Mr. Jack Ness

July 9th, 1975

"Teamster in the Woods; Muleskinner to truck driver."

Interviewed By Steve Addington
Transcribed By Karen McPherson

Reel one, Side one:
Sawmill...feeding the plane mill. Logging camps in Idaho. Pack train out of Bible Creek...bulky mules. I.W.W. strike...stockades. Sabotage on the harvest. The Spruce Division. Casland.

Reel one, Side two:
First logging trucks...pressed rubber tires. Description of Casland. Cle Elum...whiskey everywhere. High lead logging. Shooting a movie. Bughouse McDonald...dehorns. St. Joe water flume. Logging today. Danger in the woods.
INTERVIEWEE'S NAME: Mr. Jack Ness
BIRTH DATE: 8/15/1889

HOME ADDRESS: 513 W. 10th, Ellensburg, Washington 98926

INTERVIEW LOCATION:same as above

INTERVIEWER: Mr. Steve Addington

INTERVIEW TITLE: "Teamster in the Woods; Muleskinner to truck driver."

INTERVIEW DATE: July 9th, 1975
TIME: 56 minutes

INTERVIEW SUMMARY: Mr. Ness discusses his experiences as a teamster working in Idaho logging camps from 1907 to 1926. In 1926 he began logging at Casland on the Teanaway River in Kittitas County.

RESTRICTIONS: none

PROPER NAMES OR COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS USED: See back of this form

INTERVIEW AND RECORDING QUALITY: fair. Some disturbance by the presence of other people passing through the interview room and a small child playing in the room.

DOCUMENTATION: none
Mr. Ness: I come in here and started in logging in 1907 at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. They was all horses then and wagons.

Mr. Addington: Where did you come from?

Mr. Ness: I come from Glasgow, Scotland.

Mr. Addington: Did you come directly to Coeur d'Alene?

Mr. Ness: Directly to Post Falls, Idaho.

Mr. Addington: Had you had any experience in logging at all?

Mr. Ness: No, we had a ranch there and I knew how to milk cows and take care of horses, but...we raised horses, in fact we shipped quite a few horses from the Old Country over to this country.

Mr. Addington: What was your first job working in the woods?

Mr. Ness: Well, the first job I got when I come to the country was I worked at a sawmill. I was feeding the plane mill. They was 3 x 12 and they said, 'Oh, you put that Scotchman in there and he will handle them,' they would be 3 x 12/16. Instead of doing it the easy way I took it the hard way, I would pick them right up and throw them right into the plane mill. Then after that...I worked on the plane mill winter and summer and then I set ratchet there on the carriage.

Mr. Addington: Can you explain that a little more, what that involved?

Mr. Ness: That's what...it's where they saw the lumber and you set up the lumber. Whatever it is the Sawyer will motion you, he gives you signals...you see the ratchet up so it will either cut an inch or an inch an a quarter, something like that. It goes right on through and then you kick it off. We had a setter...there was two of us on the carriage, of course we were working ten hours then. We worked two hours and a half a piece, before you get your break, then we would change at quarter time. I would set the first quarter then you would dog and I would set...I'd dog the second quarter. Uncle had quite a few
horses there then, and then we started in and we went up in the 1907... went up into Springston, Idaho... up out of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho up into Springston, Idaho. My uncle, where he sold the horses and everything there was a fella there was taking a kind of a gyppo job logging and I worked for him up there driving a horse truck. In fact, I drove a skidding team too. That was the only way you could get the logs out of the woods down into the lake to the water. Everything had to go to the water there for... my uncles' mill was at Post Falls, Idaho and they had to tow all those logs, put them in booms. He had a boat and he would tow them from there down to Post Falls, Idaho. The only way they could get the timber in there.

Mr. Addington: What was the logging camp like?

Mr. Ness: Well, we didn't have much of a logging camp, it was mostly a tent. We slept in tents and we had tents for the horses.

Mr. Addington: For a stable?

Mr. Ness: Yes, for a stable we had tents for the horses. We would get up early in the morning and take care of your horses in the morning and clean out the barn and then go get breakfast and most generally we started around six o'clock. We was using horse trucks then. Then of course in the evening... meals was only two bits then.

