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**Early Logging in Latah County**

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The cover photograph is from the files of the Latah County Historical Society and probably is one of many donated to the Society by Potlatch Forests, Inc. a few years ago. Old time loggers think it was in the eastern part of the county near Bovill and place the time around 1910.

Photographs used in the photo section were loaned to author Robbin Johnston by Clair (Bud) Nogle of Bovill and John Anderson, who now lives in Montana. They show people and places of the early logging camps that fed timber to the Potlatch mill in Potlatch Idaho.

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# Early Logging in Latah County

by Robbin T. Johnston

## INTRODUCTION

*What follows are stories of some of the people who worked in the woods for Potlatch Lumber Company between 1919 and 1932. These men and women were, for the most part, average people who lived long enough to be able to share their thoughts and remembrances of working for Potlatch Lumber Company. One aspect of history is the transcription of recollections of people who lived it, conveying something of themselves as they recall life on the Palouse some 70 years ago. Much about the past cannot be derived from artifacts or books, but can be gained factually, sometimes with rich embellishment but always with feeling, from those who remember the way it was back when.*

(©1991 Robbin T. Johnston)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## THE PALOUSE

In an area located in north-central Idaho and eastern Washington is the Palouse. Bordered to its west by the Washington scablands, to its south by the Clearwater River canyon and to its north and east by mountain ridges forested with pine, cedar, fir, hemlock and tamarack lies a region rich in prairie and timbered lands.

Historically, the first Euro-Americans in numbers began settling the Palouse in the 1860s and 1870s. The principal well-established industries prior to 1900 were mining, farming and logging. Shortly after gold was discovered in the Hoodoo Mountains along the North Fork of the Palouse and around Gold Hill in the 1860s, miners, followed by homesteaders, poured into this region. Logging then consisted of family-run operations serving both the local towns and outlying communities.

Often times family mills helped to process timber from recently cleared homesteads.

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*"...most of the region east of Helmer was considered wilderness frequented only by hunter, trapper and traveler."*

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Farming then provided the basic necessities of life, while mining and logging provided cash for goods not obtainable through barter. By the time the Northern Pacific rail service reached Troy, Idaho in the 1880s, goods derived from farming, mining and timber were finding their way to outside markets.

Prior to the creation of the Potlatch Lumber Company in 1905, most of the population was concentrated in the Moscow, Troy, Deary and Princeton areas. Farming was the backbone of these communities with land and climate contributing greatly to its success.

East of Helmer, Idaho, especially around Bovill and Elk River, farming was not possible. Generally speaking the Palouse can be divided into two regions based on climate and topography. Areas west of Helmer are histori-

cally known for farming and as a result were settled quite early by homesteaders. Areas east of Helmer, primarily in Bovill and Elk River, lend themselves primarily to logging. Before the establishment of Bovill and Elk River in 1910, most of the region east of Helmer was considered wilderness frequented only by hunter, trapper and traveler.

## LOGGING ON THE PALOUSE

Before 1905 many of the people who immigrated into the outlying communities of the Palouse were from the northeastern states. They brought methods for cutting and transporting logs with them. Depending on location, methods for transporting logs varied. For example, because of the lack of rivers near Troy or Deary, logs were transported on wagons or sleighs by oxen or draft horses. As in the northeastern states logs were hauled by sleighs in the winter months. As long as the grade was level very large loads of logs could be moved. Men and horses from local farms were hired out as teamsters. In this way teams of draft horses normally used for plowing and harvesting spent their quiet months skidding logs to landings in the woods.

Near Princeton, Idaho logs could be transported down the Palouse River in log drives. Log drives between 1914 and 1917 depended upon the annual spring floods. As the flooding waters of the Potlatch River fell, logs would be rolled in. As the water level dropped, the still strong current would pick up and carry the logs down to the Potlatch Mill. This means of locomotion was cost-effective for only a short time and after 1917 was replaced totally by the rail service.

By 1906 the Potlatch Lumber Company incorporated not only these early logging methods but also many new logging technologies developed in the Douglas fir country along the west coast, including rail lines, rail camps replacing stationary camps, steam powered locomotives and steam powered yarders or steam donkeys. High lead systems involved suspending logs more easily from cables attached to blocks on spar poles. High leads evolved from the more time-consuming ground

lead systems used on the coast where logs were dragged on the ground to the landings.

The logging techniques with minor alterations were employed in the eastern regions of the Palouse where steeper topography and larger tree sizes necessitated more efficient methods. While high leads were utilized, ground lead systems remained popular. Unlike logging in the Douglas fir country, steam donkeys used in the eastern areas of the Palouse primarily yarded downhill which was considered more cost efficient because rail lines and associated yarding stations were constructed not along hillsides but along meadows and stream bottoms.

Men such as the Weyerhaeusers were motivated by economic and accessibility of resources to develop and fund a very different kind of logging where technology and people became more integrated; then separated again as machines replaced men and animals. This

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*"Money, lifestyle and personal associations motivated many to pursue logging."*

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evolved rapidly in Potlatch logging camps due partially to economics and accessibility of resources. Reliance on a finite resource and an unstable market and labor force resulted in new management procedures.

Because of unforeseen market slumps during economic depressions in 1919 and 1929, companies like Potlatch were motivated to quickly gain financial stability. Efficient tools equated greater productivity and helped keep labor costs down. Trains replaced wagons as steam donkeys did oxen and horses. Rail lines and rail camps replaced roads and road camps, and large corporate mills replaced mom-and-pop operations. These adjustments resulted in more board feet cut, hauled and processed per man hour.

While innovations like the steam donkey and Bess-Holt track vehicles initially helped workers, they eventually resulted in the elimination of many jobs. These changes did not

occur overnight, nor were they brought about by men smoking cigars in dimly lit rooms. Potlatch's inability to control external influences other than labor and technology led them more quickly towards likening people to machines, expendable when economics deemed necessary. Each person was a small part of an entity that was fast becoming more productive and efficient.

Time studies were implemented detailing company costs in terms of man hours spent, salaries expended, and board feet of timber cut. All costs were evaluated according to the amount of board feet of timber cut and hauled to the mill per day, week, month and year. To the detriment of the woodsmen, overrun figures of estimated board feet differed greatly from the actual estimated board feet processed in the mill. Room and board were deducted from camp wages as was hospital in an attempt to balance major wage increases with associated work-related deductions.

Despite cutbacks hundreds of people worked for the Potlatch Lumber Company in the logging camps. Potlatch offered an opportunity for people---native and foreign; male and female---to earn wages higher than most jobs available at that time. People from surrounding farms and towns needed the money that came with forest-related jobs.

Money, lifestyle and personal associations motivated many to pursue logging. Everyday people, not management, worked in logging camps and their stories are worth telling. Theirs are ones of perseverance and the occasional success of moving from section hand to night watchman to engineer. For most, higher education was not a reasonable expectation but common sense and a willingness to work meant possibilities.

## **POTLATCH LUMBER COMPANY**

In the latter years of the 19th century, logging in the Great Lakes region and Pacific Northwest was big business, second only to agriculture in terms of numbers of people employed and goods produced. By the 1930s the timber industry employed one million people, had a net worth of \$12 billion and owned over 220 million acres of timbered

lands. Profitability of logging depended on the rate and volume of tree cutting and the marketability of resultant wood products.

In the late 1800s midwestern timber operations such as Wisconsin Log and Lumber; Northland Pine and Timber; and the Turrish Lumber Company began bidding for and purchasing timber stocks in the northwest. As wood resources diminished in the Great Lakes region due to overcutting, so did opportunities for the larger logging companies to acquire wealth. As a result in 1902 a consortium of Weyerhaeuser-affiliated timber companies, including Laird Norton Interests of Wisconsin; Henry Turrish of Duluth, Minnesota; Frederick Weyerhaeuser and William Deary of St. Paul, established a board of directors for the Potlatch Lumber Company.

At that time Potlatch's board of directors consisted of Charles A. Weyerhaeuser, president; Henry Turrish, vice president; Drew Musser, treasurer; F. S. Bell, secretary; Wil-

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*"Idaho contained large acreages of white pine that could be had at a modest price."*

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liam Deary, general manager; and John Kehl, Cliff Musser and F. H. Thatcher, directors. The decision to form a company started years prior to property acquisitions in the Inland Empire and Pacific Northwest.

As early as 1889 Frederick Weyerhaeuser began making his bid for lands by organizing the Sand Timber Company in Washington to purchase large tracts of timbered lands. By 1900 the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company purchased Northern Pacific Railroad holdings in Oregon and Washington. During that same year Weyerhaeuser founded the Humbird Lumber Company, acquiring with it large tracts of Idaho white pine.

The causes of the company's growth in Idaho are twofold. A depletion or exhaustion of the timber resources in the midwest brought about the need for replacement stocks. Idaho contained large acreages of white pine

that could be had at a modest price. Growth of almost any industry and of the nation as a whole depended then upon the use and subsequent consumption of resources. The Weyerhaeusers were no exception. Because the government did not have the ability to tax effectively, economic growth was dependent upon business.

Investments by business were the principal means used by federal and state governments to spur economic growth. States such as Idaho offered land and raw resources. Railroads were given sections of land near rail right-of-ways as rewards for bringing in people and commerce. Government land was offered to homesteaders or, if homesteading was not possible, its mineral resources might be sold to attract people. All of this laid the groundwork for what lay ahead.

Between 1900 and 1927 the Weyerhaeusers owned and operated at least eight lumber mills in Idaho, including the Humbird Lumber Company founded in 1900; Bonners Ferry Mill (1903); Potlatch Lumber Company (1904); Elk River Mill (1910); Edward Rutledge Timber Company (1916); and the Clearwater Timber Company (1927). In all the Weyerhaeusers, a joint stock company, controlled 20 mills throughout the northwest, employing some 27,000 people, producing two billion board feet annually.

As with these earlier mills, building of the Potlatch mill was predicated by the acquisition of valuable timber holdings and related properties including ones in Idaho belonging to Northland Pine and Wisconsin Log and Lumber and in Washington to the Palouse River Lumber Company. After Potlatch acquired these holdings, it again added to its land base by either leasing or buying lands within Idaho's Latah and Clearwater Counties.

In addition rail lines such as the Washington, Idaho and Montana (WI&M) were built. Others, such as the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul; the Pacific; and the Northern Pacific, all served Potlatch and its subsidiary plants in Elk River and Bovill. As a result the Potlatch Lumber Company became a very powerful economic force within the state.

By 1930 having experienced the setbacks

of depressions in 1919 and 1929, Potlatch Lumber Company merged with the Edward Rutledge Company and the Clearwater Timber Company to form Potlatch Forests, Inc. Up to this point the Potlatch Lumber Company was its own entity, managing and operating numerous logging camps in the Vasser Meadows, Park and Bovill areas.

One problem that always faced Potlatch involved the mills themselves. More modern mills were built, rendering obsolete less productive mills built years earlier. One such example was the mill at Lewiston (1928) which superseded mills at Elk River and Bonners Ferry.

With the advent of World War I new uses and markets for wood products provided the financial stability Potlatch needed to prolong the life of some older mills. Seemingly each time the company started making a good return a depression followed. People were laid off, and in the early 1930s Elk River's mill closed permanently.

## THE TIMEKEEPER

Julius Crane worked on steel gangs for the Potlatch Lumber Company between 1929 and 1934. His story is told with a rare clarity of memory and represents an interesting segment of Idaho's history. Julius, born in 1909, came to the Palouse Country in 1919 when his father bought a farm previously owed by Hugh Bovill.

