

Idaho Panhandle Oral History Project
Interview with Henry Janusch
October 18, 1979
324 15th, Coeur d'Alene
Interviewed by David Barton
Questionnaire Information

HJ = Henry Janusch

DB = David Barton

Tape 1; Side 1

DB: Well, let's see now. So when did your folks move out here to the Panhandle?

HJ: Well, I came out here in, uh, 1926. My brother, he come out here uh, it must have been 25 years ago. And that's all the family that's come out here outside of my wife.

DB: So your parents never moved out here?

HJ: No, never moved out here.

DB: Did they come often to visit?

HJ: Oh, yes.

DB: So you have lived continuously here since 1926, up to the present?

HJ: Yes.

DB: OK, and uh, before that time you say you lived in Minnesota?

HJ: In Minnesota as a logger, I worked in Wisconsin, Minnesota.

DB: What did your father do for a living?

HJ: Here? Well, I was a millwright for about 12 years up there...13 years up there (?).

DB: Oh, your father. I'm sorry.

HJ: Oh, my father?

DB: Yes, what did your father do?

HJ: He was farming the last...that was most of his....

DB: What kind of crops did he have?

HJ: All around crops. Corn, oat, wheat, barley...

DB: I see.

HJ: Potatoes. And then they milked about eight cows.

DB: Did he ever work in the lumbering business? Timber?

HJ: Well, he worked in the woods in Minnesota in the winter.

DB: OK.

HJ: And, uh, in the summertime he worked in the saw mill for a few years. (pause) And then he worked for a forester in Germany.

DB: When was that?

HJ: That was up in northern Pomerania.

DB: What year was that, approximately?

HJ: Oh, about six...15 years. He was 92 when he died. He died (in 25 years ago?). But he come over here, I don't just remember, but he come over here when he was 18 years old.

DB: So before then he had worked in Pomerania?

HJ: Yeah.
DB: OK, what part of the Panhandle did you live in?
HJ: Here?
DB: Uh huh. When you first moved.
HJ: Right here.
DB: Right here in Coeur d'Alene? I see. Where was your first house?
HJ: It was on 1025 3rd Street.
DB: 1025 3rd Street. What landmarks was it near? Was it near ah...
HJ: It's, uh, now it's, uh, that's (Walker's) on the back side of, uh...(long pause) that, uh, grocery store on, uh, (Holt) and 3rd. That's in...
DB: Uh huh. OK. Let's see. Who were your neighbors? What kind of people were they?
HJ: Oh one was, uh, worked on the lake on the boats towin' logs. Otherwise, I didn't get to know the neighbors too much, 'cause I was workin' nights.
DB: Uh huh. Was it a special kind of neighborhood? An ethnic neighborhood, er...
HJ: No, it was, uh, it was old folks and young folks there both.
DB: Did uh, any of your relatives live nearby you?
HJ: Not then; no. My brother, he lives, uh, just six blocks from me now.
DB: Uh huh. And he moved here when again?
HJ: It was 25 years ago. That'd be...
DB: 1954. Yes. When, uh, what are some of the kind of settlements that have been around here in the past. Has Coeur d'Alene been about the same size since you've known it?
HJ: Oh, no. No. (Jack Pine Flats) between here and the saw mill...and so there was...
DB: Um hum.
HJ: And then there wasn't anything beyond...oh, it was...'bout...(1920) in this part of town. There was nothing out along (Coeur d'Alene?) Lake, either.
DB: Um hum. When did Post Falls start growing?
HJ: Oh, it started growin' about eight years ago.
DB: Do you know where any, uh, historical or Indian sites are located around here at Coeur d'Alene? For instance, if you were out walkin' out in the woods, did you ever come across any arrowheads or anything like that?
HJ: No. We found, uh, we found, uh, pestles, you know, for grindin'?
DB: Um hum.
HJ: And bowls out here in the mill yard...above Potlatch Mill yard.
DB: When was that? Do you remember about the year approximately?
HJ: When we found them?
DB: Um hum.

