

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.

Lloyd Meyer: First, I would just like to ask you a few questions about your personal self; as far as where you were born and your age and your birthplace.

Ralph W. Raines: Well, I've been thinking about this and I thought maybe I would come to that after I spend a brief resume on the folks here.

LM: O.K. why don't you start that way from the very beginning of the Raine family then.

RR: Well, as far back as I know, some of the Raines' I think there is some kind of a great-great uncle of mine by the name of Lawrence Raines and Mary Raines were like the Great Migration west. This was at a time when Horace Greeley was a great newspaper man. He was shouting about all the riches in the west and so forth. Firing up people's imaginations which was a great influence on the migration west. Like the old adage, "Go West Young Man." Well, he's right about that but it's a hard life too. Many people return back to the East because they couldn't stand the gaff out here. It was too rough. My people come and they stopped for some reason. They must have had a bad set of scenes back east of something. Either that or they didn't know any better. Lawrence and Mary Raines are buried in Dodge City on the right side of the tracks. (laughs) That's as far West as they made it but anyhow there was two brothers by the name of Harvey and the other brother I don't know were coming West. This is the story as it's handed down to me by the family. The two brothers decided to split. They were in the last of the western migration. The new Oregon Trail was newly opened up. Of course, the Santa Fe Trail was an older trail. One brother chose to go the Santa Fe Trail and the other brother chose to come to Oregon.

RR: Harvey Raines come the Oregon Trail and that's my Grandfather.

The other brother went the Santa Fe Trail. He stopped off in Texas.

There's quite a bunch of Raines down in Texas. We're all related but I don't know any of them. Some of the most famous ones I know only from seeing them on the movies and so forth is Ella Raines and Claude Raines. Ella Raines, I've never met her, I don't know her.

LM: They were movie actors?

RR: Yes. The Raines that took the Santa Fe Trail as I said, he stopped off in Texas. He got into trouble down there. He was caught stealing horses by one of the local ranchers and some of his cowboys and they had a little west of the pecos justice down there. Some Judge Roy Bean justice down there and promptly hung him from an oak tree. Anyhow, he got his stemwinder into something down there long enough to get the Raines started. (laughs) Harvey Raines, though he was a more law-abiding citizen and he took out a DLC and acquired property in a little Indian town by the name of Wierpe in what is now the state of Idaho. I'm not sure how to spell that...but it's up the Clearwater River out of Lewiston. There, he married a breed Indian girl off the local reservation. I guess that makes me about an 1/8th Indian or something like that. However, I don't show any right of it. My Dad, the picture on the wall there he shows Indian. He was swarthy, but he was an oddball quarterbreed. He was a blue-eyed Indian. A blue-eyed quarterbreed which was very unusual. But anyway, I'm all bleached out and white as far as practical purposes are concerned. But anyhow, he married a girl there by the name of Susan. Her maiden name was Marshall. Susan Marshall.

RR; (cont.) They proved up on their claim there and they eventually, I think it was around the turn of the century, somewhere around in there, 1910 or something like that, come over by horse and wagon into Portland. There was three brothers in the family and one sister. (20) Oscar Raines was the oldest one and then Roy Raines and then Waldo Raines, my father. Boys left home at a much earlier age then. The level of education was about the ninth grade, junior high school I guess you now call it. My father had a ninth grade education, but he left home at age 14 and worked in a shingle mill at Index, Washington. I think it was the Great Falls Shingle Company. I have a picture of him here someplace, at age 16 with a bowler on sitting with the shingle crew. Eventually, he come on down to Portland and by this time his brother Oscar, his oldest brother, was already out here in this country and had a mill at Gales Creek. My Dad joined him there. That was around 1914, something like that, 1915. They sawmilled there. Of course, those days, why, transportation and logging was very difficult and systems of logging were not developed as to where could ~~the~~ transport logs very far to the sawmill. So, you always moved the mill, in those days, you moved the mill to where the timber was. Well, they'd log all around a certain area and they'd move the mill. Well, it was decided by the brothers that they would move from Gales Creek to the Scoggins Valley area. They set up the mill, they moved the mill, by team and wagon. My mother was a part of that. She was a Portland girl. She stemmed from a family that come from Kentucky and Missouri. Her father, my Grandpa, Grabeel was their name, good German name, Grandpa Grabeel. He was quite an educated man. A circuit-rider around Broadhead, Kentucky. Established a town back there, Grabeel. I don't ~~know~~ know whether that's in Kentucky or Missouri. Someplace there.

