

The following oral history interview is with Ralph W. Raines, a long-time resident of Washington County who has grown up around the lumber industry for his entire life. The entire interview is over three hours in length in which time a great many topics are discussed or touched upon. The conversation generally follows a chronological order beginning with his grandparents coming across The Plains and eventually settling in Oregon. Ralph's Father, Waldo, began logging in Washington County around 1915. After Ralph was born in 1920, the older Raines began a sawmill in the old milk condensary at the town of Carnation. Included in this section is a synopsis of the history of the town of Carnation.

Mr. Raines continues the story of the sawmill as it and the Raines family struggled through the hard times of the Great Depression. Carnation Lumber Mill is significant in the fact that only a few mills in the entire county were able to withstand the economic standstill of the 1930's. After World War II, Ralph Raines came home from the war and took over the mill. As the narrative continues, Ralph Raines outlines the history of the mill until which time he sold it and went into logging and then the tree-farming business.

The story is spiced along the way with logging anecdotes, hilariously funny stories, and personal experiences that loggers, men of the woods, are famous for. The interview is a valuable resource tool in the respect that it covers the logging industry and its different aspects from the small lumber mill, to more ^{the} mechanized and efficient operations, to the new field of tree-farming, all told in a human, personal way. The user is encouraged to listen to the tapes and read the transcript for maximum benefit and enjoyment.

The interview takes place on February 27th, 1978, at Mr. Raines's home up in the mountains outside of the town of Cherry Grove.

(11 Tape 2 Side 1)

RR: V-J Day never come until August 15th or 20th. Fifteenth I think it was 1945. But anyhow, because of the scarcity of help, why, I took my old job which I had held prior, over in the mill, until some of the boys started coming home. Then I went across the tracks as a purchasing agent at Carnation Lumber Co.

LM: Who was running the mill during the war?

RR: The operation of the mill during the war my father incorporated. He had two corporate partners. Clarence Adams and George W. Johnson. And George W. Johnson, who just died here a few months ago, a very fine man, a very Christian man. He come to Dad in the early thirties and he needed a job and he needed it bad. And he was a bookkeeper. Dad had decided that he didn't have the time to keep his own books any longer, so he hired him. The man kept books for Dad all through the years and when Dad died right shortly after Pearl Harbor, ~~wxx~~ why, George was a corporate member at that time. Clarence Adams, who also had come up through the ranks. Dad hired him as a workman in the yard. He had lots of smarts about lumber. And then he was edgerman. Clarence Adams then became head sawyer. At the death of my father Clarence Adams took over the presidency and general management of the mill. Of course, in times things change and people grow older and when I come back from the war as a young man it was decided that I had better start come up through the mill. That's how come I was purchasing agent for several years. Also, my skill at drafting and mechanical engineering which was part of my education at Oregon State College all fit well. I did much of the new machinery installation and design and whatever.

LM: Going back for a moment. Was there much of a demand for timber for the war effort?

RR: Oh yes. The mill run two shifts. And, of course, no one thought anything about sustained yield or balanced cut as we do now because the war effort was on and in a war effort, you know, just like when you're in a desperate fight with a desperate enemy, everything hangs out. You don't pay attention to anything. It's a matter of survival and that's the war effort at that time. I think that describes it pretty well.

LM: That must have brought the whole timber industry out of the depression of the thirties? Did the demand for timber bring the whole industry out of its depression?

RR: Oh yes it did. It was coming out of the depression anyway because for years there had been no significant housing and no significant construction until 1937-38. Things slowly began to recover and pick-up from the world depression. And 1940, that just added to the steam. The recovery was already in effect. Peace-time recovery. The war-time effort, of course accelerated everything. (20 Side 1 Tape 2)

From purchasing agent I then was log-buyer for Carnation for several years. We had a scaler at that time, a fellow by the name of Bill Durfeld. He now head log buyer and land and timber procurment for Stimson Lbr. Co. Then the two older members of Carnation Bumber Company they was getting older and wnted to retire, wanted to quit. Of course, I was younger and gung-ho and wanted ~~go~~ to go ahead. Webl, anyhow we finally found a buyer for their interests and a logger by the name of Axel Erickson. So, he and I; we still had the corporation, but we were the only two corporate members. The law at that time allowed two corporate members.