As a youngster he often accompanied his father to logging camps to deliver milk. At that time logging camps were stationary, connected by wagon roads. In 1928 at 19 years of age Julius was hired by the Potlatch Lumber Company as a timekeeper on a steel gang in the Three Bear Country. Railroad crews, or steel gangs, at that time were comprised of native and immigrant workers who laid rail on completed railroad beds and support personnel.

By 1929 Julius had worked in the Park, Bovill and Elk River areas. He received \$80 per month plus room and board, with clothing provided. Payday was once a month but a person could draw in the middle of the month if necessary. In 1932 a man on a steel gang (a

group of men, often of Greek and Italian descent, who laid railroad track) made 35 cents an hour compared to 25 cents an hour made by the woodsmen. Cost of meals was deducted from paychecks at 30 cents a meal or 90 cents a day. One dollar a month was also taken out for hospital.

In some respects working on a steel gang was considered a rite of passage into the life of a logger. Although other avenues may have been open for some, workers coming from eastern Europe may have found steel gang work to be the best means of gaining and keeping employment. Money often was sent home to families in Europe or used to bring relatives to the U. S. Because of the language barrier these groups generally had a translator to give orders.

Members of the steel gang included many Italians or gandy dancers (Italians or eastern Europeans who worked on the rails before

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*"... working on a steel gang was considered a rite of passage into the life of a logger."*

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becoming loggers) and some non-eastern European peoples whose job titles included engineer, fireman, conductor, loader operator, brakeman, night watchman, foreman, assistant foreman, cook, flunky and timekeeper. In all 55 people might be employed on a steel crew which operated as an independent mobile unit, moving from one location to the next. Crews like Julius's were supplied with their own rail transportation including a locomotive, caboose, water and wood cars, office, dining room car, bunkhouses, flat cars and a track layer.

Julius describes his work:

*"I kept time on the steel gang. Ya see, we'd move from camp to camp wherever they needed a new spur or main line built. As they built the bed itself, the steel crew got whatever materials they could get from the ground they were going through, whether it was dirt, gravel, rock or whatever. That's what they made*

the grade out of.

*"They would then lay their steel on it and in soft places they would split shims and put them underneath crossways to brace it up. Once to a station the track layer with its long boom would begin to off-load steel and rail ties from the flat cars. It picked up first the ties, followed by the rails which were all swung up front end of a completed section of track."*

As the gandy dancers laid down the ties they would fill in with gravel, tamping as they went. After a section of track was finished the engine would push the whole operation forward, and the process would start all over again. They'd lay steel and spot ahead in this fashion all day long. The building of spur lines entailed the use of lighter gauge rail---60 pounds to the foot---instead of the heavier 100 pound gauge used on main lines. Spur lines were temporary so there was little reason to use the heavier gauge, more expensive steel. Once the operation was finished, they'd go back and pull up the steel to use someplace else.

The last time Julius worked on a steel gang was in the spring of 1934 in the Upper Basin north of Elk River. He relates:

*"The previous Christmas, in 1933, we received the usual snowfall, yet shortly thereafter it warmed up and started to rain. In the Elk River drainage rail beds, bridges and spur lines were flooded out. Water levels were reported 10 feet above normal, and where I stayed at Bovill the town became an island surrounded by a lake which extended clear to the company barns a half mile to the west."*

*"As a result of these floods Camp C in the basin wasn't able to start operations until the steel gang went back and replaced the rails and supporting features. Camps A, C and D in the basin closed permanently in 1934, and all steel, ties and equipment were taken out by 1935."*

## **FLUNKIES**

The term "flunky," of Scottish origin, is defined in the dictionary as "a person who does menial or trivial work." After interviewing Daisy Wunderlick, Margaret Olsen, Joy Boll, Sophia Crane and Edna Eller, one learns

their work as "flunkies" was anything but trivial or menial. Theirs was a much sought-after job for women and young ladies, and Daisy's story typifies what these women experienced.

Daisy's father, Iver Anderson, settled in Deary, Idaho at the turn of the century and was minister of the Lutheran church. In 1906 Daisy, Pastor Anderson's and the town's first child, was born. Times were hard for many families living in and around Deary in the early 1900s. Prior to 1919 Daisy's family, like so many other northern European immigrants, had made a living from farming supplemented by selling time off their holdings.

By 1919 wheat was selling for two-bits a bushel and with seven kids to feed, the 40-acre farm was not providing. Like many of the

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*". . .at Bovill the town became an island surrounded by a lake which extended clear to the company barns. . ."*

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girls going to school, Daisy and her sister Maude wanted jobs "flunkying" in logging camps. After being turned down originally because of their ages, they finally got an opportunity in 1926 when Axel Anderson hired them to flunky at Camp #1 on Hatter Creek at Princeton, Idaho.

Daisy relates:

*"In those days \$60 a month was pretty good money. They didn't charge us room or board except for \$1 taken out for insurance which we never had to use. We were not charged room and board so this was big money for us kids. We used to send quite a lot of money home. You know, I had a big family, and we were the two oldest. We were just so happy with the jobs. We used to send to Montgomery Ward and everything like that for our clothes."*

Money earned by the flunkies was either given to parents to help out, as in Daisy's case, spent or kept for education. In any case this was considered a very good wage for women



then. By this time logging camps were rail camps or rail towns transported by flat cars. Once camp was established, Marrion loaders unloaded numerous buildings, including dining cars, cook buildings and the flunky shacks. In all cases flunky shacks were located near the cookhouse.

Daisy continued:

*"At 4:30 in the morning the bull cook, a sort of handyman, came in and started up our little wood heater in our shack so it would be nice and warm when we got up. We had running water in there, but it was cold all the time, you know. Never had to lock our doors in those days. Everything was, you know, you trusted everybody. He generally worked in the men's compartments, cleaning up and taking care of the showers and washrooms. He chopped wood for the stove. We cooked by stove then.*

*"By 5 a.m. we'd get up, wash and head for the cookhouse. Cooks, referred to as either the first or second, commanded a lot of respect in the cookhouse. Shorty Tribble was one exceptional first cook who prepared a wide variety of foods. Oftentimes cooks' wives served as second cooks, helping in the making of donuts, pies and cakes."*

Meals were served in dining cars, and each flunky, generally two, was given charge of

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***"In those days \$60 a month was pretty good money. . . We were not charged room or board so this was big money for us kids."***

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seven or eight tables seating from four to six men each. Tables were placed next to windows with a center aisle left open to allow for easy access. Since camps operated with 100-200 men flunkies were continually moving.

*"As soon as the men sat down and started to eat, why we'd wait just a few minutes and then we'd walk up and see if the bowl was empty. We just kind of kept going up and down the aisle, all the time that the men were eating, and just making sure their bowls were*

*full.*

*"Some of these lumberjacks, you know, they'd rake the whole thing off into their plates, you know. They'd get kind of greedy, some of these guys, yeah. There was a little talking going on when they ate, but very little, and they ate fast. They weren't in there long. Sometimes a visitor came into camp, and you didn't dare give somebody else's place away because they didn't like that very well."*

Seating appears to have been somewhat formalized in that chairs and tables were occupied by certain people. Newcomers had to wait until one became free or was offered to them. People who abused this order caused trouble and could be removed or thrown out.

In dining cars, two additional tables placed at the far ends contained lunch fixings. After breakfast the men made their lunches there. Cooking lunch usually entailed serving just those men who worked in the camp, since the majority ate theirs in the woods. The camp crew comprised saw filers, clerks and the occasional foreman. After that flunkies' afternoons were free to go fishing or hiking.

*"At times we worked nights fixing sandwiches, and one girl, Lillie Plisco, was named 'The Baloney Queen'. Her sandwiches consisted of baloney, butter, jam, with ham browned up, mixed with hardboiled eggs and used as sandwich spread. Fresh foods from vegetables to fruits and meats were provided every day and were brought up by the Tunerville Trolley, named after the comic strip."*

As a rule camp locations were selected near a dependable water supply. Perishables such as meat and fruits were stored in meat houses. At that time refrigeration meant lining the roofs of meat shacks with gunny sacks and continually soaking them with piped-in spring water. Usually blocks of ice, cut and stored at Bovill during the winter, were shipped in during the summer, greatly enhancing refrigeration capabilities. Many of the men working in the logging camps in the 1920s were from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Greece, Italy, Serbia and Croatia. In most respects these camps resembled small towns. Married couples had their own shacks.

*"Many of the lumberjacks were single and*

a lot of the oldtime jacks from Wisconsin were drifters. You know, they used to get them on skid row in Spokane, and they'd come out and maybe work and they all had a packsack. They'd maybe make a stake and the first thing you know they wouldn't be there for a meal, you know they'd be gone. Some of the jacks would find their way to Spokane where they would indulge in drinking and carousing. Potlatch had a board---hotel---in Spokane, and when workers were needed, they'd give the place a call."

The towns of Elk River and Bovill had red-light establishments which were frequented by loggers.

"Men coming back from Spokane and they would be just, oh they were just sick. You could see they were, but they'd come back and they'd hire them you know. It seemed so odd, you know, picking up guys that didn't have much in the way of education or jobs and yet

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**"Some of the jacks would find their way to Spokane where they would indulge in drinking and carousing."**

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they never bothered us and I would have trusted them anywhere. A lot of them had such a poor lifestyle, yet that's the way they wanted it, to be left alone with no trouble. Still, these old fellas that would go and get drunk. A lot of time they'd bring us home records for our phonograph. I think the foremen understood the little man's plight.

"In those days before the depression most people, including the flunkies, worked a six-day week and sometimes a seventh. Workmen who had families down in the towns took trains home on Saturday, which generally left the flunkies with little or nothing to do. Often they'd plan to go into the local towns for some fun---the evening dance.

"I can remember going down in a flatcar one evening sitting up in the open. There's tears in your eyes and the wind was blowing and your eyes would freeze. But it was a lot of

fun. We were young and we didn't care. We were never confined at all, and we did and got to do as much as we wanted."

## **WITH PICKAX AND SHOVEL**

For many of us today work requires getting up from the desk and taking a walk down the hall. In Victor Anderson's day work was defined a little differently. Victor was born in Genesee, Idaho in 1905 and began working in the Three Bear Country on a steam donkey at the age of 13. He tells it this way:

"Then you had to be 16 for a paying job, and since I was big for my age, they hired me."

The donkey crew was comprised of five men: an engineer, wood buck, two hookers and a whistle punk. These people worked as a team and since communication was poor, the whistle punk stood overlooking the station, signalling when to tighten or slacken the haul-back line. As a hooker, Vic fixed logs to the haul-back line and, after the appropriate signals between the whistle punk and donkey, hauled the log back.

These donkeys were powered by large boilers which turned the various steel drums onto which various sizes of steel cable were attached. Steam donkeys by their design and construction were very different from gas or diesel-operated skidders today. Steam engines such as those employed in early donkeys possessed almost unlimited power, and if adequately anchored hauled back logs of huge dimensions.

In 1919 John Lind, an independent (gypo) working for Potlatch Lumber Company, hired Vic as a sawyer and teamster near Spud Hill, Deary, Idaho. At that time labor was supplied by local farms but within a few years of 1920 foreigners were also hired.

In 1926 Clair Nogle, logging superintendent at Bovill, selected two crews to build 16 miles of road between Bovill and Camp D located in the basin north of Elk River. Management figured that this road would ultimately save both time and money by reducing the distance for shipping supplies from Bovill to Elk River to Upper Basin.

Each crew of six followed a route previously laid out by Bill Helmer, Potlatch's origi-

nal timber cruiser. They packed all of their supplies including axes, shovels, picks and black powder from a powder shed at Camp D. Working eight hours a day they dug, chopped, blasted and rolled logs, some containing 1,000 board feet. Bridges were built over streams and roads were graded by hand. Roads had to be seven to eight feet wide, requiring numerous swathes cut through hillsides. No machines or horse teams assisted these men.