HJ: Oh, maybe 1940.
DB: 1940. But those are about the only Indian site that you know of?
HJ: Well, they found arrowheads at the beach here at, uh, oh, what do they call it, uh...the beach here at...Eastlake Shore I guess it was.
DB: And when was that? Do you remember?
HJ: Hum?
DB: Was that recently?
HJ: Oh, they find somethin' ever once in a while after a storm.
DB: Uh huh.
HJ: There in the sand on the beach.
DB: I take it, it'll wash it out?
HJ: Yeah.
DB: Yeah. Were you involved in homesteading, would you say?
HJ: No. No, never homesteaded.
DB: OK, OK. What was involved with homesteading? Did you know people who were homesteaders?
HJ: Yeah, my dad, he homesteaded...in Nebraska.
DB: Uh huh. What was involved in that process?
HJ: Well, you went out, and looked at the ground, and then you... put in a claim for it. You had to be a naturalized citizen. Then, uh, you had to live on it two years and prove up with buildings on it.
DB: In terms of building the structure and getting the ground done, what kind of things would they do to the land to get it ready?
HJ: Well, to get the land ready, why, you just break it up and plant grain in it mostly.
DB: Um huh.
HJ: Depends on what kind of stuff would grow up there. He'd raise it. He had...he rented school sections. And my mother, she homesteaded...right along father. And so they rented school sections, and then fenced it.
DB: That would have been back in 1918?
HJ: No, that would have been about...in, uh, 19...no 1890; no, 1892 I guess it was.
DB: 1892. Now, to get back to your house that you had here first at Coeur d'Alene. What was your house like?
HJ: Well, all I had...you mean the first house?
DB: Uh huh.
HJ: It was just, uh, shabby, you might say, on the back of a lot. It's gone now.
DB: How many rooms were in it?
HJ: Well, three.
DB: Three rooms. How were these rooms laid out?
HJ: Just in a row. No bathroom.
DB: Now what did the house face? Was it facing the road, or an alley, or...
HJ: It was on the...it faced the street, but it was settin' on the alley.

DB: How many doors were in the house?
HJ: How many doors?
DB: Uh huh.
HJ: Two. Outside doors.
DB: Which one of the doors did you use most frequently?
HJ: Mostly the kitchen.
DB: Kitchen door. OK, how were the rooms, uh, used? What were the functions of the different rooms?
HJ: Well, the one room was...kitchen entirely, and, well, you had a wash basin there to wash up. And the next room was the living room. And then the other room was the, uh, bedroom.
DB: There was no upstairs?
HJ: No.
DB: How far from the road would you say it was?
HJ: Oh, maybe...100 feet.
DB: And, what was your house made of?
HJ: Wood.
DB: Wood. OK, do you remember what kind of wood?
HJ: Mmmwell, I wouldn't know because...I imagine it was covered with white pine siding on the outside. And I suppose it was, it was...that was actually rough sawn red fir for studding.
DB: Uh huh. How long was it approximately?
HJ: (long pause as he thinks) About 36 feet long; 16 feet wide.
DB: Were the rooms approximately the same size?
HJ: No. The bedroom was 10 feet wide and 16 feet long. The livingroom was 12 feet and the kitchen was...about...no, the livingroom was 14 feet and the kitchen was 12 feet. And for a cupboard, we had an old Kitchen Queen.
DB: Who built the house? Do you know?
HJ: No.
DB: You don't know?
HJ: We were rentin' from...Jack...uh...I can't think of his name now.
DB: Uh huh. How old was the place when you moved in?
HJ: Oh, I don't know. It's hard to tell. It mighta been 15 years old.
DB: How many of you...how many of your family lived in the same house?
HJ: Well, the oldest daughter was just a baby, and then, my wife and I; that's all.
DB: Were there any additions built on to it, like a porch or anything like that?
HJ: There was a little porch over the...over the kitchen door.
DB: What kind of a yard did you have? How big was it?
HJ: It runs, it was mostly all garden out in front.
DB: Um hum. That's a, sort of a truck garden?
HJ: Oh, yeah. Potatoes, and turnips; anything that you want for fresh food. Because then you couldn't but it. There wasn't much in town here.

