

INTERVIEW WITH PETE JENSEN
BIG STONE COUNTY REMINISCENCES
DATE ?
BY?
WHERE?

Q: Could you tell us what your name is?

Peter Jensen

Q: Okay, when were you a captain on Lake Traverse?

I didn't get that.

Q: When were you a captain of Lake Traverse?

Well, I can't remember that far. (Before 1914) Ya. (Remember that...) It was before nine, before nine, fourt... (19...) 1914.

Q: Okay

Louder.

How many loads, or how many boats were on Lake Traverse?

There was only one, one of those boats, they had barges to haul the grain on.

Q: Okay. What...do you know what companies owned the eleva...the elevators and the boats?

Eli Saljordson Company. They, well, Great Northern Railroad, if they come right down to it.

Q: Did they own the elevators and the boats, or...(What?) Did the own the elevators and the boats?

Ya. They owned them both. (And the elevators too?) The elevators and the boats. (both)

Q: Dur...Do you know during what years the, the boats ran, or...

Well, I don't, don't know the, how,,how long I was...this, no, I never, I never kept track of the years, it was quite a while ago, you know.

Q: Okay, Could you tell us what was hauled on the boats?

Grain. All, anything. All the lumber and coal and anything else that they... (We thought, we thought it was just wheat. Yeah) Huh?

Q: We thought it was just wheat that they hauled there.

Ya, no, no, they hauled, we hauled, they had up at Diamond was one of the little towns out there, and they had a lumber yeard and blacksmith shop, and store and everything else up in there.

Q: And all the supplies to Diamond were hauled on the lake?

Yes. Yah, well, they all, but they, they was Diamond and Tacomen was on the Minnesota side, just across from Diamond, and then there was Jensen's Isle and out there and there was Jim Creek elevator, then they, what they called the Landing elevator. (Oh) on the end of the lake. There's where they unloaded. Ya, they had, they, probably you ought to know what size the boat was. (Yes) It was sixty-four feet and five to six inches. (Long) Long (That was...) that was, didn't they cut off five to six inches, of course, if they'd been over sixty-five feet, they'd have to have a different, a lot different orders and stuff to go, now and that'd be ocean route, on, so they cut, cut six, six inches off the boat to be sure that it wouldn't go over. (Hmm) Well, they made it, they made it that way, they didn't cut anything off, they made it that shorter. (So...) They had a ha...they had a cook and a gateman and a cook on the boat.

Q: How much, big a crew was it? (What?) How big a crew did you have on the boat?

Oh, they had only three men. (And the cook?) Yeah.

Q: Could you...

Only when the...when they hauled lumber, loaded lumber, some of them they picked up ex, es, extra men then, to unload them.

Q: Could you tell us how many years you worked on Lake Traverse?

Q: He wasn't sure of that, you shouldn't ask again.

Q: Oh, Okay.

I, I couldn't tell you exactly.

Q: Could you remember what color the elevators were? (What?) What color the elevator were? (The paint on them?) Yeah.

They were red.

Q: On both sides, or...

Yeah.

Q: Oh, you told us what the boats looked like...

I can tell you something else. (Oh, okay.) Else, too, that that elevator that's over at Johnson's Island, it bought more grain than any, any elevator in the state of South Dakota. (Hmm. Geepers) They come all the way from New Effington and up that way, you know, and shorter and come in there. (Umm) Lot of times it'd be a hundred boats standing in line about noontime, want to get unloaded. (Umm) And, and when the road, railroad developed in there, that hurt them a lot.

Q: That was the one that went through Fairmont, North Dakota?

Yeah, yeah, (Could...) That cut off their territory.

Q: Could you tell us what jobs you had on a boat? on the boats?

I had charge of the boats and, and charge of those elevators, to tell them off, whatever they, was anything wrong, they wanted to know, or anything else about the grain, why, I was supposed to thell ...

Q: Oh...do you remember Frank Murrey? from Whiterock?

Frank Murrey?

Q: Frank Murrey from White Rock?

White Rock?

Q: Yeah

No, I don't remember...

Q: Oh, let's see...could you tell us about some of your experiences on Lake Traverse?

(65--5min.)

Well, didn't have much of anything, only I come pretty near wreck, wrecking the boat on the ridge of rocks, one time, they had the lights up on there, and the light was out, and then I started going in for the light and I see, I could see the waves of the hills out on there that, that was to, somet ing wrong there, so I turned the boats as fast as I could out, to get out, and, a and now and then when there was a Big rock, I guess they've got something stamped on it again, I hit the side of the boat when it come, the, the hands and banged them out, out of, they fell out of the beds, the tanks, and they...

Q: At, at which elevator was that? At which...

That was out in the lake.

Q: Oh, It was right out in the Lake.

Yes. It was out on lake. We was taking the load out, and there, the government had light on there, but there, the light was out, so there was a farm light on there when they went out, and I come in I was heading for that light, and when I got in I could, I know pretty well how many waves there was on those hills and everything else. And I better get out of here because I'm in, in a trap and get out, way out on the lake and then go around. *And a board nailed up on the, across the doo.... on the door so....that way, and he said on there "The Lindquist Brothers built the sotre on the, and the beautiful lake shore, Lake Traverse shore. And they worked all day, and and they worked all night and they still they couldn't make the darn business pay." (Laughter) **Great Northern, it was Great Northern Railroad Company that, that had the owned the device. ** it was the barges...

Q: Carry passengers?

Yeah, they'd take passengers if they come to go down.

** Q: Were there at Jensen's, at Diamond?

Oh, Diamond there was quite a few houses there. The Lindquist Brothers

had houses, there was three of those brothers.

**...and they had a store, blacksmith shop and lumber yard, and they all had houses in there.

Q: Was there a post office?

Yeah, there'd be a post office where the mail carrier carried it in from Wheaton.

**Q: ...related to the Jensens that had Jensen's elevator? Was that your relatives?

Yeah, that's...my father owned the island, and he owned the land on the side where the barges was built on.

**Q: ...do you?

_____ The...that there they pulled that over from Big Stone.

Q: Across...now that's interesting. Wait a minute.

That was the _____. (Tell us _____) ** Yeah, it was pulled over to Browns Va...to Traverse Lake from Big Stone.* horses to pull it over.

Q: Forty horses? (Yeah) (Geepers)

Well, the first one that brought over, that was bought at Ortonville somewhere...it was built there. They had this and that was a very old engine they put in there. It was three cylinders and they had about 15" across each cylinder and it ran about 450 rounds a minute. And it had, it had the old stack of the first ignition system. They had two springs in there, the piston will come down and hit it and in fact it's probably...and if one cylinder misfired it would carry over, but if two she would stop and you'd have to go and start it over again. *** Well, they, man the boat and they had two, two barges on they # that's what they loaded the grain in. Well, Lindquist took part off the first one and put a bin on the top of the barge and then he pushed the barge to...

(124--10 min.)

END OF THE INTERVIEW
** INDICATES BREAKS IN THE TAPE