Anderson described the work:

*"Stations were placed every 100 feet, and at the completion of each, payment consisted of \$15 split six ways. There were days we made eight dollars apiece and days we didn't fare so well. I found if you worked six hours working as fast as we could go was all one could generally take. We didn't spend time looking around, and there were no breaks. Eat our lunch and go to work. Fifteen minutes for lunch probably. We never put in eight hours, most of the time we couldn't make it. We were a good crew. There was no loafing. After you broke in together, everybody knew what he was supposed to do.*

*"We used to take a box of powder with us every morning. The trees were so thick and you could barely walk even where the tree stumps were. You couldn't get six people now who even know how to roll some of them logs. We'd shoot the stumps and fill in the holes. Some days we got six stations and others when we didn't do so well. By November 1926 we finished the road."*

In 1927 Vic left the basin and went to work as a sawyer. In those days a strip of timber was assigned to each crew of two, and the walking boss, Axel Anderson, or his brother Melker came back each week or so to check up. If people didn't produce or tried to get by with something, down the road they went. A camp of 200 men had only one boss, so people were expected to do their jobs. Together Vic and his brother for six weeks averaged 25,000 board feet per day in Camp 3. Each tree had to be felled, then bucked up, limbed and cut into 16 foot lengths.

*"We cut one tree, a white pine, that must have had 6,000 feet in the darn thing. We felled that. It was one of the nicest trees I ever*

*sawed in my life. Was that a big tree! We sawed it up in an hour and a half. Fell it and sawed it. I never seen a tree where the saw just sunk into it. Every cut. Never had to use the wedge on the whole tree. You don't run across many. That's the only one I ever did saw and get a thing like that."*

At that time sawyers were paid only for logs that were perfect and sound. Any portion of the tree containing rot was docked against them. It was better to leave the cull portion of the log in the woods, hidden or out of the way. Although preferring white pine, crews like Vic's cut tamarack and cedar too. Using spring boards on tamarack and cedar allowed for getting above the swell at the base.

Generally their wages ran 60 cents a thousand feet, and later \$1. Scalers came by

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*"It was one of the nicest trees I ever sawed in my life. Was that a big tree! We sawed it up in an hour and a half."*

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once a day, checking each crew's progress, recording each saw crew's marks, and making an estimation on the number of board feet cut. Toward evening the scalers told each crew what they had cut and made for the day.

*"The sawyers there, you know, got paid so much a thousand. Scaled them right in the brush. Then the skidders, they scaled them back at the landing, got paid so much a thousand, as did the Marrion loaders who came to pick them up. Everyone got paid so much a thousand. Pay varied between 60 and 90 cents and we got up towards \$1 and some towards the end."*

Later in 1927 Vic was back in the basin working for Les Mallory's steel crew. Today the rail bed he helped build is located above Camp C in the basin and follows the hillside above Shite Creek toward Windy Point. Before the road crew could begin work, a right-of-way crew was sent to blast stumps and roll trees out of the way. Next came the ditcher and a steam shovel that cut out the

right-of-way, scooping up dirt on either side and placing the load in front. Once finished the ditcher moved on to the new section and started the process all over again, moving eight to ten feet at a time. Upon completion the ditcher was moved out in the same fashion as it was brought in, a very time consuming process.

*"Axel, assistant logging superintendent, kept track of the time and figured that before Potlatch Company got the ditcher, his crew put in 70 miles of rail grade by hand, including the bridges. In those days to check grade one used a Swedish level consisting of a stick with a cross piece. Two men with levels would stand at opposite ends at the back of the ditcher and check level in between. If the level was off they'd pile or shovel on more dirt to level it out. Like the road crew we were paid so much per station. In this case every 100 feet, equivalent to \$20 split by the crew. We could put in as much with a ditcher as with a six-man crew. It was all heavy work. Old steam rigs were used first, and then they got the diesels."*

It may have been that Johnny-come-late-lies got the crust of the pie, but in this case the better jobs were already taken by people who came earlier, primarily northern Europeans such as Swedes, Finns and Norwegians. These earlier groups followed a pecking order established long before rail camps or big-time

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***Associating with one's own kind  
may have served to segregate  
and define jobs.***

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logging operations existed. Eastern Europeans were just the most recent group in a long line of immigrants to the area.

Associating with one's own kind may have served to segregate and define jobs. Ethnic groups in the camps usually bunked together as did those with similar jobs. Swedes and Finns didn't generally bunk with Greeks or Italians, and the sawyers didn't like to bunk with teamsters.

In 1920 to 1921 Vic Anderson stayed in

Little Camp A located at the confluence of Shite Creek and Elk River. At that time the camp was run by Melker Anderson and Oscar Hagbamb who was in charge of the steam donkey operations. Steam donkeys were also extensions of the rail lines themselves. When a rail crew got to the point where building spur lines was no longer feasible, steam donkeys were the company's alternative.

These machines extended the distance over which timber could be harvested---5,000 feet in some cases---and over the long run were believed to be the most cost-effective method of moving timber. As in the case of the beaver trapper who having reached the highest valley realized the good old days of easy pickings and plenty were gone, the steam donkey represented the company's attempt to harvest trees in areas that would not have been considered years earlier. With the advent of these machines, the life of the logger became even more dangerous and production oriented.

*"Some of the loggers never went out of camp for a year at a time, stayed right in camp. When they'd finally go, they'd take a big payroll with them which didn't last more than a couple of days. They'd get robbed when they'd get to Spokane. It didn't take long. They'd buy free drinks for everyone, and when they'd get drunk they'd get rolled. They called it rolling. They didn't last long, and some of them which came back didn't even have their cork shoes on. Nope, not even a pair of shoes.*

*"There was the Bernard Hotel in Spokane where lots of loggers used to stay. That was a pretty good place, and there they took care of the money and everything. When they came in with all that money, they'd put it in the safe for them. If a logger happened to get drunk, they would allow him so much, and if someone had to get out of town, there would be enough, too. Eventually either through drinking, getting rolled or fighting, the money ran out and the men would be looking for a way back to camp."*

Apparently many old-time jacks had little use for money except for the bare necessities. These jacks adapted to the camp's close knit organization and hierarchical order better

than to cities where unrestrained behavior met with disfavor. In most cases money acquired in the camps had little use within the camps themselves. One exception was gambling. Melker's Camp A in the basin (upper Elk Creek) had a reputation as being the worst of the gambling camps, and for some it didn't matter if you lost your poke sitting, standing or lying down.

*"I remember one time just out of Bovill where Camp 2 was, where the horseshoe bend was at, that we got robbed. They came in and robbed the camp there one night and old Joe St. Peter, he had only one eye, was the only one that didn't get robbed in the whole camp--in the bunkhouse there--because his eye was open all the time. We guessed that the robbers going through our stuff saw Joe laying there with his glass eye staring back and decided to let him be. I'll never forget that. Other times people were robbed at gunpoint right at the tables, so camp life was anything but dull."*

## **A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE**

John Anderson grew up in Elk River in the 1930s which at that time was a logging town. His father, Axel Anderson, was an immigrant from Norway who after a time became assistant logging superintendent under Andrew Bloom. In the days between 1919 and 1929 Elk River and Bovill were separate logging entities, although both belonged to Potlatch Company.

In Elk River the lives of many people were in transition. Nez Perce bands camping at Bull Run found their seasonal hunting and harvesting grounds taken over. While other American institutions, such as golf and football, were being established, logging was the town's lifeblood. In the woods logging camps identified as Camps A, B, C and D supplied the logs for the Elk River mill.

Camps with alphabetical identifications were generally associated with the later phase of logging primarily on the Headquarters or Clearwater side of the Elk River Basin. Camps identified by number were predominantly the earlier camps located in the Bovill and Potlatch areas west of Elk River.

John's early recollections of life in the rail

camps grew from his association with his father and from men like him. He related:

*"In terms of camp life, the average lumberjack had it pretty good. The company pampered the lumberjack for two reasons: to maintain and retain first-rate loggers. By the 1920s men were provided with clean living quarters, complete with showers and facilities for washing and drying clothes. Transportation was provided to and from the job with all tools furnished. Facilities in camp were maintained by bull cooks whose job included everything from getting fires going in the morning to*

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***Cooks provided meals of quantity and quality that few people could afford to provide for themselves.***

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*ensuring that accommodations for the logging crew were kept up. They, as a result, put in long days and nights."*

One commodity never in short supply was food. For example, the morning meal consisted of such foods as dry and cooked cereals, fresh milk, two or more kinds of meat, eggs (boiled, fried or poached), hot cakes, toast, juices of various kinds and coffee or tea. Fancy pastries were prepared as was "graveyard stew." Cooks provided meals of quality and quantity that few people could afford to provide for themselves. While Potlatch lost money in the cookhouse, they made it back by keeping loggers well fed.

*"All of this was accomplished by the cooks: Billy Mush, Albert "Shorty" Justice, Ralph Hansen, Ed Allen and others. There was the celebrated Sunday night smorgasbord. After a weekend of carrying on in the various cities, the jacks, as they were called, usually found their way back to camp. Some of these people were pretty hung over or in varying degrees of health. Besides the various food laid out such as sandwiches, boiled eggs, fruits, cheeses, meats and pastries, there was fixed 20 gallons of oyster stew. It was believed that this would bring a man back from the depths from which*

he came.

*"I would like to put it this way: Through the years many professional lumberjacks, choker setters, tong hookers, chute and flume builders, axmen, hookmen, sawyers, teamsters, rigging men, etc. were rather restless and nomadic, seeking periodic changes of scenery and job. Some who particularly liked a camp foreman might remain, and others might remain because they liked the barn boss or a particular saw filer, but the vast majority would forsake all or even higher pay to remain in a camp that boasted the best cook."*

One little known aspect of camp life was church services. Dick Farrel, the "lumberjack preacher," made it a point to visit the various logging camps. Since he could appear at any time during the week, services were held after supper and, weather permitting, outside from a stump.

*"Lots of times Dick would start out with 15 to 20 men sitting there. Pretty soon they's start filtering out and all of a sudden he wouldn't have anyone. Then he'd take off right up the walk and go to every bunk-house and give them heck. One thing I remember his saying is 'Are you prepared to die?' Now given the type of work the men did this came pretty close to home. It was a fact of life that people got hurt in the woods and sometimes they died. People liked this man and what he brought, and the company gave him room and board when he came."*

*"I can remember one time at Avery as we were filing out after service and people were shaking the preacher's hand, down comes the old man. They shook hands. 'Well, Axel, good to see you out.' The preacher was real gushy about stuff like that. 'Well,' he says, 'how did you like my sermon?'"*

*"By God, Dick, that's the best one you ever preached.' 'Well, by golly, coming from you that means something.' They hugged each other and the old man said, 'It was the shortest.'"*

Day-to-day living could be harsh. Snows in the Elk River area were generally much more severe than those around Potlatch, Idaho. Snow often delayed production or stopped it altogether. Usually after the logs were milled at Elk River they were stacked outside to dry. Even so during the summer lumber was found to contain mold right in the stacks. The mill was built over an existing meadow and moisture in the air contributed to the problem. At times there was as much moisture going back into the cured lumber as was taken out during the drying process.

As in other mill towns life for residents of Elk River held few promises. When the mill closed in 1932 workers had little warning; the management simply closed the doors. Unlike other towns offering alternate lines of employment, the only line of work for the people of Elk River was the mill. There was no farming or other industries to depend upon.

