

INTERVIEW WITH FREDERICK KING (F. K.) WEYERHAEUSER

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(Recording begins after start of interview)

FKW . . . labor relations and other things. There was a question of financial matters.

FRM In other words, they had certain subject areas that they were interested in.

FKW They thought it would be helpful in developing monographs covering various phases of the history. Most of them were very poor. They were not something that you cared about. They either were poorly done or were slanted. We just never did anything with them.

ERM They still exist as a part of that remnant of files that's out there in Tacoma?

FKW They're still in the files out there. You can see them, but they were very, very incomplete and in fact some of them were misleading, I thought. Most of it just wasn't good.

ERM What was good? Do you remember anything besides the biographical sketch of your grandfather by Kohlmeyer which you thought was good?

FKW I'd have to get the stuff out and look at it again. I haven't looked at it for ten years. Well, for instance, it built up the disagreement between members of the Laird Norton family and our family as to policy. At one time, Frank Thatcher, for instance, made a statement to Ed Davis at this hearing that the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company should be liquidated inside of ten years. This was a statement back around 1910, or perhaps earlier, and F. E. took great exception to that because you couldn't possibly liquidate that property without destroying its value. There was a question as to whether he did or didn't say it or what did he mean if he did.

ERM Well, what was the basis of their quoting Thatcher on this? Had they found some document?

FKW In F. E.'s memoirs, he said that Thatcher had said that. And Laird Bell, for instance, had no recollection of such a statement. I don't know if he said it; I wasn't there.

ERM Did the Columbia crew get any substantial memoir from Laird Bell, do you recall?

FKW Oh, yes, they did.

ERM Where are all these tape-recorded interviews that were made during the course of this company history?

- FKW They're either in Tacoma or else they're in the Columbia file. I don't know which.
- ERM Do you recall under what conditions these interviews were made by Columbia? Were publication rights reserved to the company exclusively for a period of time, or did Columbia have any rights at all to them? You have a contract that covers that, of course.
- FKW The contract covers it, but I'm hazy about the details. I haven't looked at it for so long. We worked it out with the help of our attorneys, and I'm just vague about the details of it now. I remember that we paid a given amount of money to have the history written, and that the authors of the history were to be the final judge of the facts. The differences of opinion were to be worked out if possible by conversation and discussion, but if it was impossible to arrive at an agreement, then the representatives of the company were permitted to put footnotes in the history. There were not footnotes that I recall.
- ERM You insisted on no insertion of any footnote of your own?
- FKW No, the authors were very fair about it.
- ERM They made accommodation of changes in the text of the manuscript, then, before publication, in consultation with you?
- FKW There was some changes made. For instance, the authors came out with a discussion of the terrible conditions in the logging camps. The food was terrible, the beds were dirty—full of bugs and everything. Well, none of us that had been in the business since the year '15 or '16 could recall anything like that. Maybe that was true in the 1880s in Wisconsin, but it certainly wasn't true in the lifetimes of any of us. I could remember the camps of the Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company. Why, they had electric lights, shower baths, clean blankets and sheets—and talk about the food! I've never seen food in a logging camp that wasn't great. You couldn't keep men in a logging camp if the food wasn't good, and that goes way back to when I was a boy.
- ERM I think the tradition of good grub went well back into the nineteenth century in the history of logging.
- FKW I think so, too.
- ERM I think the condition of the camps—the bunk house—was a somewhat different matter, and there wasn't any really great changeover to the modern camp that you knew in the middle teens until about 1906, '07, '08, '09—in that period.
- FKW Very likely.
- ERM This was not only a matter of the interest and concern of the owners for providing better living conditions to their help; it was indeed a part of the attitude of the men themselves. They rather scorned, you know, fancy gigs, as it were. They kind of prided themselves in that old romantic notion that Stewart Holbrook enunciated so well in *Holy Old Mackinaw*.

There were a rough breed of cat, and they didn't care for a lot of sheets and pillowcases and all those fancy do-dads.