DB: Uh huh. How many rows of garden did you have? Can you remember?
HJ: Huh?
DB: How many rows?
HJ: Oh, (laughs). It depends on the...
DB: Yeah.
HJ: Yeah.
DB: But it was a pretty big garden, I take it.
HJ: Yeah, it was a big garden.
DB: Now how was your house heated? Did you have a fireplace or a stove?
HJ: A heater. A wood heater.
DB: Wood heater? Where did your fuel come from?
HJ: From the saw mill, that is edgings and slabs.
DB: Where was the saw mill at that time?
HJ: Oh, it's Potlatch over here.
DB: The same one that's still there now?
HJ: Um huh.
DB: And how long did you live in that house?
HJ: Oh, about a year and a half.
DB: A year and a half? Uh, how many houses would you say you've lived in since then, here in Coeur d'Alene?
HJ: Just...just one...there's one more; and after that, there's one down here for about four months. And then, of course, this one.
DB: Um hum. What happened to your first house that you had there on Third Street?
HJ: Well, there was no bathroom, for one thing.
DB: Uh huh.
HJ: As far as rent price is, it was only \$10 a month. First house.
DB: Uh huh. Did it get destroyed or burned down, do you remember?
HJ: No, they tore it down. They built a home in front.
DB: Which room would you say was the most important, or most used by the family?
HJ: Well, here...I think my wife lived in the kitchen, 'course, uh, in the evenings and I was home, then we'd use the living room here.
DB: Back in the old days, back in your first house, would you say it was the same...the kitchen was the most important for your wife? And the living room was most important for you?
HJ: Yeah. Yeah.
DB: How was your, uh, kitchen laid out? You say it had a wash basin in it and a stove?
HJ: Well,...it's a sink. It was a sink, and then you had a wash...a wash bowl that you washed in...your hands, and there was no hot water. You had to heat the water on a wood-burning cook stove.

DB: Um hum. There was never a fireplace in that house, I take it.

HJ: No.

DB: Was there an ice box?

HJ: Here?

DB: In the kitchen--in the old house.

HJ: You mean, uh...

DB: The one you had on Third Street

HJ: Yeah. Fer...cooking on?

DB: Well, and for eating. And tables and stuff.

HJ: Oh, tables. Oh, we had tables. My wife had a Kitchen Queen, that was...had a top on there, it 'as down there to work on. And then we had a table...chairs. Four chairs.

DB: OK, were there any outbuildings out behind the house?

HJ: Just the...just what you'd call a privy or a backhouse. That was on the...corner of the lot.

DB: But there were no shed or barn or anything up there? (HJ doesn't hear) There was never a shed or a barn in the back of the old house?

HJ: No, no.

DB: Where did you get your water from in the old house?

HJ: Well, that was city water.

DB: So it was hooked up to the pipes? You had running water in the house?

HJ: Running water in the house.

DB: Did you have any kind of root cellar to store potatoes or anything.

HJ: No. We had a little lean-to built on one end that we kept them in.

DB: Were there any vegetables that you grew in your garden here that were different from the vegetables you grew in Minnesota or Wisconsin?

HJ: No. All the same.

DB: All the same?

HJ: Corn don't grow very good in this town.

DB: Why is that, do you think?

HJ: Too cold a nights.

DB: Uh huh. How about tomatoes? Did you always get pretty good tomatoes?

HJ: Oh, yeah. They always turned out real good.

DB: Did you have a fence around your house or a hedge or anything like that?

HJ: Nothing.

DB: I see.

HJ: Didn't even lock the doors.