RR: And that town of Grabeel is still in existence today I understand. But, he come West. They were wheat farmers around Iona and Heppner country. Some of my second-hand relatives are still there. I've met them and acquainted with them. But anyhow, she was a Portland girl. Quite a religious family. My father and, her name was Idus, Idus Grabeel. When they were first married, why, she helped move that mill; the horse and team to Scoggin's Junction. Of course, World War I was on at that time and United States entry into the War was eminent. Then 1917 come and the government told the two brothers that one of them could stay and run the mill but one of them would have to go in the draft. So, it was decided my ^{Father} brother being the youngest, he would go in the draft and his older brother Oscar would run the mill. And after the War was over and my Dad returned, they went into partnership together and they then moved the mill to Laurel.

LM: What's involved in moving a mill? What would they use?

RR: Horse and wagon was involved in moving the mill. It was nothing more than a few wheels. ~~and~~ They didn't have band-saws or head-rigs in those days. They were all circular. It wasn't too bad a job to move the mill, but it was done with team and wagon. They moved the mill into Laurel from Scoggins Valley Junction and they sawmilled there for awhile. But, then they go a contract, a tie-cutting contract. (30) with the Southern Pacific Railroad. So, they ~~milled~~ moved the mill back over to their...up to Laurel when they were located there. They leased the property ~~from~~ the Sam Coberstein family. The Cobersteins still live in Gaston, their descendants. Sam Coberstein only ~~did~~ here a few years ago. He was in his seventies.

RR: They moved the mill in back to Scoggins Valley Junction and the mill was ~~moved~~ located, the mill was located then the Dethlefs' peoples property. Harvey Dethlefs is a few years older than I am. He's about, approximately about 60 now, 59 or 60. He's a real estate salesman in Forest Grove for Hiesler Realty there, I believe it is something like that. In Forest Grove there and he's a descendent of the Dethlefs' people. They leased that property at Scoggins Valley Junction from the Dethlefs' people.

Then the third brother Roy joined with them at that time. Roy worked in the mill. Oscar took care of the sales, and my Dad did the logging. He logged that ridge just south of Scoggins Creek between the old T.V. Highway now and Stimson Lumber Company. He logged all that ridge in there with a team of Purchen horses. Then came 1920, June the 15th and I was born. Folks had a tent and sidewalks. They had a 16 X 16 military squad tent. He had that over a tent and sidewall and my mother tells about when she used to sweep the floor by the time that she got to the door that there was no dirt left, because it would all go through the cracks and the whole thing was built out of green lumber to start with. When it dried it all shrunk up. There was cracks in the floors. (laughs) My first year; I put in the winter of 1920 there as a baby, and she says there was never a day that I didn't have the colic. I don't know how in the hell I ever ~~survived~~ survived but survived people did somehow or another. Infant mortality rate was high in those days.

LM: Did the people that worked in the mills along with your father also live in houses like that?

RR: Oh yes. (35) ~~In the Spring of 1921, in the very early Spring, they~~

RR: Oh yes. In the Spring of 1921, in the very early Spring, why, Dad decided he wanted ~~g~~ to go off ~~xxx~~ sawmilling on his own, no bad blood between the brothers, because they always cooperated and looked out for each other. Dad went to the community of Carnation, south of Forest Grove, He bought property there. That was an incorporated community. A little history of the community of Carnation. ~~xxx~~ Around about 1917 or 18 Carnation Milk Company had property there and a milk condenser which was a common thing. Milk Companies had collecting points all over the countryx in those days because there was not refrigeration. There was only ice, not refrigeration. So, they had to have collecting points because most of the milk was brought in by the farmer himself in horse and wagon. So, they had these little collecting points all over. Then they run the milk through the condenser and iced it down and so forth. Carnation Milk Co. had property there and a condenser, and a collecting point. It was an incorporated community. Carnation Milk Co. also built what was called then, the Colonial Hotel. There was an old hotel there primarily for the housing of their employees. But also, they took in the public at the same time. We know why the railroad went south of Hillsbore and Forest Grove, what was it Mr. Hill got into a big argument. He ~~andx~~ had a ~~big~~ big mad-on at the two towns and he was going to show them who was going to have the last word. He didn't build the railroad through their towns. So, the railroad went through the community of Carnation. There was a depot there and I can show you right where the depot was. (10 Side 2 Tape 1) They built the hotel. They had the milk condenser. But they took in the general public traveling through the country. Lots of salesmen stopped there for overnight. There was a way station and so forth.

