. Joe and Ted Loftus were also

students. Jack Shamley came a little later. Audrey asked how they got water to Bunnell's house. Jack said they put a pipe from the main building down to Bunnell's house. Jim Sturgis did most of the work.

Audrey asked if he left the university for a while. Jack said he mined on Palmer Creek up off the Chena River for two seasons. His mining partner was Axie McIntosh. He also mined on Ester Creek. His partner was Louie Lewison. He describes how they used dumps that they worked in the spring. Audrey asked about drift mining. Jack draws a picture to describe drift mining. They sink a hole next to a shaft into the bedrock. Jack said they would work ten hours a day in the early days. That was later changed to eight hours a day. They were paid five dollars a day plus board. There were some places that paid just two dollars a day.

Pt. 2.

Jack talked about removing material and cribbing up the mine. Jack describes the size of the shaft. He said sometimes the shaft would start caving in. Jack said in the early days they had the bare essentials like rope and wood for buckets. Jack said some of them built their own wheelbarrows. Audrey asked what they did with their clean up. Jack said as a rule in Fairbanks and Dawson they took it to the bank. The bank purchased most of it. Unless it was bought by one of the big companies and they would transport it Outside on the boats.

Jack tells a story about one of his horses.

Audrey and Jack talk about Margaret Thomas Murie. She was the first female to graduate from the university. Jack worked at the university for ten years.

Harry Hughes is heard at the end of the tape describing his transfer process. He transferred the tape on September 20, 1960. The bird in the background is the trademark of all the tapes that he transfers in his home.