DB: Uh huh. Was your yard in grass at all or was it dirt? The part that wasn't a garden?

HJ: Oh, there was a dirt walkway out to the street.

DB: Uh huh.

HJ: There was grass on it, and then...

DB: Uh huh. Where did you take your trash; the stuff that you didn't want?

HJ: Well, we usually accumulated it in a pile on the backend of the lot, and then...every once in a while you haul it off to the city...dump.

DB: OK, but that's what you did. They didn't come and pick it up?

HJ: No, there was no pickup service, whatever.

DB: I see.

HJ: There was only 7,000 people here then, you know.

DB: Uh huh. How many people were in your neighborhood at that time, back in your first house?

HJ: Oh...the count?

DB: Uh huh. Just a general idea.

HJ: I think it was...(long pause) Oh, maybe a 100 people.

DB: 100?

HJ: Just right in the two-block area.

DB: Uh huh. Was everybody in the area friendly with one another, or were some families better friends?

HJ: Well they were about equal outside of this here one boy that worked on the lake. He and I chummed quite a bit...and he's...I still see him every once in a while when I go up and visit him. He's pret near blind. He can't get around, and he don't drive a car any more.

DB: Uh huh.

HJ: And his wife passed away just a year after mine did.

DB: Uh huh. So people get along...got along pretty well in the neighborhood?

HJ: Oh, yeah. There was no arguments in the neighborhood. And the wood smoke didn't seem to hurt anybody then.

DB: Uh huh. did you have a name for your neighborhood?

HJ: Yeah. Well, this was all the way from there to where the store buildings are...but, north of there it wasn't very far anymore.

DB: OK. So how many blocks would it have been from Third Street to the stores? Where you say the store buildings were?

HJ: Say the store buildings?

DB: Um hum.

HJ: Well, now, there was a...there was a grocery store, and few other stores on, uh, Fourth Street, and they were in the 800 block.

DB: OK. So it was about 10 blocks from your house to downtown.

HJ: Yeah.

DB: And your neighborhood was about three blocks wide, something like that?

HJ: Oh, it was wider; it was, uh all around the edges like that.

DB: So, did it go from the downtown all the way...

HJ: Yeah, from downtown out to there.

DB: So it was about 10 blocks, I take it.
HJ: Yeah.
DB: OK. Was there ever any cooperation between families for, say, working on big projects, building things, or uh, putting together a house or anything like that?
HJ: You mean at that time?
DB: Yeah.
HJ: No. It was pretty near all sawmill work around the lake.
DB: I see.
HJ: How about child caring? Did people, uh, have one family that took care of a lot of children, or...was there like a community child care center, or something like that?
DB: No, nothing like that.
HJ: So there was no, like an older woman who took care of a lot of the kids in the neighborhood that you know of.
HJ: No.
DB: OK.
HJ: That babysittin' deal only come in 1942 when we had the Navy out here.
DB: Why did that happen?
HJ: Well, there was so many Navy women out here that had youngsters, and then they'd hire babysitters.
DB: I see.
HJ: Some of these other people also would be workin' out there at the base, the women, and they'd have babysitters.
DB: That's up at Pend Oreille, you talking about?
HJ: Yeah, on Pend Oreille. Farragut.
DB: Um hum. Um hum. Were there some people in the area that had special skills or crafts? For instance, were there carvers or hat makers, or anything like that, that you knew of?
HJ: No, the only one that had any special craft was the taxidermist.
DB: I see.
HJ: And then the rest was mostly all sawmillers, or regular run o' the mill.
DB: Um hum. Was there any musical instrument makers around here?
HJ: No.
DB: No? OK where did the taxidermist live at?
HJ: He lived...I don't remember the house number, but it was on Empire Avenue, but Empire Avenue was only two blocks long.
DB: Uh huh. OK. Did the, uh, did the children play in one area; did they have a playground in your old neighborhood back on Third Street?
HJ: No. No. There'd be vacant lots, and the kids'd play on vacant lots.
DB: What church did you go to at that time?
HJ: I didn't go to any outside o' once in a while, I'd go over to Dishman?