FKW Well, those were things that we argued about, things like that. Another thing we argued about was there'd be some crack at somebody in the book that would be taken out and built into something big, which was really undeserved. I think it put a black mark on somebody that was unwarranted. There were a few changes like that, but they were minor things. None of them were important.

ERM Tell me a little something about how the, this history got started. Was this an idea that you had for some time and sold to other members of the family? How did it get going?

FKW Well, I don't—I'm not really sure. We talked about how important it was to have an accurate history written because of the fact that there's so much misrepresentation and misstatement. I remember when Rex Black was here, there was a lady who was taking a course at Columbia and submitted as her thesis an article on the Booth and Kelly Lumber Company in which she stated that Frederick Weyerhaeuser of the Weyerhaeuser Company was a party to Booth and Kelly and that there had been grave crimes committed where titles were stolen and land was stolen, with the knowledge of either my grandfather or the company or something like that. The Weyerhaeuser Company never had anything to do with it. And Rex Black protested very vigorously to this woman. He told her this was not true. She came back and said that the University of Columbia was insisting upon an accurate statement of the facts, that she couldn't take anything out of the book, out of her thesis. He wrote back and said, well, she could put it in if she wanted to, but that the company reserved the right to sue in case of libel. Which was alright, but it scared the hell out of her, and she didn't put it in. It was untrue, and things like that happened. Many of the things that were said about the forest industries and about our company's . . . we felt there was no point in getting nasty. You don't get anywhere when you keep telling the same lie over and over again. Like the old story about the man who was going to cut timber in Wisconsin, and he got a railroad right of way and made the right of way twenty mile wide. You know, that kind of yarn. That was told by various people.

ERM You had something to do with setting up what was originally known as *The Hell Book* in the industry.

FKW Well, the man who did that was C. L. Billings. Billings was the manager of the Potlatch Forests, Inc., in Lewiston. I'm going to say I think it was after my brother Philip left to go to the Coast in about 1934. The Forest Service and the industry were at sword points. The Forest Service criticized the industry for its wasteful methods and its destruction of the forests. It was just common practice for the Forest Service to put a good crack in the paper every Sunday. They would show pictures of what the forest industries had done. Well, Billings had been in the Forest Service, and he collected a bunch of this stuff. I remember

one of the pictures he got was put in the paper by the Forest Service, and it was a good example of the terrible wasteful practices of the industry. Well, Billings was able to pinpoint where it was. This is a very interesting thing. This had been a piece of land owned by the Forest Service which the Forest Service had burned. They had logged and burned it in order to plant, to turn out an experiment on the planting of certain kinds of trees. It was a perfectly proper experiment that the Forest Service made, but the title said it was an example of the terrible practices of the lumbering industry. When this was called to their attention, they admitted it, but said, heck, they could have shown other pictures that were just as bad. (*Laughter.*) It was a very good example, from Billings' point of view, to put this in, because it was absolutely malicious. What makes you ask about *The Hell Book*?

ERM I wonder to what extent it caused you and your brother Phil to think in terms of the need for writing an authentic history of the company that might deal with some of these problems of your public image.

FKW I think the story is correct in this book that Billings got out. He sent it to every member of Congress. But, on second thought, I don't think that was called *The Hell Book*. I think that was something that led up to the development of the American Forest Products Institute program.

ERM National Lumber Management Association had something to do with that.

FKW But I'll tell you that NLMA or the AFPI got out a book which was called *The Hell Book* which collected a great many articles and pictures which described the terrible public attitude toward the forest industry, and I think, on second thought, that was what we called *The Hell Book*. Now, no doubt the AFPI has had this reference, too.

ERM What I'm striving for here is to get at the point at which—if you can find it in your memory—to pinpoint where you became first of all seriously interested in having a scholarly history done on your company. Did it derive in any part from your association with scholars in the Forest History Society or the Minnesota History Society?

