

Interviewed: January 14, 1976

Jack Jacobson

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- Born 1901; dad one of first Finn Road pioneers; dad came from very poor part of Finland.
- Fished beginning 1913, year of last great salmon run when C.P.R. blasted rocks into Fraser River at Hell's Gate, changed current; fish blocked in; 4 years later hardly any sockeye.
- Humpbacks (pink) 2 years cycle; sockeyes and springs (chinooks) 4 years cycle; sometimes springs don't die but return to ocean, get monster springs up to 100 lbs.
- 15-20 subspecies in sockeyes i.e. return to different tributances.
- Finn Slough used to be called Anderson's Slough.
- History of family's arrival: 4 brothers, 1 sister
- Dad first fished Columbia River---very dangerous; shallow bar at mouth.
- Lived on scowhouse, fished from windows of house.
- Listed some canneries and figure of cases packed (by Chinese)
- Read a lot; interested in history.
- Started fishing at 12 in row boat, when rowing paddles kept hitting salmon. River was so full (year of big run); nets would fill immediately but canneries were so slow couldn't can more than half the fish.
- 1915, fished in boat with his dog alone.
- Fished 5 day week; hard on himself, if didn't fish, thought of all fish going upstream that he wasn't catching.
- Steam packers loaded fish in wooden boxes holding 400 lbs. each.
- Packers small; about 50'.
- After 1913 big run; Adams River run became larger.
- After WW II, five day week restricted.
- Linen nets from cannery.
- Talks of hazards in river.
- Fished Woodward's Drift on river; Gulf of Georgia; Rivers Inlet, Skeena River.
- White springs 100 lbs., 5¢ a piece; sockeyes 6¢ then 15-20¢.

- When quit fishing in 1969, nets cost \$260, now over \$1,000.
- Member of Fraser River Protective Association; out of New Westminster no pension, just fish prices.
- First unions separate, i.e. gillnetters, seiners, etc. which fought amongst themselves.
- When gillnetters joined union, prices became better....United Fishermen's Allied Unions.
- Discusses boat accident.
- Built two boats from own plans; shallow draft hull good for Fraser.
- Mukai built boat for Tom Jacobson, Kishi built for Jacobson.
- Best wood; red cedar...lighter, oil to protect against dry rot... yellow cedar rots easier.
- When Japanese-Canadians' boats were taken by government, towed up river in hard wind, boats swamped, broken up.
- Comments on war's effect on man's humanity.
- Japanese people are industrious good boat builders, good workers, clean sauna every night.
- Describes his boats.
- First engine boat, 1915, though lots of people still had sail boats.
- In summer, Steveston 50% Indians; Indians came until 1919.
- Story of falling under raft when 21 years of age.
- Lived in scow-house until 1923, moved house onto land; house crowded, he and Tom built house on Finn Road.
- Finns are religious, talks of own religious feelings.
- Story of seal caught, paid \$5 bounty by government, later government paid \$25 - \$30 skin and dropped bounty.
- Can't catch seals if they interfere with nets.
- Sealions protected...talks of amount of food sealions eat.
- Talks about films made out of seals.
- Illegal to shoot fish to get them in boats.
- Trolling has been going on for long time, since inception of gas engines, after 1919.
- Sockeyes eat plankton, so won't bite at needle fish, herring or spoon like springs and coho.