Under Bloom the company devised a plan to ship timber cut in the Park country just south of Helmer, Idaho to Elk River in hopes of keeping the mill at Elk River in operation. After Bloom's death timber in

the Park country was taken instead to the Lewiston mill and with it went Elk River's future. The people of Elk River felt it was their town, not a company town. They built the school, hospital, church and whatever small businesses that were dependent upon mill dollars, so for all intents and purposes this was their town.

*"Business got hurt and a lot of people never recovered. Axel told me the management figured the mill was meant to last no more than 20 years and he wasn't too far off. I can remember people standing in the street, not knowing what to do when the mill closed. People who had lived there over 20 years now found themselves out of work with no means of supporting their families."*

One aspect that exacerbated matters for the company was the time frame felt on leases to timbered state lands. While most of the

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***Dick Farrel, the "lumberjack preacher," made it a point to visit the various logging camps.***

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land in the Elk River Basin was owned by the Potlatch Lumber Company, in other instances they possessed only timber rights on others. The company was obligated by law to remove timber within a certain time frame. It tried to get the state's 20 year law rescinded or changed to 40 years but failed, resulting in a greater emphasis on timber production than originally planned.

"Potlatch's association with the state in this regard, I am sure, affected the intensity of the lumbering practices. Still there was a tremendous amount of white pine in the basin, and it took them 20 years to cut six sections or six square miles. In comparison it took them six years to cut 20 sections at Avery. Coupled with downtime resulting from bad weather, depressions and eventual resource loss, the mill was closed and dismantled."

## **A CONTRAPTION**

Bud Nogle was born in Bovill, Idaho, in 1919 and in a sense you could consider him to be at the tail end of an era. Bud began working in the woods at 16 years of age. By 1934 the logging operations of Elk River and Bovill were merged. Bud, whose father was then logging superintendent in Elk River and Bovill, worked in Camp A in the Upper Basin along with 149 other men under Clyde Radcliffe, camp boss.

Bud relates:

"Camps at that time were like small towns with separate cars used for various purposes. There was an office car, commissary, storeroom, kitchen, dining car, meat house, flunky shack, saw filers' shack and barns for the horses.

"Shacks were also provided for the first and second cooks and their families if they had any. These towns were generally laid out depending upon the terrain and the number of rail sidings put in. Family shacks were offset away from the main group of bunkhouses which could sleep 10 to 12 men. Flunky shacks were placed between the office and the kitchen."

By 1934 as a result of the depression work in the woods was only conducted during the dry months. Logging depended upon the

market demand for lumber, which was not good and rendered winter logging impractical or at least unprofitable. A few years after that the Elk River mill was dismantled, necessitating shipment of logs to the mill at Potlatch.

"We worked an eight-hour day, five days a week so the work days had changed dramatically just between 1928 and 1934. Living accommodations were still pretty good in the camps, and in Camp A we were given fairly good mattresses to sleep on with clean pillow cases and sheets provided every week. We had shower facilities and a washroom where we could wash and dry our clothes."

As they had been since the early 1900s, teamsters were still employed in the woods to skid logs down to the landings. Bud's job was a new adaptation to that practice. He operated a new 2-ton caterpillar developed from the earlier Bess-Holt tractors.

"In Camp A horses were still used to skid logs down a greased log chute. After the logs were placed alongside the chute, they were rolled in by hand using peveys. The end logs were fastened together using a dog hook, and I attached my "cat" to the end log using tongs and a cable. My job was to place the cat alongside the logs at the back end and push the logs down this chute to the landing. Along this chute was a road that I followed, and if it got too wet they'd place logs down to firm it up.

"This was probably the first time a machine of this kind was used in the basin, and I know that the teamsters didn't think too highly of it. In time these machines replaced not only teamsters but blacksmiths, barn bosses and eventually others."

## **STEAM POWERED MACHINES**

Like many youths growing up in the Elk River-Bovill area before 1918, Wallace Boll's chances of finding employment depended upon his ability to work in the woods. One job for those still in school was of a non-specialized nature. Each summer several kids would be picked to work in each of the numerous logging camps as bull cooks. Work entailed cleaning bunkhouses, chopping wood, getting the stoves going in the morning, keeping the washrooms and related facilities clean, and

later there was also fire duty.

"Every summer it seems we'd have a fire and then we had to carry water. That would be our job, carrying water. Of course in those days there were no bulldozers, no machinery of any kind, all hand shovels, axes and grub hoes and so forth. So, they would move along this fire trail 'til the next trail, and it kept going and every little bit we'd have to find a new place for water. But, of course, in those days there was water in every draw and it was good water."

In 1918 as a result of a flu epidemic, the school Wallace attended closed, so he went to work for the company as a steam skidder. A steam skidder, like its name implies, was a yarder powered by steam. This particular donkey was moved by rail car and possessed a fixed boom, allowing for logs to be skidded short distances to landings near the rails. At that time 17-year-old Wallace was just a crew member; yet soon that was going to change.

"This guy, the engineer, didn't know anything about the donkey and, of course, neither did I. The water kept blowing out of the boiler

and, of course, they had to pull the fire out to keep from burning up the boiler. It did that twice. The second time the engineer says, "I quit." So we went down the road out of Collins at Feather Creek, I think. We shut down the rig and went into the office. He wanted his time, and they made it out and told him he had to get it signed by Bob Jones who was out fishing.

"We found Bob fishing, and Mr. Carter told him he wanted his check signed. 'Okay,' Bob says, 'What's wrong?' and Carter proceeded to tell him how the doggone machinery just won't work. Bob told him he didn't have to quit, and he replied he was tired of it. So, he went on and I stayed there.

"Now, of course, I knew this old Bob fella good, and I got to thinking that I could run that thing, yet I was only 17. So, I was trying to get up nerve enough to ask him for the job,

so I waited 'til he was fishing alone and catches a nice fish eight to ten inches long.

"I said, 'Bob, you're gonna have to have somebody run that rig. How about me running it?' 'Do you think you can handle it?' he says, and I said, 'Sure. I'll come up tomorrow and get it fixed.' 'Okay,' Bob says, 'You try it.' Later I took a horse and went up there to take the pop valve off and kill the boiler with a bucket. I filled it up and steamed it up. It worked. All that was wrong was the check valve was stuck. It was so doggone simple. The check valve would stick and then blow water back through the injector, and if you didn't stop it, it would blow all the water out of the boiler."

As it turned out, Wallace knew an old fellow named Charlie Sanderson who lived between Collins and Purdue. They called him the "donkey doctor" and Wallace told the doctor everything that had transpired concerning the machine.

"He said, 'Well, if that happens again there's a valve right here. You close that valve and usually you screw the top off the check valve and it will

usually go back to work. If it still gets to the point that it continually wants to do that, why, the only one thing to do is to put a new check valve on.' In the coming weeks that worked so well and I was making so much money that I didn't go back to school and didn't actually finish 'til 1920."

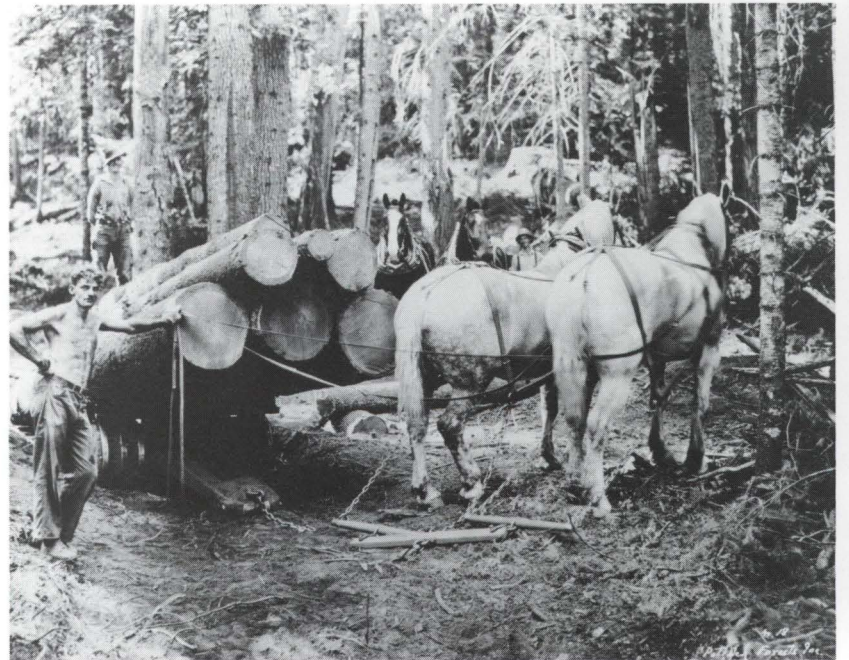
After that Wallace went on to other camps and ran high lead high line donkeys. At that time he was working at Deary on Bear Creek with another operator by the name of Pelton. These men were known as donkey men. Wallace worked with and got to know each of the Peltons---Homer, Adrian or Tots as some called him, and their father O'Chili Pelton as he was known for his temper. In time he went on to operate not only steam donkeys, but fixed the booms that replaced the Marrion loaders. There is no doubt that in time he became adept in running and fixing machinery

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***"The water kept blowing out of the boiler and, of course, they had to pull the fire out to keep from burning up the boiler."***

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TOP: Quarters for the crews were set up near the railroad tracks.  
 ABOVE: Horses were used to haul cut logs to the railroad line.  
 LEFT: Alfred Johnson stands beside what was then considered the largest White Pine in the Northwest. It was located in upper basin, Elk River, and was 9 feet 8 inches in diameter.



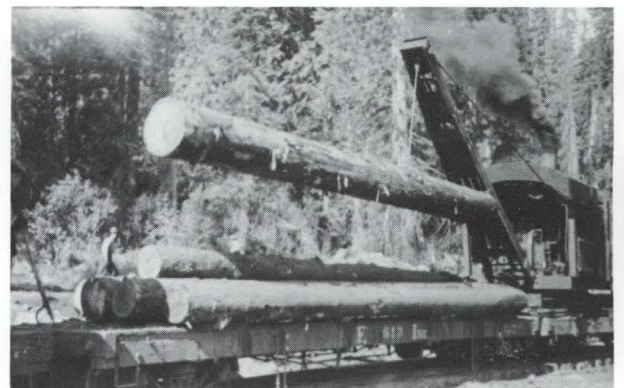
ABOVE: Logs were loaded by a Marrison Loader on flat cars to be hauled to the mill.  
BELOW: Housing for the crews was frequently moved and set up as home for the lumberjacks.



RIGHT: Horses were essential to the operations of the logging industry in the early days.

BELOW RIGHT: More logs being loaded on flat cars.

BELOW LEFT: Later, the tractor took over from horses the task of hauling the logs through the woods.





ABOVE: These were the men and women who worked on the Latah during 1929-30.

ABOVE RIGHT: Living quarters for the crew.

LEFT: A steam donkey on a rail car in the E.

RIGHT: Teams of horses with their drivers pulling logs in the woods.