Mr. Addington: Two bits a meal?

Mr. Ness: Yes and everything that you could eat. I worked so much a month and... instead of working it out I was paid by the month.

Mr. Addington: You were a teamster, right?

Mr. Ness: The sawyers worked by the contract and they didn't get paid much. I think they were getting four bits a thousand for cutting them. Everything was long hours and then you had to get up... after we come in at night we took the harness off and we had to go back out after supper and took care of the horses and curried them off and bedded them down. Then about eight o'clock
we would probably take them out an water-them before... in the evening you know.

**Mr. Addington**: Did they have a Company store there?

**Mr. Ness**: No, everything was brought up there. They would probably go to
town once a week for something...get groceries.

**Mr. Addington**: What type of men were working in the woods then?

**Mr. Ness**: They were pretty good men there. Of course that camp there was
kind of a home camp. You hired the most...generally fellas that you knew around
there.

**Mr. Addington**: There weren't any transients?

**Mr. Ness**: No, they wasn't a going and a coming...not like it was with the
Company. The Company would hire them and they were a going and a coming and
going all the time.

**Mr. Addington**: Were lots of the men married?

**Mr. Ness**: Yes, they had a tent or two threwed up there that would stay
there right at camp.

**Mr. Addington**: What did they do for recreation in the logging camps?

**Mr. Ness**: Well, you didn't do much, fight mosquitos at night, mostly.

**Mr. Addington**: The mosquitos were pretty bad?

**Mr. Ness**: Yes, the mosquitos got bad up there.

**Mr. Addington**: Did they have skid roads?

**Mr. Ness**: Yes, they had skid teams there and a man would do the swamping
and another fella would drive the team. Then we had a loader, made a loader
there to load the trucks. Used to load them by the peavie, with
a cant hook then, instead of with the loaders they got now. They are pretty well
equipped for everything like that now, you know.

**Mr. Addington**: How about oxen, did they have any oxen there?

**Mr. Ness**: No, we didn't have no oxen up there, but I seen up at Haden Lake
that summer I was up there, and I seen the team oxen work then. Oxen was
like mules...we was mostly horses, the mules, there wasn't many mules that worked in the woods then either, but the oxen was a great thing.

Mr. Addington: The men that worked as teamsters didn't do other logging work, is that right?

Mr. Ness: No.

Mr. Addington: They worked just as teamsters?

Mr. Ness: Yes, well if you were driving skidding team or something you had to dog your logs up and swamp too, dog them together and get them off the hill.

Mr. Addington: Did you log in the wintertime?

Mr. Ness: Well, not very much in the wintertime, the snow got pretty deep, but we used to do a little logging with skidding and haul them out. We decked them there for a while and then when we got some snow we would start hauling and we used to use four horses and then as the snow got deeper we would split up the horses and haul off the deck. But, it was pretty rough country.

Mr. Addington: How far was it to town?

Mr. Ness: We had to come down and catch a...at Springston there was an outfit that run a boat into Springston and then you could go from there to St. Maries. We had to go to St. Maries for most of the stuff like getting the feed for the horses, hay and stuff, we had to go to St. Maries. They shipped it up on a boat and then we hauled it from the lake up on a wagon.

Mr. Addington: What kind of horses did they use in the woods?

Mr. Ness: We had good big horses!

Mr. Addington: Were they Clydes. ?

Mr. Ness: They were a mixture. They were Percherons and Shires. They had good stock. They was just like out here.....Casland at one time had around 200 head of horses there. They operated mostly railroad camps
Mr. Addington: Did the teamster have trucks or ...with trailers or...?

Mr. Ness: Well, they just had the Peter Shatler wagon, just haul short logs on it. There was some places they used to use four horses for hauling. On the ground we were on we were pretty much down hill and just use two horses to...

Mr. Addington: Did they use steam donkeys at all?

Mr. Ness: Well, no we didn't up there, but there was an outfit up there out at Clacky, Idaho, I was up in there and they had the steam donkey up in there. It had the haul backs on it and everything. There wasn't many steam donkeys in there then, when it first started up, but they had quite a time getting them in there. There was no roads in then. The steam donkey had to pull it's self and they had to get stuff to hitch on to so that they could anchor so it could pull it's self.