RR: We had one other share out to a Grant Robertson, now dead. Portland lumberman. Outstanding lumberman for years. We had one share out to him to make the three member corporation as required by law. Corporate law at that time. That's now changed. But Axel was a good partner. He's older than I am. He was a hard logger. He was a logger of the last generation. He was a very shrewd businessman, very little education, come from hard beginnings come from very difficult beginnings. His father ~~did~~ ~~xi~~ died at a very early age. He and his brothers and his mother was left destitute, high and dry and alone. We didn't have all of these nice programs that you got now, like welfare and food stamps and God name it. He's a very shrewd businessman and I learned alot of things from Axel Erickson. His main logging all occurred over in the Salmonberry country. northwest of here. I learned what to do and somethings that I decied were things that you shouldn't do. But that's the way life is, you know, You paid your money and you take your chances and you always have to stop and evaluate things and say to yourself, "Is this the right thing for me to do?" But anyhow, Axel and I were ~~xxx~~ partners. Axel handled the logging end and I handled the saw mill end and we got along ~~■~~ indeed very well together. After several years Axel by that time had heavy timber interests in northern California. It was difficult for him to manage that down there and also take care of this up here. He had this difficulty, but in edition to this, taxwise, it was very advantageous to sell out at that time. And we had a buyer for the mill but he didn't want ~~the~~ the timber and the timberland. With that situation, Axel and I decided that we'd sell the mill, liquidate the timber, and sever out partnership, which we did. So, the mill and property was sold there to Gales Creek Lbr. Co.

RR: They recently had a fire in their own mill. Which was located at the junction of the old Tualatin Valley Highway and the Carnation Road. The Carnation Road is now severed because of the bypass cut-off going south of Forest Grove. Fred Bocett and his partners came over and bought the mill and the property. Then Axel and I we logged together for a short time and then made this separation that I was talking about. I bought all the timber and timberland that I could afford to buy, but some of the pieces were...one piece in particular was very difficult and I hadn't had much experience with logging. This involved high-lead at which I had very little experience at. As a matter-of-fact, I had very little high-lead logging system experience. The last high-lead tree that was rigged in this country here Axel and I, right west of Forest Grove, about 15-17 miles. That was the last high-lead tree that was rigged. Now, we have all steel spars, high-lead systems.

LM: Could you ~~me~~ explain high-lead a little bit?

RR: Well, a high-lead is just...pretty well describes what it is itself. It's a system whereas you, in those days, you limbed a tree and topped it and then you hung all your blocks and you had your yarding donkey down below on the ground. All your lines...I can't remember all the lines now...You start out to rig the tree after you topped it, you rigged it. You had your rigging block right at the top and then your main block, and then your receiving block, or haulback, what we'd call haulback block. And then there were other blocks. If you...And then you had your mainline, receding line, and pail blocks, and taut guyes, If you loaded off the same tree then you either had a...what we called a single stick or a hay rack, or a loading boom of several varieties. If they were rigged off of the high-lead tree ~~x~~ then you had the loading donkey.

RR: If you had a crotch-line loading system instead of a hay rack, why, then you had your diamond-line, your spreader, and you had your bull-block and you had your tail-block for that, and Good God there was monkey-blocks I can't name all the riggin' anymore, because it has been so long now.

(35 Tape 2 End of side 1)

(Beginning of Tape 2 Side 2) *the Spring with Dad. It usually happened*

RR: I have old diagrams around here and so forth like that. I don't think there's too many loggers left, no loggers active anymore left that could rig a tree anymore around the country. You know, a logger's life is rather limited in the woods. He starts out as a young man in the woods. Usually his active life in the woods rarely runs longer than 40 or 45 years old. Some fellows stay with it longer into the ~~th~~ fifties and sixties but not very many of them. Most of them they start seeking easier jobs say, around 45 or something like that. It's getting too hard to jump fast enough to stay out of the way and to keep from getting your head knocked off. There was lots of ~~z~~ fellows killed in the woods. Actually, there was more accidents in the woods on the old railroad trains than there was actually in the logging itself. Some of the railroad tracks and logging tracks just were not all too safe, because they were only temporary at best. I ridden those old Shays too, the old logging Shays. I remember in the twenties it was the custom of the sawmill man, he knew pretty well what his market was going to be for the summer. He knew what kind of logs he was going to have, ~~have~~ to have to supply the demand. He would go in the Spring, it was the custom for the sawmill man to go the woods and to see what the various local loggers were going to have in the way of timber, quality and volume. And Dad had arrangements With Sunset Logging Company, which was over in the Cochran-Timber area. He had arrangements made that he would buy all of their logs that were 33" in diameter and less. That is, the small, what we used to call a red-fir type. It was a young old-growth I guess. It was a very good quality timber. We had lots of it in the country, besides the bigger old growth stands.