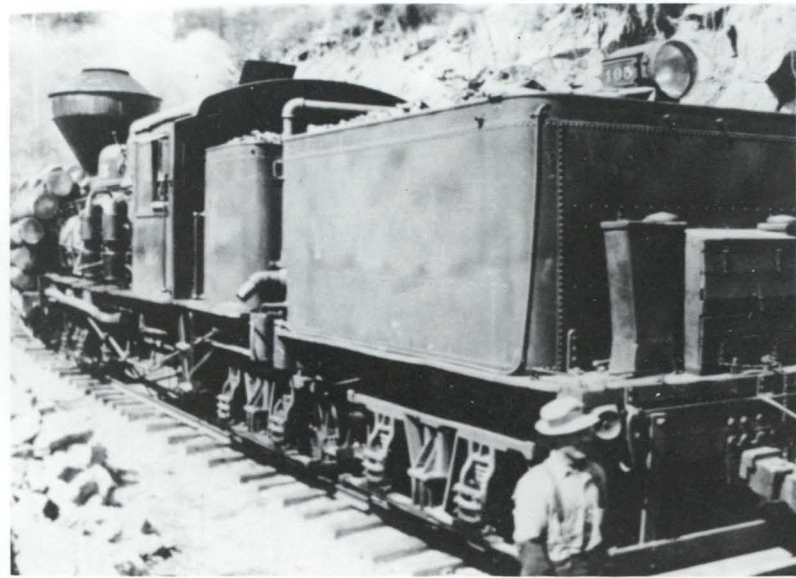
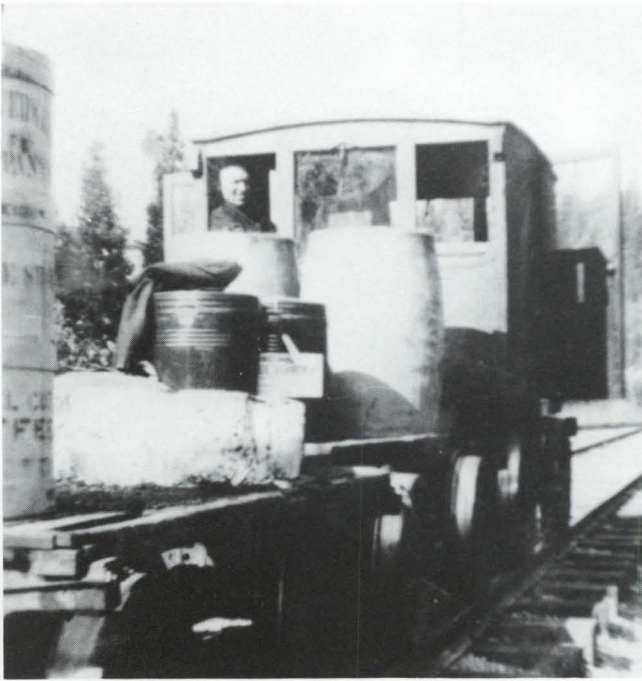
who kept Camp 14 running

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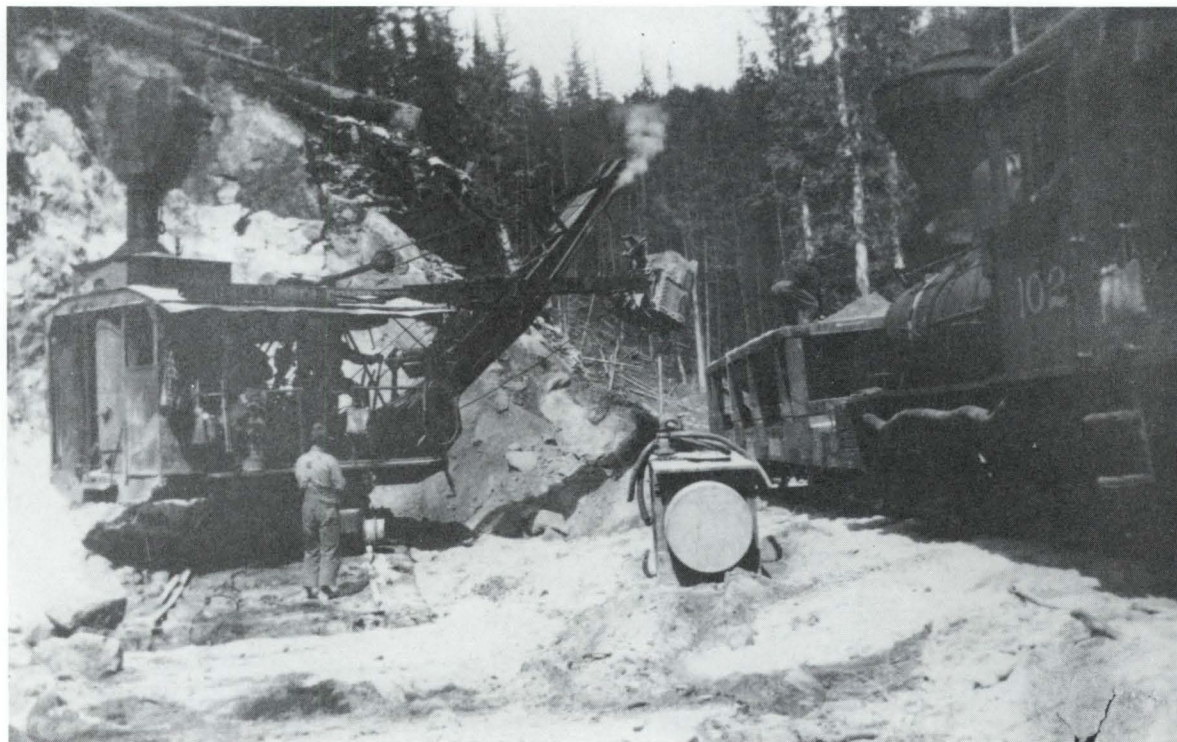




ABOVE LEFT: The "Toonerville Trolley" bringing in supplies to the upper basin, Elk River, in the 1920s.

ABOVE: One of the Shay locomotives operating in the Elk River area in the 1920s.

BELOW: Steam shovel loading dirt and rock on a rail car for building road beds.





ABOVE: Chaining the logs together to be pulled out on a dolly by teams of horses.  
BELOW: A Marrison loader with loaded flat cars and engine in the background.





ABOVE: A cook house and mess hall in front and bunk houses for the crews in back.

LEFT: Daisy Wunderlick and her sister Maude worked in Camp D in 1929.

BELOW: Clean surroundings and good food made eating a pleasure for the logging crews in this mess hall at Camp 14.





which was necessary for the job. By 1930 after the depression most work in the woods stopped.

*"I was walking on the road when Clair Nogel, then superintendent at Bovill, drove by. He asked me if I wanted a lift and I said 'Yes.' We were going to Bovill and he says if you want to go to work we got our machinery down in Potlatch now. You could go down there and help them. So four of us eventually went down there, and they had several locomotives, loaders and one thing or another to work on, so we worked on those. When spring came out we had two shovelers. These were shovels that they put to work on the railroad, and I was building working on that."*

That summer Wallace was running one of those shovelers, building rail bed through the Park, and eventually through Three Bear country. The building of rail beds and eventual laying of steel was Potlatch's principle means of shipping logs to the mills. Today on the Palouse, rail beds can be found on almost every meadow and drainage of any size. These rail systems consist of main lines and temporary spurs. In 1935 Potlatch Lumber Company shipped Wallace and the entire rail crew out of the Three Bear country and the Palouse to the Headquarters side.

## **AN ENGINEER**

Gay Ellar was born in Palouse, Wash. in 1906 and started working on the railroad with his dad when he was 16. At the time his father worked for the Washington, Idaho and Montana Railroad (WI&M) staying in Camp 8 just north of Bovill, Idaho. Because of his age, Gay wasn't allowed to do the really heavy work which was left to the Italians on the steel gang. Instead he worked as a water boy and section hand, traveling up and down the track on a speeder, repairing track segments. In 1921 and 1922 Gay was hired as night watchman, whose primary function was to keep fires going on the locomotives during the night.

*"One time an engineer brought a locomotive in to take on water, and he seen my dad goin' by and wanted to know what happened to me. 'I haven't seen him go by now.' 'Well,' he says,*

*'He's working for Potlatch now. Brakeman told the engineer that he had a boy that wasn't too bright and decided they were going to make an engineer out of him.' So they got me."*

As fireman, Gay worked for McFarland's Italian steel gang. At that time the camps had a lot of foreign people who could not speak English. Gay related that one time Nagel, the superintendent, told the men to go vote in the upcoming presidential election. As it turned out, only two men in camp could vote---the rest were Swedes. The language problem was so bad that the company ordered Gay and others not to talk Swedish when the scalers came around. The scalers, Gay determined, put up a big beef because they thought the Swedes were talking about them.

Originally there were five men to an engine: an engineer, fireman, conductor and two brakemen. To cut costs the company got rid of the brakemen and gave the responsibility to the conductor, thus cutting the number of men

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*The language problem was so bad that the company ordered Gay and others not to talk Swedish when the scalers came around.*

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from five to three. Fireman Gay recalls that fuel for engines changed from wood to coal and eventually to oil.

Wood was brought in on flat cars, like cord wood, except it was wrapped in bundles and tied with a string. To get the fire going they'd throw in whole bundles. Later when they switched to coal, wood was used only when coal was in short supply. Coal was usually stored in coal docks which were built in Long Meadows, Elk River and the Upper Basin. Coal docks, like the one in the basin, were built in the early 1920s and facilitated the receiving and unloading of coal brought in by train.

*"When off-loading coal they'd take a whole string of flat cars so they wouldn't have to get the engine on an incline, and they'd get back*

and take a run at it until they got speed enough up to push they cars up. The coal car would be on level ground on top and so would the engine with the flat cars there between."

As an engineer Gay operated Shay and Saddle Tank Malley steam engines. Potlatch considered Saddle Tank Malleys less expensive to run, but since they started with Shays, they were stuck with them. Some of the Shay engines didn't weigh more than 30 to 40 tons for #100 versus a 70-ton for #107. The higher the numeric number an engine had, the heavier the engine. Besides size differences, there were noted design differences among the various locomotives used. Saddle Tank Malleys had a water tank on top of the boiler instead of behind like many conventional engines. Shays were geared differently, allowing them to work in nonconventional places. In all, these engine were used to the company's best advantage.

Later, when Potlatch shifted to oil, they did away with the coal docks and relied upon oil container cars. Changing from coal to oil required modifying the firebox within the engine by removing the grates and replacing the lining of the firebox with bricks made in Troy, Idaho. Oil would then be sprayed out toward the end of the firebox by an atomizer used to regulate the oil flow. Engine crews were told to keep the pressure at 200 pounds per square inch whether they hauled heavy loads or not. When operating the engine, it was advisable to check the color of the smoke coming out of the stack. If the smoke was running black, fuel was being wasted; conversely, a whiter smoke meant more efficiency. The cleaner the smoke, the more power was going to the engine. Of course if the smoke got too clean, one could lose pressure and power.

*"Loading was generally done during the day by loading crews, complete with loaders. Each crew could load 18 to 20 cars depending upon the need, and some of the better ones could do 30. A big load (flat car) would run*

*10,000 feet and 30 would be a big day, but there would be bigger ones than that. What you couldn't push or handle determined your limit, but I don't know what it was. Each car had separate air brakes, so if they were all cut in, the brakes were working well, it was okay.*

*"Well, I seen Axel one time when he was telling some of the crew how they got so many feet (board feet) a day, but it averaged out to 700 and some feet for each man, woman, cook and blacksmith, including the warehouse crew. Yeah, everyone was paid out of that log. Depending on where we were going, engines ran one way, whichever way they were going, and they'd back out. Very seldom did they back up a hill. They wanted to head up. Hauling out of the basin required engines placed in front to back down to the mill at Elk River. Here the pond crew would off-load them. Once finished they'd take on water and push the works back up into the basin."*

Shays were considered the work horses of the operation, designed to move more slowly than other engines at 12 miles per hour. One

time while going around the loop along Elk River, Gay hopped off the engine with 12 empty water sacks. He took the water sacks down to the creek, filled them and climbed up the other side. By that time the engine had completed its loop, and as it came around he climbed back on and continued toward the mill.

Shay locomotives, being geared, had three cylinders on one side that were connected to a single drive line. In the winter, snow would get into the gears and remove the lubrication, causing them to wear out faster, so crews like Gay's were constantly having to stop and take oil out of the engine to relubricate.