Mr. Addington: Where did you go from there?

Mr. Ness: Well, I run pack train there one summer up out of Bible Creek. I packed in 22 miles. It took a day and night. Had mules and a saddle horse.

Mr. Addington: It took a day?

Mr. Ness: Yes.

Mr. Addington: Was that into the logging camp?

Mr. Ness: Yes, it was just a trail in there for the mules to walk on. It was...I went in there the 27th day of June and I packed over six feet of solid snow that was in there. It wasn't tall snow, but there was places that there was snow and they used to get 14 feet deep there in the wintertime.... up out of Clacky. That was about the only way they got stuff into camp. Everything had to be packed into it on mules. There was no roads, they packed in everything on mules. Then they did get a piece of a road there and the Weyerhauser an Rutledge outfit put brake wagons on, four horses on a brake
wagon and they would freight from there back in... oh, they had about a five or six mile haul there and then they had a packing station there and they packed from there into the camps. It was pretty expensive feeding too.

Mr. Addington: Had to bring feed in?

Mr. Ness: Yes and the fellas, most of the men, packed their own blankets. There was no springs and mattress then, of course they did afterwards.... they had the big strike there....the Wobblies.

Mr. Addington: The Wobblies?

Mr. Ness: Yes, the Wobblies pulled a strike there. They got way better accommodations then....springs and mattresses.

Mr. Addington: How about the mules, were they pretty easy to work?

Mr. Ness: Yes, they were the best for the pack. They were pretty good, you had to watch them all the time. They were great for....they would lay down and roll with your pack on them if you didn't watch them when you stopped.

They were the best to pack....the mules. They were way stouter and they worked pretty good together.

Mr. Addington: When did you first hear of the Wobbly?

Mr. Ness: About in 1916. That was a big strike and then they had, they would build them....they would have tops....they built them stockades and they would run them fellas in there. They got pretty radical you know. Fellas that would get to talking a little too loud or rambunctious, they would run them in, put them in the stockade.

Mr. Addington: Did they have any unions before the Wobblies?

Mr. Ness: No, that was the trouble. The Wobblies, no union, worked long hours, no overtime or anything like that.

Mr. Addington: What were they striking for?

Mr. Ness: Well, for better accommodations....blankets. You see them old fellas
used to pack their own blankets and that was a son-of-a-gun. Quit a few of
them lousy you know. Yes, they struck for better accomodations.

Mr. Addington: Did they have to close the camps down?

Mr. Ness: Well they did when they pulled the strike, they closed everything
down.

Mr. Addington: Was there any violence at all in the strike?

Mr. Ness: Oh, there was, but it didn't amount to too awful much. They got
blamed for a lot of stuff that they didn't do. During thrashing time, the
harvest...the farmers blamed a lot of them for setting their equipment a fire
and vandalism. Everything they blamed on the Wobblies.

Mr. Addington: Everything that happened.

Mr. Ness: Yes.

Mr. Addington: What did they arrest them for?

Mr. Ness: Oh, just put them in for a while and let them settle down and then
turn them out.

Mr. Addington: Was the strike successful?

Mr. Ness: Yes, they stayed out till they furnished everything. They got the
better camps and accomodations, eats and everything. Then they put up wash
houses for the fellas to wash on the weekends, the fellas that had to do their
own washing. And, there was more money.

Mr. Addington: They paid more money?

Mr. Ness: Oh yes, they paid more money too.

Mr. Addington: How much were they being paid?

Mr. Ness: Around then, $2.50 a day, that was pretty good wages. I worked
month after month for $30.00 a month. They was long hours too. You had to
take care of your horses.

Mr. Addington: Then you went into the Military?

Mr. Ness: Yes, in 1917.
Mr. Addington: What was the Spruce Division?

Mr. Ness: Well, I wasn't in the Spruce Division. The Spruce outfit was working up out of Vancouver there and they got common wages, they paid just...them fellas in the Spruce Division didn't have to dress up in army or anything like that. They were just working for...we were shipped down to Fort Lewis, down to Vancouver................