FKW Well, the Forest History Society was, I would say, an important influence, and had talked a lot about having the history written. I think we had been talking about it a lot before that, and I know we talked a lot about it after that. We discussed having a man on the Weyerhaeuser Board do it. And one of the people we considered was a man who wrote two or three stories. One of them had to do with crest fires in the West.

ERM Stewart was his name.

FKW Was that his name? I think he was a professor—or wasn't he a teacher someplace?

ERM I think he was at Cal.

FKW I think so. And somebody talked to him about it. He was very cagey about it; he didn't want to get sucked in on a whitewashing project and that sort of thing. And then we decided to go to Nevins.

ERM Who recommended Nevins to you? Do you recall?

FKW No, I think I went to talk to Nevins in 1952; that's in my diary somewhere. I think that I had lunch with a bunch of professors at Columbia when I came back from a hunting trip in Scotland in the fall of 1952.

ERM Had you read anything by Allen Nevins up to that time that caused you to think he would be a good man?

FKW He had written something on Rockefeller. I think I had read various things, but I can't recall at this point why I went there. John Musser . . .

ERM Was John an active participant in this whole thing at that time?

FKW Yes, I think he was. Let's see, Phil and I discussed it a great deal; we were both interested. I remember the time I first met Nevins. I met him over in the little place where they ate at Columbia. We sat down and talked about it for a while. I remember I asked him what he charged to do this kind of thing, and he said, "Well, all I get is my salary, that's \$10,000 a year. I don't accept anything other than my salary." He said, "If you want me to do this, you should make arrangements with Columbia, and I will do it as part of my work at Columbia." That sort of startled me. I didn't realize he worked that way. But, you know, all these people leaned over backwards to not be under any obligation, which I admired him for. And yet it was sort of, you know . . .

ERM But it was you and your brother Phil who took most of the initiative, I take it, in getting this thing organized and financed?

FKW Yeah, I think I was more interested than anybody else, but I know they all went along with us. Talk is one thing.

ERM How was the project actually financed? Was it done out of company funds or privately?

FKW Oh, the company paid Columbia \$150,000, and later some more.

ERM You had to put in a supplementary grant?

FKW Well, we'd have put in more, but we couldn't. They wouldn't take any more. The thing stalled.

ERM They ran out of money.

FKW They ran out of money, and the last part of the work was done absolutely without the authors being paid for it. That became a matter of pride with them. We could never . . .

- ERM It became stalled in the sense that it wasn't completed on schedule. And therefore they went on working until it was?
- FKW It took all of ten years. The book was published in 1963. I'd have to go into my files to find out about the origin of the first meeting I had with Nevins.
- ERM Did you seek guidance from anybody here at all locally in regard to these scholars that were being selected to do this work?
- FKW I think we talked to the people here. I think I talked to Ted Blezen. I'm not sure about that. But I know that Herbert Heaton was interested in it, but we didn't think he was the best one equipped to do it. As a matter of fact, I think we were rather interested in the fact that Nevins writes in an interesting manner. Heaton's works aren't written in as interesting a manner as Nevins'.
- ERM I remember having a conference with you. At the time I was working for the Forest History Society, which was then the Forest Products History Foundation. It was in the spring of 1952, in which you asked me who there was in the field who might be interested in doing something along this line. You had mentioned Nevins, and I mentioned a few people including Hidy and Heaton and a couple of other business historians who were at Northwestern University at that time.
- FKW Well, maybe you're the one I talked with. My memory is very vague now, but that's the time when we were trying to make up our minds where to go with it. Now I can't remember the reason that made me go to Columbia.
- ERM As you look back now over that period of time and the product that these men turned out, and if you could have the time and the opportunity to tackle the job again, what changes would you make in your approach to the whole thing?
- FKW Well, in the first place, I think I would ask that whoever undertook it would do it in a certain time limit and get it done within a certain period of time. Nevins was in great demand. During the ten years this thing was being researched and written, he undertook several other rather important jobs. Didn't he write another book about Rockefeller?
- ERM He wrote several other books.
- FKW I think he wrote one about Morgan. I think he was the kind of man who was impatient, and I think he'd get tired of one thing and jump to something else. I don't think it did his work any good. As I think of it today, parts of the book *Timber and Man: The Weyerhaeuser Story* are pretty good, and parts of it are not good at all. Have you read it recently?
- ERM The last time I read it was about three years ago. Would you be inclined, if you did this again, to choose one author instead of two or three?