*"Winter caused problems not just with the engines, but at the mill itself. The management in Potlatch failed to take into account the differences in weather between the two towns and as a result suffered financially."*

Gay got paid from the time he got on the

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***"Each crew could load 18 to 20 cars, depending upon the need, and some of the better ones could do 30."***

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engine until the time he got off, including nights. As fireman he received 42 cents an hour and as engineer 62 cents, one of the few higher wages. Depending upon the job, different engine crews pulled different assignments and worked a variety of hours. As a result arguments arose between the various engine crews over certain jobs that paid more. The company finally settled the matter by making crews shift periodically to different engines, thereby mixing work opportunities. The company placed a limit on what people could get paid per day, and there was no such thing as overtime. Potlatch knew exactly how much a person could make in a given day based on time studies. The company usually offered (gypos and independents) so much a thousand, but the company never really set the price or delivered the money until the logs were on the landing and loaded.

*"Acquiring work became more difficult later in the 1920s. There was a saying that if you weren't a Republican, you didn't work, and after the crash in 1929 the company began to hire only those people who were married or with families. Those people who weren't were let go.*

*"The demise of the railroad came during World War II when the government subsidized companies to build roads because more timber was needed than could be reached by rail. The companies got reimbursed not only for the cost of the roads, but for an additional 10 percent. As a result the rail lines was taken out and with them went my job.*

*"Trains were the life, but in order to live I had to drive a truck."*

## **A MILL WORKER**

In the summer of 1924 Lee Gale graduated from the eighth grade and got a summer job in the Elk River mill. He was able, during his employment with Potlatch, to collect useful information concerning management of Potlatch Lumber Company. Lee's story serves as a reminder that while employees were making a living, Potlatch was making a profit. Companies like Potlatch were always looking to make and save a dollar. It was the nature of their business. For example, log scale is

loosely defined as the measurement of logs to determine the actual board feet contained within. Overrun, on the other hand, is the difference between board feet quoted and board feet actually milled. In June of 1908 the company paid their workers for 3,826,320 board feet cut and hauled to the mill. In actuality they received and processed 5,247,893 board feet, a 33.1 percent overrun, defining actual board feet in each log cut.

As technology for milling logs improved, more board feet could be realized from each log, so scaling methods could never keep up with technology. Methods used to scale logs in the field were largely inaccurate. In time Potlatch saw overruns as high as 50 percent, and this paid the overhead that Potlatch incurred in its day-to-day operation. In 1920 sawyers were paid by the board feet cut each day. Based on overrun estimates, they were

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*Based on overrun estimates,  
they were cutting more board  
feet than they were getting  
paid for.*

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cutting more board feet than they were getting paid for. Theoretically others whose salaries depended upon board feet cut were also getting paid less.

Ways of recouping money and cutting costs didn't stop there. In 1908 William Deary found wages in the woods rising above \$2.25 a day instead of the \$1.50 to \$2.00 a day workers used to get. As a result, T. P. Jones, logging boss, was told to raise room and board to 75 cents a day from the standard 50 cents a day. Wages at that time were fairly fixed in this region. Many of the larger mills paid 20 cents an hour with each man making \$2.00 to \$2.25 a day gross. Mr. Humbird, president of Sandpoint Lumber Company in 1907, was financed through Weyerhaeuser. It is no surprise that wages and room-and-board costs varied little in comparison to those of Potlatch.

The board of directors was not some group of people far away in the East, but by now

local men. Stocks were not sold or traded on the stock exchange, nor were they as a rule purchased by the general public. Control was vested in families, resembling the practices of nobility in a feudal society. As an example, in 1908 in Little Falls, Minnesota, Pine Tree Lumber Company, jointly owned and controlled by Muzzer, Muzzer, Norton and Weyerhaeuser, made over \$500,000 in the first six months of that year. Given that there was no income tax, these men made over \$20,000 a month. Likewise, considering the usual salary of \$2.00 a day for the people in the mills or camps of Potlatch, one can easily see the discrepancies between the management and labor incomes.

Time studies helped to judge costs in the field. They showed what the company spent on wages and the productivity per dollars spent. In 1908 two separate time studies were done on steam donkey crews out of Camp 7 in the Three Bear country. The results of the study point to two things: The crews were generally very efficient and costs could be kept low. Costs in the study were noted to have been below \$3.00 per thousand board feet.

**CONCLUSION**

Examination of the history behind potlatch Lumber Company and its smallest component, the logger, shows that the woodsman was an essential ingredient in the success of the company. Without woodsmen and the skills they brought, lumber companies like Potlatch would not have existed. Initially the relation-

TABLE		
DONKEY #1		
	DAYS	COST
General Crew	12 days	\$352.14
Sawing Crew	12 days	<u>114.10</u>
Total Cost		\$466.24
15,000 Board Feet per day		
12 days = 187,567 Board Feet		
Average = \$2.486 per thousand		
DONKEY #2		
	DAYS	COST
General Crew	19 days	\$670.23
Sawing Crew	19 days	<u>162.37</u>
Total Cost		\$832.60
17,324 Board Feet per day		
19.5 days = 338,169 Board Feet		
Average = \$2.462 per thousand		

ship was mutually dependent. Loggers in the early years of this century were specialized workers practicing their trade in a social and physical environment foreign to most people. Essentially they fit into a world that they helped to create. But the evolution of logging as we know it may not have been possible without the financial backing and technological encouragement of lumber companies such as Potlatch.

Machines and men were utilized by the lumber company to maximize productivity and efficiency. This was evident within the Palouse where the use of steam locomotives

and steam donkeys was common. By 1910 man and machine on the Palouse were inextricably tied together. Potlatch Lumber Company needed machines to turn a profit, but people necessarily played their parts in this equation by building rails, sawing trees or serving meals.

People working for Potlatch at that time considered themselves producers. They belonged to a society of people whose fragile existence was dependent upon a single resource. While logging already existed as an industry on the Palouse, Potlatch rapidly elevated and changed the ways in which people worked in the woods. In the 1920s Potlatch hired mostly professional woodmen whose manners, dress and lifestyle were foreign to most "civilized" Americans of the day.

In the years prior to World War I Potlatch switched from using stationary logging camps as a means of efficiently moving men and

materials to work locations in the woods. The implementation of rail camps was important because it assured relative isolation which created and sustained a subculture of acceptable outcasts. Such camps were male dominated and because of their relative isolation from others, we find conformity to "norms" making sense only within the context of camp. Rail camps were self-contained communities where people lived, worked and died.

In the camps the hierarchical order worked within that social context. The position of "boss" was achieved through hard work and ability, separating the woodsmen from those given positions of authority based on education or kinship to corporate heads. Education or money had little relevance in camp; common sense did. While rail camps helped to maintain internal cohesion, other factors beyond their control contributed to their eventual elimination. They were resource dependent, so as long as there were marketable trees and a market, people of their profession worked. The continued development and improvement of machines eventually eliminated the need for many men.

Potlatch utilized machines such as the steam donkey, locomotive and tracked vehicles like the Bess-Holt, replacing people and animals and removing the need for blacksmiths, barn bosses, teamsters, grease skidders and many others. Eventually the rail camps were terminated, ending a way of life that had flourished for 25 to 30 years. Productivity was a major factor, and as long as men could produce to the company's satisfaction, they might maintain themselves. But the company was ever dependent on a market over which they had little control. Although the company survived, the woodsman as he existed between 1905 and 1930 did not.

The men and women interviewed came from economically poor surroundings by today's standards. What they lacked in educa-

tion, they made up for with common sense and hard work, generally working harder with their hands for lower wages than anyone would or could today. They toiled in very difficult and, at times, dangerous surroundings and, in spite of this, tended to remain loyal to the memory of camp life provided by the Potlatch Lumber Company.

They are a part of a period of Idaho's past whose likeness will never come again.

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## *The WI&M Forty-Nine Joining the Great Northern*

In curling mistiness  
of the night, rumbled  
a freight train,  
a pack of elephants  
thundered, swaying down  
the tracks, their plunder  
Mighty Sampsons on their backs,  
white pine logs sheared of locks  
from Idaho forests.

Blowing steam and trumpets,  
it rumbled over trestles  
squeaking, squealed  
around the bends.  
Lights glared, flashing through  
our depot windows in Harvard.  
Mom's mantle clock danced  
to two-four time as  
whirl winds with Elijah  
steamed past Princeton  
and Yale onto Potlatch mill,  
The WI&M Forty-Nine  
The Midnight Special.

I lay tracing  
pools and shallows,  
and felt the thumping rhythms,  
breathed in scents of pine.  
Spirits of lights flickered  
up and down my poppy  
papered bedroom walls,  
shimmered sunlight  
on a river and flooded  
into a lake across my ceiling.

Brakemen, bugs they were  
on rungs of box cars  
swerving, swinging their lanterns  
in circles,  
"Clear the tracks, make way,"  
Like Paul Reveres  
they shouted, whistles shrilled,  
Make way for the WI&M  
Number Forty-Nine  
The Midnight Special

The old depot shivered,  
readjusted its planks  
as a flustered duck  
adjusts her feathers.  
Under comforters I scooted,  
listened to thumping  
rhythms - a steam engine  
with its plunder fading,  
fading, sinking into  
silences of the night.

--Annette Hellberg

*Annette Hellberg was born in the beautiful Palouse country 30 miles from Moscow, and 10 miles east of Potlatch -- the mill town where she went to high school. Her father was an agent for the Washington, Idaho and Montana Railroad (WI&M) which hauled logs from Bovill to the mill in Potlatch.*

# How Many 'Moscow's' Are There?

By Richard J. Beck

It's said the most popular or common name for towns in the U.S. is Troy. But Moscow can't be far behind. The 1991 Zip Code Directory is a handy resource since it has an alphabetical list of towns in the back--21 towns named Troy and 11 named Moscow. However, this is just a list of towns with post offices. Many very small towns without post offices have the same zip code as a nearby town with a post office, thus Joel's zip code is 83843.

The *World Almanac* is not a good source in this instance since it lists only towns over 5,000 population and Moscow, Idaho, is the only one to make the list. *The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World (1962)* lists six Moscovs in the U.S.

Moscov barber Don Royse (Ye Olde Barber Shoppe) has a hobby of collecting popular town names and has found 13 Moscovs using a *Rand McNally Atlas*. He found several just studying the maps since the city/county name lists in the back do not list ever town on the map, in some cases very few.

Charles Elster who wrote *There's No Zoo in Zoology* has a new book out entitled *Is There a Cow in Moscov?*. The subtitle is "More Beastly Mispronunciations and Sound Advice". Almost nine pages are devoted to whether Moscov is

pronounced "MAHS-cow" or "MAHS-koh". Latah County Historical Society Director Mary Reed is quoted at length along with such other familiar

names as Dan Rather, Ted Koppel, Peter Jennings, etc. Yes, it's "MAHS-koh". Elster says there are at least 13 Moscovs and lists most of them.

About the best source is the 1991 *Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide*. Not yet complete is the *National Gazetteer of the U.S.* being published by the U.S.G.S. I did find a Moscov in South Dakota not listed elsewhere. In Missouri there is a railroad station named Moscov but the town is really Moscov Mills.

In his book, *Is There A Cow In Moscov?*, Charles

Elster says, "Though I do not doubt that a community called Moscov exists somewhere in New York State, I found no listing for it in any of my sources." We found it is near Russia (no joke) just north of Utica.

As to how it got its name, Lalia Boone, in Idaho Place Names, says Moscov, Idaho, was named after the towns of the same name in Pennsylvania and Iowa--first hometowns of S. M. Neff, who completed the application for a post office in Moscov, Idaho, in 1875.