Mr. Addington: How could you get into the Spruce Division. Did they just select you or.....?

Mr. Ness: Well, yes. I didn't go into it, but I was in the army, but themfellas that worked in the Spruce Division were just hired like any other outfit. They had worked in the woods before and they hired them. They got pretty good wages too. All I was getting was six bits a day there. When we first went in they paid....took $15.00 out for your bond and ....

Mr. Addington: How about after the army, did you go back to logging?

Mr. Ness: Yes, I went right back up to the job that I left. Oh, I went up out of Coeur d'Alene there, I went up on the sleigh haul that winter. I top loaded logs up there. Then the next spring I started in at the tie mill there. They had a little sawmill up in there and I worked in it at that time....that summer. Skidded the logs in and then had to haul the ties to the railroad. That was quite a job hauling them ties to the railroad.

Mr. Addington: When did you come to this valley?

Mr. Ness: I come in here....oh, it was about '26.

Mr. Addington: You went into Casland?

Mr. Ness: Yes.

Mr. Addington: Can you describe what Casland looked like?

Mr. Ness: Yes sir, they had everything there. Camp, stores and mostly all railroad. They had Shays that they used to run up with their flat cars on. They would load them up with logs and then haul them to Yakima.

End of Tape 1, Side 1.
Mr. Jack Ness  
July 25, 1975 

Accession No. KIT 75-37sa, Tape No. 1, Tape Side 2. 

Mr. Addington: They would haul them to Yakima?  
Mr. Ness: Yes. The camp... they were mostly all railroad camps up there.  
The men slept in the railroad bunk houses. Up out of Casland there they had a  
speeder that they hauled their hay and oats and all the groceries for the camps.  
Of course they had their own roundhouse there at Casland too. They done all  
their own mechanical work and stuff. They had the bunk houses there and they  
had their office, they wrote their checks there. They had a grocery store.  
It was just a regular village there, Casland was.  

Mr. Addington: Were you working as a teamster there, too?  
Mr. Ness: No, I drove truck there. I drove truck there and I drove team that  
winter for a while, for a gyppo there. Wasn't trucking, couldn't truck.  

Mr. Addington: What was a gyppo?  
Mr. Ness: Spence, Alec Spence.  

Mr. Addington: What was the first truck you used in logging?  
Mr. Ness: First truck we used was a Mac, Bulldog Mac. The first truck used  
in logging, that was a six sixty White... then a... bought a Mac, all hard  
rubber. We used (corner binds ) then instead of stakes. It was all corner  
binds, you had to corner bind your logs on the bunks.  

Mr. Addington: Can you describe those trucks in a little more detail?  
Mr. Ness: Well, that... it didn't have no fancy cab on it like they do now,  
it was just on... and most of them, they didn't have them cabs they just...  
That Mac I had, the Bulldog, was a chain drive. Then the rubber, it was  
pressed on. It was hard rubber pressed onto the wheels. When it would wear  
out you had to have them pressed... change rubber and pressed on again.
Mr. Addington: What kind of men were working up at Casland?

Mr. Ness: They had all kinds of men up there. There were quite a lot of foreigners in there; Swedes and stuff like that. They were all hard working men too. They done a lot of gyppo work, mostly all gyppo work. Contract work.

Mr. Addington: Why do they call that gyppo work?

Mr. Ness: Well, I don't know, they gyppoed and that's the way they all went. It was contract work, but it was just a nickname for them, a gyppo.

Mr. Addington: What did the loggers do for recreation?

Mr. Ness: They didn't have much to do in the evenings, they set around and talked a little bit. They went to bed early you know.

Mr. Addington: Was there any gambling?

Mr. Ness: Oh, they used to gamble, yes, they used to gamble there quite a little. Then got held up once in a while too.

Mr. Addington: Do you remember any hold ups?

Mr. Ness: No. I have heard of them, but I never been in any of them.

Mr. Addington: How about bootleggers, were there bootleggers up in the woods?

Mr. Ness: Yes, there were bootleggers there. Packers used to bring them in. They didn't do so much drinking in them camps. Whenever they went out they done the drinking in town and went broke and then come back and made their money.