RR: I always liked to go in the Spring with Dad. It usually happened in the month of May. He would allow me to take a few days off from school and go with him. We would drive, Dad had a Star-Four, and then he had a Star-Sixx touring, which I have pictures of here. We would drive to Gales Creek and to the Timber junction, and then we would go to Timber. We would park the car there and catch the Shay up on into the woods ~~upxxxxxx~~ into Sunset Logging Camp. Those were all camp shows in them days. The fellows would only come out of the woods once a week, on weekends. Now, it's all home-guard shows. That means that you're always home every night. You can guard the wife and family. You can take it ~~xx~~ from there (laughs). ~~They~~ They're called home-guard ~~xx~~ shows. I loved to get on that Shay and I'd always ride in the cab with the engineer. Boy, that locomotive, I'll tell you, those old climaxes and those shays, they would puff along. They were geared down for pulling heavy ~~xxx~~ loads. They had what they called disconnect cars behind them. Logging trucks or disconnects. Going through the woods, they would puff along like they were doing eighty miles an hour and they might be doing eight (laughs). They were geared down like that. Sunset Logging Company always fed good in their camps. Loggers that come in the bunkhouses, I remember, I was only six, seven, eight, nine years old. Loggers would pour in there. One of the bunkhouses was set up as a guest-house. We would sleep in the guest shack. I can remember in the morning those fallers and buckers they'd be out there at four, x five o'clock in the morning. Walking up and down in front of the bunkhouse swinging their arms, limbering up their arms for the day, you know. It was all done with the old swede fiddles or the handsaws. No powersaws yet, not yet.

(10 Tape 2 Side 2)

RRx

RR: Cork boots like you never saw. Well, when you make a hard living like that, and it's a hard way, and your all out there, the fun comes rough. There's many anecdotes, much humor comes out of the woods that never really reaches town, because no one down here really understands the terminology to start with. Why talk about it after you get down where the white people are.

LM: Could you tell me some of those anecdotes?

RR: Oh yes. I could sure tell you a number of anecdotes of things. I sure do remember that Shay. Those were great days of my life to take the Shay with Dad and go to the woods. And then come back out on the loading train. We always had instructions that if the engineer said to jump, why, jump! You'd jump off of this thing because sometimes those tracks would let loose. Those tracks were not like railroad tracks down here in the valley or something like that. They were all cabled together on the side of the hill. They just weren't all too safe. That's why there was more logging railroad men killed on those old logging railroads than there was ever in the woods! Casualty rate was far higher. We always had instructions if the engineer said jump that meant jump.

Those were great days in my life. Some of the logging stories and anecdotes and things like that I could repeat. There's many many of them, thousands, hundreds of them. Stem mostly from my logging life which is a different era from what I'm talking about right now. By the time I and my partner seperated and I bought all the timberland that was remaining between the two of us, bought his half interest out. Some of it was sold because of the high-lead and rough situation of it. I got started by myself.

RR: As the sole ownership of Raines Logging Company. The times were right. I had everything hawked, including the house. Everything but the wife and my boy. I started out and I knew I had a good thing. I had some cutting contracts and I owned a little bit of land. I started out logging. I had a cutting contract to harvest all of the old-growth timber, white fir, cedar, hemlock in the McMinnville watershed. It was a beautiful place. And it just seemed like good fortune struck me. Everytime I turned around I seemed to find a dollar under a rock someplace. When I got started, why, what I did was I paid, I was advised by my partner Axel Erickson, to pay good logging wages. To pay above the union rate, to pay over the union rate. Then go out and shop for your best professional men. Get the best loggers in the country, and we had them. So I did. I payed anywhere between 25 to 75 cents an hour over union rate, for the different jobs. I shopped for the best loggers and I really had a gung-ho young crew. They were all local men like in that picture right there. (points to photograph on the wall behind him). They was all local fellows here. I started out and, boy, that outfit really did run. We had one of the highest production for little companies in Oregon there for several years. Our safety record was good. In five years of hard logging, high-ball logging, I hurt one man, only one man. He was hurt doing something I told him not to do just three days before. When those logs were being bobtailed or yarding behind the cat, not to ride the tail end of those logs. Don't walk too close to the ends of them because alot of times vine maple and other saplings and stuff drag underneath the logs and they'll whip back behind. He wouldn't pay attention to me so he got hurt. That was the only that I hurt in five years of hard logging.