Well, it beats Hog Heaven.

## 21 Moscovs

Following is probably the most complete list of Moscovs in the U.S.:

State	County	Zip Code	Population
Arkansas	Jefferson	71659	150
Idaho	Latah	83843	17,500
Indiana	Rush	46156	120
Iowa	Muscatine	52760	300
Kansas	Stevens	67952	278
Kentucky	Hickman	42301	100
Maine	Somerset	04920	570
Maryland	Alleghany	21521	300
Michigan	Hillside	49257	200
Minnesota	Freeborn	55912	"rural"
Mississippi	Kemper	39328	25
Missouri	Lincoln	63362	434
Ohio	Clermont	45153	324
Pennsylvania	Lackawanna	18444	1,536
Rhode Island	Washington	12832	"rural"
South Dakota	McPherson		
Tennessee	Fayette	38057	499
Texas	Polk	75960	300
Vermont	Lamoille	05662	300
Virginia	Augusta	22843	"rural"
Wisconsin	Iowa	53507	560x

# 'My Dad Loved Rationing'

By Jean Cummings Rudolph

*In her reminiscences of World War II, Jean Rudolph remembers how her father beat the system of rationing and had fun doing it.*

Maybe it was necessary or patriotic or both, but rationing irritated most people like crumbs in the sheets.

However my dad, Carleton Cummings, found it an exciting challenge---the war clouds' silver lining. Whatever became scarce or "unattainable" was what he set out to get whether he needed it or not.

For instance he bragged about having a case of catsup even though none of us ate catsup. When we pointed this out he'd say, "Well, there are lots of people who'd love to have it."

He did share with people he deemed deserving, but this didn't include me when it came to cigarettes--scarce because they went to GIs. I was smoking the only ones I could find, made from horse hair or something similar judging by the taste, while he passed out Luckies and Camels to my friends. Since he was opposed to smoking, he didn't want to contribute to my delinquency, but it was such fun proving

he could get them he couldn't resist. Need wasn't the point, and he shrugged off the family's disapproval.

However I spoiled his fun when mom and dad came to Texas for the birth of a grandchild. Mother and I huddled with the ration books each morning deciding what we could buy with the stamps available and then sent him off to the store. The stamps were more important than the money---I remember forgetting to pay after I'd counted out the stamps. Eventually we noticed we had way

too many stamps and discovered he'd been weaseling groceries out of the local merchants without them. Since we were among the few Air Force Yankees in that tiny town, it was easy to connect him with my husband and me, and I expected the sheriff to pound on my door any moment.

Dad was nothing if not persuasive---he sold enough insurance during the Depression to win trips to the West Indies and Alaska. He was keeping his skills sharp I guess, and he was so triumphant when he brought home something really rare, it was hard to stay mad at him. Scarcity was the challenge, he never bothered with the merely difficult.

Of course he wasn't the only one cheating; racketeers counterfeited stamps on such a scale that new books on special paper were issued, and then they stole the paper. An estimated 20 per cent of meat was sold on the black market. When the ration was 2 pounds a week (later 28 ounces) a Pittsburgh reporter bought one ton for \$2,000 and no stamps. While the crooks ate their fill, many of the conscientious tried horse meat, no stamps required. It wasn't bad.

For those too young to remember and the ones who forgot, like me, I dug out some facts from old government reports.

Sugar was rationed first; then shoes, coffee (1 pound every 5 weeks), and gasoline. Shortages developed more because of transportation problems---ships diverted to the war zone, tankers sunk by German subs---than actual scarcity. The exception was tires. When the Japanese cut off rubber supplies from Malaysia, no good synthetics existed.

Gas rationing hit the East Coast first (those subs), and most of the war they got less fuel than the West, partly because peripatetic Eleanor Roosevelt had noticed that western

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*...but it was such fun proving he could get them he couldn't resist.*

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distances were greater and public transportation sparse. The pinch started in May 1942 in the East, but the West escaped until December. Allotments varied according to national goals over the four-year duration. In 1943 it dropped to one and one-half gallons per week, or 90 miles a month, from the original three gallons. At one time inboard and outboard motors were restricted to 10 gallons every three months. But the universal gripe was the 35-miles-per-hour speed limit, enforced to save both gas and tires. Even on 1940s roads, that was SLOW.

Most of us displayed an A card sticker on our windshields which allowed us the basic ration. X cards were for safety and medical workers (and members of Congress, of course!) who got unlimited miles. Dad had a B card with more miles because of his insurance business and wheedled stamps from farmers who got extra for their machinery, so he drove pretty freely.

I, on the other hand, followed the rules and will never forget walking from North Howard Street to a 7 a.m. class at the University the whole

summer of 1945, saving gas for a trip to Priest Lake. Then on August 15, VJ Day, gas rationing ended with the war.

School teachers were saddled with registration for ration books until local boards could be set up. The volunteers there and at draft boards had to be willing to be unpopular. For instance a county board would be allotted just so many tires and had to decide whose need was greatest.

Eventually a huge bureaucracy at all levels churned out tons of regulations which, along with military paperwork, prompted Boy Scout paper drives. In 1943 my Air Force husband griped from North Africa that the war couldn't last much longer because they'd run out of paper. He also hated censoring letters---all of us got small one-page photocopied V-Mail with holes cut out. But soldiers didn't have to fuss with ration books except when they were on leave.

Babies weren't exempt either. Rubber pants disappeared, and it was before there were plastic ones. Mother solved my problem by knitting "soakers" to go over diapers. She ignored the traditional white/blue/pink baby color scheme and made them yellow "because they'll get that color eventually anyway." Leather was needed for GI boots, so the shoe ration was three pairs a year. Since this was not enough for fast-growing kids, mothers set up swap centers.

Preserved fruits and vegetables were rationed largely to save the metal in the cans, which led to home canning, victory gardens and scrap metal drives. Stamps were required for dried fruits, juices and---a big pain---soap especially for those of us with diapers to wash.

When sugar rationing started (two to six pounds a month), your allotment depended on how much you admitted to having on hand. Five extra pounds were allowed for canning. Later it dropped to eight ounces a week, and

it was still rationed in 1946.

Shortage of shipping space led to powdered eggs, hated by the troops even more than Spam. President

Roosevelt recruited high-powered minds like Bernard Baruch, Harvard's Conant and MIT's Compton to wrestle with supply problems.

The Office of Price Administration (OPA) generated mountains of rules for retailers and wholesalers since everything that wasn't rationed was under price control, such as wages and rent. OPA employed 60,000 workers and 300,000 volunteers. Leather half soles could cost no more than \$1.50, for instance, and there was even a communications manual for secretaries.

All this interference in daily living probably resulted in fairer distribution of what was available, but it was certainly annoying. VJ Day was celebrated at least partly for the end of rationing as well as the end of the war. But, it also spoiled dad's fun; after four years he had getting around the rules down to a fine art. He seemed lost for a while but eventually found a new challenge, raising Arabian horses.

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*But the universal gripe was the 35-miles-per-hour speed limit. . .*

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# *Life in the Centennial Annex*

By Nancy I. Atkinson

When I moved into the Rollefson's Apartment at 327 East 2nd in June of 1944, it came as the result of many fervid prayers. I had come to Moscow the previous October and, as so many newcomers to Moscow did, I started life at the Thatuna Apartments, third floor on the court at the head of the stairs. The place was clean enough but shabby and dark, the furniture nicked and sagging. The corridors reminded me of the "tunnel of love" in the old-time roller coasters at amusement parks, dark with heavy swirling plaster on the walls and, incidently, ragged carpet on the floors and stairs. I know of two other people who also lived in that apartment: Elizabeth and Ken Dick (Ken, I believe, is responsible for the shelving which may just still be there) and Eleanor Sherman who moved in after I left.

In contrast, my apartment at Rollefson's was light and airy, with windows to the north and west, appliances which were attractive and which worked. It was small---two rooms and bath with a walk-in closet---but to me it was a mansion. I lived there for five years and moved out only because my father had come to Moscow to live and we needed larger quarters.

Dr. Rollefson was a dentist in town and he and Mrs. Rollefson occupied one of the two larger apartments on the first floor, the one on the east side. They were excellent landlords, very considerate of the tenants, never seeming to notice any of our comings or goings. I think my rent was \$40 a month and due to wartime controls, it was never raised.

My apartment was in the front on the west side with an unimpeded view of the sunsets from the kitchen window. It was in that kitchen that I learned why you don't make applesauce in a pressure cooker, though

it did make a nice pale green design on the ceiling. It was from that window that I saw the leaping flames coming from the Washburn-Wilson Seed Company and heard the wailing of the fire siren as it surged up and down, up and down. It was early on a summer morning and half the town was there, many in pajamas and bath robes, trampling down lawns and gardens and getting in the way of the fire fighters. It was an awesome sight.

The apartment house was well planned, with stairs to the second floor both from the front door and the back door and down to the basement. There were large storage bins in the basement for each tenant and a laundry room. I remember when I moved out, soliciting every box from those bins, the last haul being six candy boxes tied together with string, filled with all the leftovers. I remember also one evening when I was doing the laundry and the floor drain reversed itself and water welled up into the base-

ment. Something about surging water fills me with a primitive fear, and I yelled for help. Nothing, of course, happened to the drain or to me, the water retreated to where it belonged.

In those days there were four garages in the back and a gravel driveway. I used to sit back there in the summer, on the stretch of lawn on the west side or huddled amid the bushes next to the Methodist Church on the south side. It was peaceful back there then, with birds calls, the scent of grass and flowers. It was a good place to read or write letters or just think.

Many of the people who lived there in those years are still in Moscow, many are gone. One of the first I knew was Bernice McCoy. She had been State Superintendent of Public Instruction and was then at the Univer-

*Nancy Atkinson recalls  
her life in Rollefson's  
Apartments, now the Cen-  
tennial Annex of the La-  
tah County Historical  
Society, during the years  
1944-49.*

sity. She had a niece living in Moscow, the mother of a small child. When Miss McCoy became very ill with pneumonia, it was to her niece that she turned. Her niece, fearful of exposing her child to the infection, was put in a difficult position. She tried to get her aunt admitted to Gritman Hospital but there was no room for her. So, the two of them had to go to Lewiston by train, where Miss McCoy later died in the Lewiston Hospital.

Miss McCoy had lived in the other front, second floor apartment, and the next inhabitant was Maurine Cherrington. Her husband, Virgil "Cherry" had been sent to the Philippines. She was a wonderful neighbor. It was at Christmas of, I think, 1944 or 1945 that I really got to know her. I was far from home and did not have many close friends here, and I mentioned to Maurine that I was opening my presents as they came. But you can't do that,

she told me. You wrap them all up again and come to my apartment Christmas morning; we will open our presents together. I did and that is my special memory of a very special person. When Cherry returned from the war, they moved downstairs to the other

two-bedroom apartment on the west side where they lived until they built their own home. Sometime later, Virginia and Bert Bowlby occupied that apartment. He was a partner with Leslie Howells in the Owl Drug Store.

Two members of the music faculty also lived in the Rollefson's Apartment. Miriam Little, a cellist, lived first in the back apartment on the west side and then in the front apartment on the east side. We became very close friends over the years, bridge partners, companions, cabin mates at Priest Lake in the summer. At retirement she moved to California, to Berkeley, where her sister lived.

After the war Norman Logan, also a member of the music faculty, and his wife Margaret lived for a while in the back east apartment. Some lovely music came from their place, but

muted, heard only in the hall. Not like another tenant in the apartment next to mine who played the radio so loud that the only way I could drown it out was to play the same music on mine loud enough so that at the critical point one would balance the other and I could no longer hear hers. But, I was blown out of my home.