Mr. Addington: What kind of things did they do when they went to town?

Mr. Ness: Oh, they would mostly get drunk and spend their money.

Mr. Addington: Did the loggers from Casland go into Cle Elum?

Mr. Ness: Oh yes, they used to have some big doings in Cle Elum! That was a real bootlegging town!

Mr. Addington: Can you describe the town a little bit?

Mr. Ness: Well, they used to claim that there wasn't no place, even at the preachers, that you couldn buy a drink of whiskey. Everyone was bootlegging in Cle Elum. They used to have some pretty rough fights in there too, loggers and the miners.
Mr. Addington: The loggers stuck together pretty well?

Mr. Ness: Oh yes.

Mr. Addington: Were there any people in the logging camps other than the loggers?

Mr. Ness: Yes, there was some married people that lived there. They would have cabins built there.

Mr. Addington: When did they stop using horses?

Mr. Ness: Of course they used caterpillars and horses both, but they... the caterpillars practically run the horses out. Like it is now they have them wheel skidders, them rubber tire skidders now so very few horses in the woods now. There is an odd team once in a while. Then they do a lot of high leading. Put up spar trees.

Mr. Addington: Could you describe the high leading logging a little?

Mr. Ness: Yes, take the high lead.... there is a spar tree better than a 100 foot high and they got guy lines and everything all attached to the tree. They run this off of what they call the donkey. They got haul backs that goes out into the woods and this cable takes the chokers back there and those fellas out in the woods set the chokers and they give them the whistle and they jerk them up. They got to get them off the ground, keep the logs off the ground.

Mr. Addington: How did the Depression effect logging?

Mr. Ness: Oh, I never did....I was always able to work, the Depression never bothered me any.

Mr. Addington: Did they get unions again after the Wobblies?

Mr. Ness: Oh yes, everything was union. Oh, there was some outfits that didn't go union, but the most of them went union and they got paid time and a half and overtime.

Mr. Addington: Did they have any big strikes?

Mr. Ness: Yes, they pulled a strike once in a while. They had a big strike here
this last fall, everybody was out in the winter, no work and everything. They couldn't draw their unemployment or nothing. Of course they wasn't paid much then on unemployment. They generally built up...there was some families that was pretty hard hit, but they built up a strike fund and they would draw so much off the strike fund, so much a week or something. Just people that had families. But, a lot of them went to work someplace else.

Mr. Addington: What do you think of life as a logger now?

Mr. Ness: Well, I have put in quite a lot of it....done it about all my life....86 years old now.

Mr. Addington: Well, do you remember any particularly colorful loggers?

Mr. Ness: No, I can remember one winter I was up Tiger, up above Colville, reservation up there....there was a....they was filming a picture up there that winter and they had the dog sleds up there. They had dogs in sleds up there and that's where they were filming the picture in the snow....up there by Tiger...Ione. They used to come down there once in a while to the store. They would bring their sled dogs down. That was quite an outfit. Billy ( ) was in that outfit, I remember her.

Mr. Addington: Do you remember Bughouse McDonald?

Mr. Ness: Oh yes...yes, yes. I worked with him for years, old Bughouse McDonald, out at Casland. Old Bugs, he was all over. They used to put Bugs in the can here. They got him in here one time and by gosh they kind of made a trustee out of him and he was going to do the lawn mowing around there and son-of-a-gun if he didn't take the lawn mower down and sell it and get drunk. Oh, he was quite a character, old Bugs McDonald. Oh, there was quite a few of them old timers. Old dehorns they call them.

Mr. Addington: Why did they call them that?

Mr. Ness: Well it was just cause of that old alcohol that they was....that dehorned alcohol that they was drinking.
Mr. Addington: Do you remember the expression, 'timber beast'?

Mr. Ness: Yes. Oh yes.

Mr. Addington: What was a timber beast?

Mr. Ness: He was just...worked in the woods I guess, what they called them if they worked in the woods. Just an expression they had. Just like the flunkys, they had in the camp...bull cook.

Mr. Addington: What was a stump farmer?

Mr. Ness: That was a little fella that had a few acres of stump land. They would work at camp and work on their ranch too. Clear it up all they could. Clear the ground....stump farmer.