RR: That crew, I'm proud of that crew. We took a week's vacation every Spring with pay. Most of the time they elected to work. Whatever they wanted to do was just fine with me. I never had very little trouble with the crew. They were all good fellows. Most of them were tax-payers, family men that lived here and payed their bills. One of them was Harvery ~~Deth~~ Dethlefs, for instance, active 15 years on the Gaston school district, down here on the school board. Other fellows, after I quit high-ball ~~ng~~ logging why, one hooker that I had at the start of my logging days, susccessful logger in northern California went on from me to there. Next hooker I had, a fellow by the name of Hohn Cambell, he went to Alaska and started up a reasonably successful logging outfit up there. Pays his bills I understand. He's done not exceedingly well but he's done a good. I receive Christmas cards and sometimes visits from fellows that worked for me in the past and I'm proud of it. That means alot to me. That's a real value in my life. When fellows come to work for me, the set of instructions was, I assumed it already when he'd come to work. He'd already been screened and I knew he knew his job. (23) I'd tell him that here the name of the game is get logs! Now, if don't think you can stand up and hold up with the rest of the crew we don't cut the pay here, you'll just have to quit. It's get logs and get logs safely. If you can't do that we don't like to make widows here. We're not widow-makers here. Get logs. And get logs they did. One summer we averaged 1900 board feet per man per day, all summer long. That was well over double the production of the average in the state that year, which was about 9 36 board feet per man per day. That was high-lead systems and bobtail systems or cataloging, for the state that year. But, we had a show I want to tell you. You just wouldn't believe it.

RR: And talk about loggers and cork boots. From that time backwards through the thirties and twenties this country here was not quite so civilized as it is now.

Saturday night dances. The fellows would all get in from the woods. The Saturday night dances at Shadyside dance hall and out to Balm Grove, the wild affairs. If those went on today the state police and the National Guard and every other thing would be out here, the F.B.I. to round up the moonshiners, quell the rioting. You wouldn't believe it! We always use to speculate, I remember when I was a teenager we always used to... several of us would get together and say "where are we going tonight?" "Where are we going to have the biggest donnybrook tonight?" Was it going to be Balm Grove or was it going to be Shadyside. I remember at Shadyside, why, loggers a lot of times on Saturdays, why, they'd be in from the woods. Maybe they didn't even have their cork boots changed yet but they always had to stop and wet their whistle at the tavern. Sometimes they would show up with their logging clothes on and maybe just their slippers. They called them dancing slippers. If they didn't have their dancing slippers why, sometimes they were there in their corks. For the Saturday night dance. When the fight started, why, you would always run over to the side and stand up on the benches so as you could get a better view. (laughs) I could tell you about some of those fights. Sometimes it got to be six or seven of them going at it at the same time. I remember one time at Shadyside Dance Hall they had one brawl, Shadyside was built right on the side of Gales Creek (30 Tape 2 Side 2), or Scoggins Creek rather. Right on the edge of Scoggins Creek right exactly where the old T.V. Highway goes over the Scoggins Creek right there.

RR: It has now fell down with the snow about 10-12 years ago, something like that. But anyhow, this door on the side of the building was always nailed shut. The loggers all got in a fight there one night and they picked up one guy and threw him right through the door and went out the door and went right over the bank and right into the creek. (laughs)

There some other stories I could tell you. Stories, Good God even the girls used to get into it. One night we were out there at ~~Bka~~ Balm Grove and two girls got into some kind of a scrap. I dontt know what it was over. Anyhow, the fight was on and outside they went. Right in front of the doorstep of Balm Grove Dance Hall out there. There was a heck of a big mud puddle there. And the damned mud puddle, I don't know, it seemed to me like it was maybe, 10-12 feet across, maybe four to six inches deep something like that. The girls got to scrapping it out right r in the middle fof that mud puddle. By God, we stood up on cars and everything else to x watch the fights. One of them got the other one down in the middle of that mud puddle, her dress clear up over her head God Almighty, no pants on. (laughs) Turn that thing off for a minute and I'll tell you the rest of it to see if you want to record it) One of these girls, I don't remember who the girls were. By God, she just reached right down and grabbed a hold of her hair right between her ~~xxxxxx~~ crotch) crotch and just stretch^{ed} that thing something terrible. The one picked the other and threw her over her shoulder. God Almighty, I'm telling the truth!

End of tape 2 side 2