RR: My Dad bought property from C.L. Bump, who lived in Newberg. I don't remember if he was a ~~law~~ lawyer or a doctor. But then there was Dan Bump also in Forest Grove, his brother. He was a lawyer. In the 1920's, why Dan Bump, and clear up into the thirties, and until the time he retired even, Dan Bump took care of alot of the legal work for my father. Just general law work. He bought property from the Bumps there. Then there was a general merchandise store. The post office was in the same store right exactly where, what is now Willamette Industries Retail Office.

Right exactly. Just in back of the building there is where the post office was. I'll show you where the exact location was. I know exactly where it is.

There was also a livery stable where you could rent horse and team. There was livery stables all over the country. Because when you want anyplace alot of times you went on the train or then when you got there you either rented a saddlehorse or you rented a buggy. There was a livery stable there. The Botherlier people owned that. They had the general store, the post office, and the livery stable. Eventually, as transportation, road systems in Oregon and transportation got better and cars began to come in and were mechanically sound, people understood a little more about how to run the things and how to change tires and a few things like that. Of course, these little milk condensers, milk collecting points all over the country began to vanish. So did Carnation. & The incorporated community of Carnation diminished. My t father then, with a mill there, which he had, owned some of the property, he had leased some property for his mill site from Southern Pacific. He sawmilled then from about 1921 to about 1929. He decided that he needed a more modern mill. So, he tore that mill down, destructed it. And it was a dry yard, what we call a dry yard mill.

RR: That means that they just dumped the logs off the railroad car right out on the dirt. And they just yarded them all around with a horse, team of horses, bucked them into mill lengths, whatever they wanted. Horses, they would pull them into the yard over, then they'd hook cable on them and pull them up the log chute into the mill. And I have pictures of that here and darn it I can't find them. I'm still trying to locate those two pictures I was telling you about. Anyway. He desctructed that mill and built a new modern mill. One of very most modern mills in the country. He got it finished. Of course, insurance in those days, insurance companies, the cost of insurance on mills was very high because of the hazards. But they didn't know how to insure mills. And mill owners then didn't know how to build mills that were safe, ~~xxx~~ relatively safe from fire. Mills weren't all too clean. collected dust and so forth like that. Very explosive dust. My Dad finished that mill building there in 1929, the Spring of 1929. And started to run it. Things were recovering after the recession after World War I and gee, he was doing pretty good. He p aid for that mill had paid for after six months after he started running it.

LM: How big of an operation was the old mill?

RR: Oh, I do n't remember what its capacity was. 20,000 board feet a day something like that; 25,000. But the new mill, its capacity was double that, about double that. It was about 30,000-35,000 . But it was a very modern mill. The most up-to-date for that time. He had something short of 100,000 investment in todo total property and capital ~~investemnt~~ investment. Total property ~~a~~ in mill construction.

(20 Tape 1 Side 2)

RR: But he only had about \$8,000 worth of insurance on the thing. On August the 21st, at nine P.M. 1929, that mill caught on fire. As the newspaper clippings which you see here, caught on fire, and 30,000 of that capital investment went right up in smoke. It totally demolished that mill. All he had was 8,000 dollars worth of insurance. I don't have to tell you, what was it they called it, Black October hit. The stock market plummeted, the world depression was on and boy, I want to tell you, we were poor. Ragged! I just don't understand the strength of my Dad to, in the face of all this, to go across the tracks south of the Southern Pacific mainline there, south, and buy the Carnation, the remaining part of the Carnation property. He bought that and he went through the old condenser and revamped it with timber to make it structurally acceptable for sawmilling and built a new sawmill that was bigger than the one that burned down! He finally got it to going. I think it was in late 1931 or in early '32. Depression, I don't have to tell the older people, the Depression was full on our backs. People, the breadlines. Educated people, good people walking up and down the tracks with packs on their backs looking for anything so they could send a nickel or a dime of anything back to their family someplace, where ever they may be. Things were so tough and so desperate that many gave up. They just drifted off from their families because they couldn't support them anyway. There was no work. Dad used to have as high as ~~20~~ 10 and 25 of these kind of people every night ~~xxxxxxx~~ In the wintertime he would let them sleep in the sawdust bin next to the boiler in the mill so they could stay warm and keep from freezing to death.