From another tenant whose name I do not remember, I learned a good way to deal with those church emissaries who cannot stop talking even when you are closing the door. I heard both voices, sometimes in unison, sometimes in counterpoint, but suddenly one voice alone was heard to say, "Please don't make me be rude..." Others have undoubtedly used that phrase, but to me it was new and it has proved to be very useful. Another tenant in the back, upstairs apartment to the east was Mrs. Viera, a nurse at Gritman Hospital.

When my father came to Moscow in 1947, we spent two years trying to find a larger apartment. Those who bemoan the housing shortage we are seeing now can take scant comfort, I know, from the knowledge that it was ever thus. The influx of veterans after the war

stretched this town to the limit. Not only was there no housing, there were no places to eat. As Social Chairman of AAUW that year, it was my job to make the arrangements in the fall for our monthly dinner meetings at the Moscow Hotel. The renowned Elsie Nelson was manager of the dining room then, and when I approached her, she looked at me sternly and said, "Anyone who has a home has no business eating downtown." But, she softened and let us eat there after all. Where all the people who live in the present houses and unnumbered apartment houses and eat in our myriad restaurants come from, I cannot figure out.

My father and I sublet an apartment on Hayes from a friend for the summer, and then Dr. Church, owner of the McConnell Mansion at that time, rented him a room--the one at

*"Those who bemoan the housing shortage we are seeing now can take scant comfort, I know, from the knowledge that it was ever thus."*

the end of the downstairs hall. I moved back to my apartment at Rollefson's. Dr. Church, head of the History Department at the University at that time, became a good friend. He always walked to the campus, departing between 6 and 6:30 each morning. When I saw he was wearing his ankle-length fur-lined coat, I knew we were in for a cold day.

I remember being awakened once about 3 or 4 in the morning by the sound of fire trucks outside. Looking out the front window, I could see flames rising, I thought, from his house, towering about it as high again as the house itself. I bundled up and went out to see and found that the flames were coming from the garage at the back of the house where an automobile was kept. The paint on that side of the house was burned off, the windows in Dr. Church's bedroom were cracked, but he and the roomers in the house slept through it

all. The fire had been seen by police patrolling on the other side of town and they had reported it. Dr. Church just said that he had had a long day and was tired.

I enjoyed life in the Annex. After the war the town and University really boomed--lots was going on in Moscow, the country and in the world. In so many ways it was a positive time in history and while it was terribly busy, it did not seem so frantic as it does now. Perhaps our expectations were not so overblown as they are now, but there was an unending number of things to be done, but we were less contentious, less prone to trivialize basic matters rather than address them seriously.

Nostalgia, you say. Maybe so, but those times did suit me far better than the present. Time for me to go?---again, maybe so---but who then will solve all those problems?

## Writer Recalls Earlier Times

By Virginia Slade Hyerdal

Richard Beck, a retired University of Idaho librarian, is a trustee of the Latah County Historical Society and is active in historic preservation. Several months ago he received a letter from Virginia Slade Hayerdahl of Cheverly, Maryland. She grew up in Moscow and is the daughter of the late Dick Slade. She left Moscow some 20 years ago, and is now editor of *Doll Reader* magazine. Excerpts from her letter follow:

*I am glad to hear that you are so active in historic and preservation organizations. I do hope something can be done to preserve Whitworth. It is an "institution" as far as I'm concerned. My mother went to school there and so did I. I always liked the building. In fact--I know this sounds weird--but I still have dreams about the school every now and then. I can still go over in my mind almost every room in it. Once in a while I have dreams about the high school but I am sure it has changed a great deal--I presume Whitworth*

*has not changed nearly as much. Keep me posted on that as I hope they won't tear it down.*

*I don't know if you know it or not, but I am a member of the Latah County Historical Society. I wish we would have had such an organization when I was there. I would have loved to have been involved when I was in high school. I always loved history and didn't realize there was so much right there. One reason I loved working at the University of Idaho library was because I was working with the old rare books!*

*I'll have to tell you a funny story. Well, I think it is a funny story. There was this house on Polk Street, up across I think one of the David homes. It is the "gingerbread" house with the high "porch" so the carriages could come up. I can't remember what the house was called now and don't have my Moscow history book right handy, but I am sure you know which one I mean. I had always wanted to see the house on the inside. I had heard that the*

top floor was a ballroom and there was supposed to be a beautiful dining room set and a grandfather's clock that would stay with the house. Maybe they were made out of the same wood as the paneling or something--I really can't remember all the details.

Anyway, I was taking architecture at the U of I and another student and I were both very interested in seeing the house. So we posed as married (rich) students who were looking for a house for ourselves and we proposed to have other married architecture students living there. The owners were very nice and took us through the house--I don't know if they saw through us or not--but I still remember parts of the tour, mostly the ballroom. It really was a neat house. It was about the only other house in town, other than the one we lived in at 514 East First, that I would have given almost anything to have lived in. I liked the Day house and the old house Doctor Wilson used to live in--it had a turret. But this house was something else. When we lived on Moore Avenue, I walked by this house every day on the way to and from school and used to dream about living there some day. I hope it is one that will be preserved.

I have been doing some work for Andrew's school in my "spare" time. I was asked to work on some field trips for two classes. So the fourth graders are going to our County Seat in Upper Marlboro and will visit an old restored house. I tried to get them a meeting with the County executive, but he will be in Baltimore that day so an aide will take us on a tour of his office and we will at least get to see that.

Then I am taking the fifth graders to the Surratt House. This is the house in Clinton, Maryland (south of Washington) where supposedly the conspiracy to assassinate President Lincoln was hatched. Booth was supposed to have visited it many times. It is on the way to

Mudd house. And Mary Surratt was, I believe the first woman hanged or executed in the United States. I am hoping the kids can first go to Ford's Theater and get the feel of things there before going to the Surratt House.

One of the reasons for doing things like this is to try to give the kids here some kind of historical presence. So many of them just do not realize how historic this area is--where we live right here in Cheverly is where the British Troops marched through on their way to burn the Capital. They had the Battle of Bladensburg just down the road a piece from here. They stopped at the spring here in Cheverly for water and rest.

And here is another interesting story.

Several years back a lady was doing some work out in her garden. I don't know exactly what, but she was digging. She uncovered what turned out to be the grave of a British soldier from the war of 1812--presumably one who had marched through here either on his way to or from the burning of the Capitol and had died and was buried right here! That was pretty exciting. So I want them to know that even though we have the Nation's Capital right here, there is still

a lot of history right here in Cheverly and in Bladensburg.

Last weekend we went down to Solomon's Island--it's down at the tip of Maryland on the bay. It was a real old timey place, rather run down, but I understand it gets a lot of tourists in the tourist season. It was kind of neat. They had some nice shops there--didn't buy anything though--and they also had a really neat museum and you could go out onto the screw pile lighthouse on the grounds. I hope we can go back down there sometime and go to the museum.

Take care and keep Whitworth intact!

---

**"I do hope something  
can be done to preserve  
Whitworth. It's an  
'institution' as far as  
I'm concerned. My  
mother went to school  
there and so did I."**

---

# Notes from the editor's desk. . .

## **The Majesty of the Forest**

For this issue we have modified our usual cover page makeup to get the full impact of a truly superb photo showing the early Latah County forest in its magnificent splendor. They say there are still a few stands like this left in the county.

## **Dr. Lalia Boone, 1907-1990**

The Legacy wishes to belatedly acknowledge the death of Dr. Lalia Boone, a former professor of English at the University of Idaho. She died December 1, 1990, at her home in Silver Springs, Maryland at the age of 83. The following is from her Family Remembrance:

"At age 58, Dr. Boone accepted a position as Professor of English at the University of Idaho in Moscow. She remained there until her retirement from teaching in 1973, her final year as professor of education. Idaho became the locale for some of her most productive work in the area of place name research.

"Her 'Idaho Place Name Project' began in 1966 as a personal hobby. She wanted to know why Idaho place names sounded strange to her southern ears, what the name meant, when and why they were chosen, who chose them. What began as a hobby became a serious study of Idaho history, Idaho geology, and Idaho people. With early funding from the National Science Foundation, the project in 1968 became one of two pilot projects in the American Name Society's nationwide Place Name Survey. She began editing her work for publication in 1983. Of the first volume, *From A to Z in Latah County*, Lillian Otness wrote: 'The strength of this book lies in the depth of the author's research and in her eye for historical detail. It brings together valuable information on how place names came to be and sheds light on the social history of the place.'"

## **Writer Seeks Information**

The Latah County Historical Society received a letter earlier this year from W. A. (Bill) Estes seeking information about a couple of robbers who were apprehended in Moscow and he and his brother Bev played a part in it.

This is how he tells the story:

"One calm and nice day, as they all were when I was about 8 years old, found us boys, brother Bev, 2½ years older than I, and Evan Hall, about

Bev's age, and Woody Hall and myself, about the same age, . . . playing around the box cars parked along the old warehouse when all of a sudden we saw this man in an overcoat walking toward us between the cars and the warehouse. . .

"Bev saw the man hide something under one of the ties. We crawled out and around to the spot and the two older boys found a tobacco (PA) can with they said were dynamite caps in it and a pint bottle half full of a yellowish liquid which they supposed was liquor.

"Well, they were suspicious so Bev hid the bottle in the blouse part of his slip-over sweater and we four headed for town. Third and Main street wasn't far away and we stopped in front of David's Department Store and saw this same man and another with him walking down Main Street on the other side of Main toward Third. There was a bank on that corner and these two turned West and went down to the end of the bank building and very carefully looked over the side door of the bank.

"Bev thought we ought to get the police so he sent Woody and I up to Charlie Summerfield's house, only three or four blocks away (he was chief of police, I think). He and another man came right down and picked these two fellows up and took them to jail.

"Well, it came out in the paper the next day that these two had robbed a clothing store in a small neighboring town the night before. They sent the 'liquor' to Spokane and it turned out to be nitroglycerine, a highly explosive used to blow open safes, as I was told. Anyway, we were told that it could explode just by dropping it--enough to blow up a couple of building, as I remember the story.

"Bev and Evan each received \$5.00 for their heroic efforts and Woody and I were just hurt (ha!). Well the story come out in the paper and mentioned Bev and Evan's names."

Bill has been trying to find the newspaper account of this event and has not been successful. He wants to get a copy to give to his brother Bev, now 80, who lives in Port Angeles, Washington. He places the time at somewhere between 1918 and 1922.

If any of our readers have any knowledge or memory of this event, please drop us a line and we will send word on to Bill Estes who lives in Tucson, Arizona.

--Bert Cross

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In 1968 interested individuals organized the Latah County Historical Society to collect and preserve materials connected with the history of Latah County and to provide further knowledge of the history and tradition of the area. Every person, young or old, who is interested in the history of Latah County and who would like to assist in its preservation and interpretation is cordially invited to become a member. Subscriptions to this journal and a discount on books published by the Society are included in membership dues. Dues for the various classes of membership are as follows:

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Privileges are identical for all classes; the highest dues represent a much needed donation to help the Society's work. Dues are tax deductible.

The Society's services include conducting oral histories, publishing local history monographs, maintaining local history/genealogy research archives and the county museum, as well as educational outreach. The society wishes to acquire objects, documents, books, photographs, diaries and other materials relating to the history of Latah County. These are added to the collections and made available to researchers while they are preserved for future generations.

The Society is housed in the Centennial Annex, 327 East Second St., Moscow, and is open Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, and 1 to 5 p.m. The McConnell Mansion museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. Visits to the museum or research archives at other times can be arranged by calling (208) 882-1004.