DB: What kind of a church was that?
HJ: That was a...that was a...Lutheran Church.
DB: A what kind of Lutheran?
HJ: (?)
DB: I see.
HJ: That's the old German church.
DB: Uh huh. And, uh, where was this church at?
HJ: At?
DB: What address was it? Do you remember? Or what street it was on?
HJ: Argonne Road.
DB: Argonne Road. Did you...
HJ: It's still there.
DB: Uh huh. Did you get there by walking, or...
HJ: No, I had a Model-T Ford.
DB: I see. How many people belong to that church?
HJ: Oh, why, there 'r maybe 200.
DB: Um hum. Did you go to that for a number of years? To that particular church?
HJ: In the mornings.
DB: Sunday morning. OK.
HJ: Yeah.
DB: And, uh, did your minister live in your neighborhood, or did he live outside?
HJ: He lives right next door to the church there in Dishman.
DB: Where is (Dishman?) at now? Where is that located? I'm not familiar with that area.
HJ: Uhhh. 1700 Penn Avenue.
DB: OK. Did they ever have any special services at the church, or was it just Sunday morning?
HJ: Oh, we have, uh, we have quite a few services. We have two services every Sunday now.
DB: Um hum.
HJ: And then they have in between what they call Bible class.
DB: Um hum.
HJ: This year we had 890 at church Easter Sunday.
DB: Back in the old days, uh, did they have any of those special kind of services?
HJ: Well, yeah, they...not the way they are now, because in the old days, each church had their chairman or whatever it was, and, uh, they just had it for themselves then.
DB: Um hum. Was there a choir in the church?
HJ: Not...oh, some of the bigger ones had a choir. We have choir here now.
DB: Um hum. OK, uh, did any members of your family belong to the same church?
HJ: Oh, yeah. We belong.
DB: Uh, so the building is still there, I take it?
HJ: Here?
DB: Uh huh.

HJ: Yeah, well, the other, the first church we built, we were using that Saunders Hall. And now, and the other...and the new church that we built the new one.

DB: When was the old one built? What year?

HJ: 1957, yeah, I imagine '57.

DB: Is that the old one or the new one?

HJ: That's the old one.

DB: The old one. Was there a school in your neighborhood? Back then, in the '20s?

HJ: In '28, we had a school down here, but, uh, that closed after we had a public school down here at, uh, four blocks north on Sherman...from Sherman on 15th.

DB: But back in the old days, where was the old school at?

HJ: One block down here; six grades were here.

DB: Um hum. And about how many children went to school there?

HJ: Oh, I don't know. Six grades and about 20 to the grade. That'd be 60-70.

DB: Uh huh. How long during the year did they go to school during the old days?

HJ: About the same.

DB: About the same as now? OK. You went to school in what, Wisconsin or Minnesota?

HJ: Minnesota.

DB: Now your daughter went to this old school, didn't she?

HJ: No, she started..they both started up there at the Harding School.

DB: Uh huh. When was that built? Do you remember? Or right about approximately?

HJ: I imagine it was built about 1924.

DB: Do you remember when this old school was torn down?

HJ: Never was torn down. It was turned into a...into apartment house.

DB: And what's the name of it?

HJ: This used to be Lakeview School...er, uh, Lakeside School.

DB: Lakeside School. Do you have any idea when it was built?

HJ: No, I don't. No.

DB: Uh huh. OK. Back to life in Coeur d'Alene. Um, did you buy many things at the store back in those days, in the 20s?

HJ: Well, just...just, ah, meats, mostly (mumble). And, oh, staples somethin' like that--vinegar 'n that kinda stuff that you can't have your own.

DB: Salt and things like that. Uh, which store did you go to?

(END OF TAPE 1; Side 1)