LM: The rest of the economy was in such dire straights, was there much of a demand for timber?

RR: It was very weak because no one had any money. I don't have to tell you what happened to housing. There was nothing being built. People were living in shacks. They were living in tents, they were living anywhere they could find. Banks were loaded with properties and foreclosures from mortgages that couldn't be honored. Until they were land-poor and bankrupt. Then FDR came in, in what year, 1933 or something like that '34, we had the presidential election. First thing he did was close the banks down for some few days until they could recoup. Then he started the NRA which turned out later to be unconstitutional. But at least FDR served a purpose even though later on he became quite unpopular with many, many people. Nonetheless, his first four years in office he served a real purpose. He had some fine ideas about...whether it was right or wrong at least it got the country moving again. Began to bring this thing out of the doldrums. Things were so bad that it took almost a decade to start getting things back until where people could live and not want to commit suicide, jump out of windows and everything else. Desert families. Things were so bad that many families broke up in desperation. There was just no other way. So anyway, why, Dad had a terrible time trying to pay for that sawmill. He owed Portland Machinery Company he owed Star machinery Co. Until he felt that he just couldn't stand it any more he couldn't make it any longer. I remember him saying, "Well I just got to go to Portland and tell them to come and get her, that I can't make it no more. But, they didn't want the machinery. They had machinery sitting all over the yard down there in Portland. They told him to go back and try it.

RR: And he did (30 Tape 1 Side 2) And by God pretty soon he began to come out of it. And he paid them off and he made some money. There were many tough years.

LM: Did the rest of the mills around the area, did they go bankrupt and collapse?

RR: There was only about two mills in the country that were able to stay with it. Besides Cannation Lbr. co., my Dad's Company, Longview Lbr. Co. now International Pulp and Paper, and Crown Zellerbach, Weyerhaeuser, and there was several number of others little mills around the corner, you know. Sawing a few boards to sell to the farmers here and the farmers down the line someplace like that. But they only operated spasmodic. They were intermittent mills. They might run a few days if some farmer wanted a few boards or something like that. But, they weren't sawmills that produced a continuous payroll. In this area right here...(end of Tape 1)

RR: In this area right here there was only one sawmill which run continuously and produced a steady payroll and that was my Dad's Carnation Lumber Co. There were other mills on the river such as Inman-Poulson, Eastern-Western and several other mills. I just don't recall their names at the present time right at the moment here. They were running steady but even in the early thirties those mills were intermittent because there just wasn't the orders to cut and you couldn't go on cuttings supporting a payroll and having a whole yard full inventory that wasn't moving. You couldn't have that kind of money tied up. There wasn't that kind of money. But anyhow, Carnation Lbr. Co. right here in this immediate locality is the oldest, continuous running sawmill and continuous payroll. Even though the mill has since, I sold out the sawmill, and two subsequent ownerships the mill has never missed a day's payroll, a week's payroll since I seperated from the mill there. When World War II come on, of course I was in the last of my teens then, 19 20 I was just in my 20's. Of course, I went into the air corp in 1942, after Pearl Harbor. I ended up a navigator and gunner, heavy bombbardment. 485th~~the~~ bomb group, 831st bomb squadron, B-24 Consolidated. We were assigned to a replacement pool in England to the 8th Air Force. We were there for a few days but they were so shot up after North African campaign and up through the Southern Italy campaing things were so s desperate. They were so shot up that they needed crews down there badly. Sixteen crews of us took ~~out~~ us out of the *8th Air Force Replacement Depot and we ended up in Casablanca and over in North Africa and into Southern Italy. We started flying then and we were in on the last of the Plouveste missions and Southern France D-Day.

RR: We flew missions all over Germany, southern Germany, and Czechoslovakia, Poland. We went Poland one mission. It was a long haul for us. Hamberg, all those northern targets, they were all 8th Air Force targets. I flew 56 missions, two and half tours. Flew 56 missions. I was sure glad to get home, I'll tell you that? I used to think when we had fighter attacks you didn't have time to think about home. You be surprized how when you sit here calm your vision goes out at a certain angle. (10 Tape 1 Side 2) But when you are in combat and you have somebody shooting at you and those enemy planes buzzing all around you suddenly your goes almost 360 degrees. Laughs) Anyway, survived all of that. Come home here. When I come home, why, I arrived home here before V-J Day. I was home here in May of 1945.