Mr. Addington: What about the snake rancher?

Mr. Ness: Yes, there was a snake rancher up here, he was a bootlegger, he made the liquor, yes, back up Teanaway. He was the bootlegger up there and they called him the snake rancher. That was the snake rancher. He made the money too.

Mr. Addington: Did they have any water flumes around here?

Mr. Ness: No, not here. But, I worked up and out of St. Joe there that winter and they were working on the chute there then. They built the dams up at Bible Creek, back in there. They built the dams and they built chutes through. Everything was made out of hard timber....that is fir timber. They would chute them down into this dam and then....most generally in the evening they would have most of the dams full and they would sluice them out of the dam down into the river....St. Joe River, but out there at St. Joe.... I worked up there that fall for O'Neil and (Arrowvine) and they had everything skidded and decked on the chute there and they all come down the chute then to this pond and then they went from the flume into the ....they had about two miles of flume into St. Joe and they run them on the flume right into the river there at St. Joe. They put them in a boom there then, towed them out.
They just run them flumes... that's the only flume I ever seen up in there. They would run that flume pretty near every evening. The logs would come down and go right into the St. Joe river. That saved a lot of hauling and stuff. Of course that was expensive building them flumes too. That chute work was pretty expensive. They had fellas up there that just nothing else, only built chute. You see you had to have it just right. On steep ground they used to put goosenecks in, what... to slow them up, to slow the logs up they would put goosenecks in. They would drill holes in the chutes and stick them in there and they would just... there were steel and solid and hard, they would catch on the bark. They would stick up so that they would catch the bark. It would slow them up on that steep ground. A lot of them used to jump the chute and knock trees down and everything else, get a going too fast. The company here only....they got a couple of three man wagons. The fellas would get in the man wagon and go up, go to work. They would leave the caterpillars up in the woods. Just stack them up and a way they go... not the way it used to be. Everything got mechanized, done away with all the hard work and labor... man. That is just the same way with building roads. They got the caterpillars now....you see when they built the railroads they used to do that by horses. They had fellas here at Casland that was building railroad tracks and they gyppoed that. Then the outfit come along and laid the steel.

Mr. Addington: Was it pretty dangerous working in the woods?

Mr. Ness: Yes, they claim that is about as dangerous as you could get, but there is a lot of men that get careless, it's just like anything else. Yes, it's dangerous work, especially on falling. A lot of people gets killed falling timber. They claim that the woods is dangerous... the dangerous outfit of the bunch.
Mr. Addington: If you had it to do over again would you work in the woods again?

Mr. Ness: I imagine I would. Paid pretty good money.

End of Tape 1, Side 2.
The following are towns located in Kootenai County, Idaho - Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, & Lake Hayden.

The following are towns located in Benewah County, Idaho - St. Maries & St. Joe

The following are located in Pend Oreille County, Washington - Tiger & Ione

Vancouver, WA - town located in Clark County, WA

Colville - town located in Stevens County, WA

Casland - former logging camp run by the Cascade Logging Company located in Kittitas County at the intersection of the West Fork Teanaway Road and North Fork Teanaway Road.

Teanaway - the Teanaway River lies in Kittitas County an drains from the Cascade Mountains southeast to the Yakima River.

Sawyers - a lumberjack who fells trees and cuts them into logs

Peavie - five to seven foot pole with curved steel hook on one end in driving logs down a river

Flunky - cookhouse help

Bull cook - the choreboy around camp. Does odd jobs around camp

Cant hook - logging tool similar to a peavey but shorter and lighter, used in loading logging sleighs

Chokers - loop of wire rope, used for yarding logs

Swamping - to clear a path for teamster and his horses hauling logs from the woods to railroad tract/river/etc.

Top loading - man who stands on the top of a load and directs the placement of logs on the load

Skidding - to haul logs by dragging them over the ground.

Gyppo - a small operator that works on contract for spar tree - a standing tree trimmed of all limbs and used to leverage to yard logs

Dehorns - a hard drinker, especially one inclined to fight when drunk

Proper names used in this interview:

Alex Spence
Bughouse McDonald
O'Neil
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