FKW I'm not sure of that. I'm not sure I would do that. I think if you get a man that's well known like Nevins, it may be best to permit him to get some help. He actually had two people helping him, Hidy and Hill. I knew at one time which parts were done by which writers. I think the early part of the story is more readable than the latter part.

ERM When it gets into the more complex economic and financial aspects of the story, this is the area which was taken over by Hidy, right?

FKW Yes, I guess.

ERM And of course it was in that area that the documentation was, of course, far less complete than in the areas which Hidy took over and took responsibility for researching and writing. The growth of the company, the Potlatch merger, the whole detail of that development, the sales company, all of that would be areas which would be more grit for the kind of thing that Hidy does.

Well, this is just background that I thought would be useful for me to have in regard to my whole approach to this thing. But it doesn't begin to get at the personal history that I hope we'll tie into here today a little bit. The emphasis I'd like to put on our interview would be on your personal history, and, in particular, start out with your recollection of your boyhood years. Start out with where you were born and so on. Give us some of the basic data.

FKW I was born in Rock Island, Illinois, on January 16, 1895. My father was John Philip Weyerhaeuser. My mother was born Nellie Anderson. I have an older sister, Elizabeth, who is now Mrs. F. R. Titcomb in Tacoma, and I had a younger brother named John Philip Weyerhaeuser, Jr., named after my father. I went to the Hill School. I went to public schools in St. Paul, Minnesota, where we moved to. I should say that we first moved from Rock Island in 1900 to Lake Nebagamon, Wisconsin.

ERM How old were you then?

FKW I was about four years old.

ERM Four years old. Do you have any memories at all of your early childhood in Rock Island?

FKW Yes. I remember living in Rock Island. I remember little details of the house and my mother. I remember the horses. It's all pretty vague. We lived in the house where I was born, which is the house that my grandfather acquired, and added to, when he was a young man. There was a barn, we had horses, and it was a regular farm. There were chickens and cows, and there was a wonderful vineyard of Concord grapes out behind which I remember I never could pick particularly because my father and his brothers all loved those Concord grapes. They were awfully good.

We moved from there to Lake Nebagamon in 1900 because my father had a chance to build and run a sawmill up there, having an interest in the business with his father and

with Mr. Edward Rutledge. Mr. Rutledge was an old timber cruiser and a great, great friend of my grandfather's. The three of them had equal interests in this company. My father had to borrow the money to buy his interest. That company was the Lake Nebagamon Lumber Company, which was the result of their acquiring pine lands from the Omaha Railroad in the area there. The timber was small and tight-knotted and happened to be the kind of timber that was in great demand in the early 1900s. My grandfather and Mr. Rutledge used to come up there and visit us. Father, being a healthy young man, was being checked up on by two seniors, and if a board was out of place or anything was a little bit wrong, they'd speak about it. Father was a very sensitive person, you know, and I know it was very hard for him. He was very much worried at times because of the little things they would pick up.

ERM Was this his first major assignment in the business?

FKW No, before that he'd been manager of the Rock Island Manufacturing Company in Rock Island, which manufactured lumber. It's on the site of the sash and door plant, and the sash and door plant was an outgrowth of the lumber company. It was a considerable part of their production, manufacturing sash and doors.

ERM What preparation had your father had for this career in the lumber industry? Where had he gone to school?

FKW He went to some school up near Chicago which was sort of a high school, I think. But I think he was very lonesome and was up there only a short time. He never did go to college. I think he was always sensitive about that. He felt that he didn't really have as good an education as other people.

ERM What about his brothers? What was their education?

FKW Well, my aunt, Mrs. Hill, who is his oldest sister, was the second child. I don't know how it came about, but she became interested in college and went to Wellesley. Her two sisters also went to Wellesley. The next one was Charles who went to Andover, Philips. There were two prep schools that sound alike: Philips Exeter and Philips Andover. Anyway, he became the pitcher on the baseball team and his hand was always where you could see it. In those days, they didn't wear very much of a glove, and his hand was always kind of hollowed out like that. He was the only pitcher they had on the Andover baseball team. They did awfully well until they got to the last game or two with Exeter, and they lost that. He lost his pitching arm at the wrong moment, after pitching all year, right away. He never did go to college. I don't know whether he graduated; I doubt if he graduated from Andover. Anyway, the next one was Rudolph. He went to Yale, and the youngest one, F. E. Weyerhaeuser, graduated from Yale in 1896. The three sisters and two youngest brothers went to college, but the two oldest brothers, John and Charles, did not go to college.

- ERM You mentioned that your father was a little sensitive about this. How did this sensitivity manifest itself to you?
- FKW He was a very shy person in lots of ways. He'd avoid people rather than seek out a group to be with. He was a very wise man, but he was a very quiet, retiring person.
- ERM Rather introspective rather than extroverted?
- FKW Yes. He was not an extrovert. He was an excellent lumberman. He knew the business; he was a good businessman. He was an excellent lumberman—I think the best I ever knew. He knew the details of manufacturing and the factors that entered into making good lumber, getting the most out of a log, which is an art.
- ERM Was he a good judge of men in selecting the people who worked for him?
- FKW I think he was, with the exception of this, that he was very, very inclined to listen to and to be influenced by anybody who came around to him who'd worked for him. I think, in a general way, he was a good judge of people. He loved to go into the plant and talk to everybody he found that he'd known before. He couldn't help but go out and walk around the sawmill.
- ERM Within his own milieu, then, he was at home, and he would express himself and converse very well within that atmosphere?
- FKW Oh, yes. Very much.
- ERM But in larger groups—for example, in industry associations—did he shy away from involvement in this sort of thing?
- FKW I don't think he had very much faith in industry associations. He told me that at one time he was at a meeting of the sash and door industry in Chicago. I don't know whether it was in the 1880s or the 1890s. At that time the prices were awfully low, and everybody decided that they would jerk their prices up for the following period. This was before the days of anti-trust laws or anything like that. This was just for self-preservation and perfectly legal. They all agreed to raise their prices, and he went home and he moved his prices up. But it didn't work; his business fell off. It got worse and worse. Finally he went back to the next meeting, and the chairman got up and said, "Now who here did what we agreed to do and raised his prices?" Father stood up, and everybody turned around and laughed. That was told as an example of his being naïve. I don't think he had much faith in associations. Of course, associations became an illegal thing with the Sherman Anti-Trust law.
- ERM Did he take that same attitude all the way through his life, then, as he grew older? Did he have, for example, that same general doubt about trade associations with the development of the NLMA and other groups that began to come along in the early part of the century?

- FKW Well, I think he looked at them as necessary activities, but I don't think he regarded them as important beyond that. He felt they had to have associations to maintain ground rules and standards of practice. After all, it was more important to run your own business well than it was to depend upon associations.
- ERM In other words, he depended pretty largely on his own counsel and that of perhaps an inner circle of friends and relatives.
- FKW That's right.
- ERM To what extent did he rely on the close contact with his father and his brothers?
- FKW Well, they were very close. You see, he was born in 1858, Charles was born in 1866, Rudolph in 1868, and F. E. in 1872, so they were a lot younger than he was. And as they came along, they went different places. Rudolph and Charles went up to Little Falls and built and ran with Mr. Drew Musser the Pine Tree Manufacturing Company. I think he went up there about 1892 or 1893. Rudolph M. Weyerhaeuser went to Cloquet about 1985 to run the Northern Lumber Company, while father was running the Rock Island Lumber Manufacturing Company, which was a sawmill. In fact, I think it was two sawmills up on the Chippewa River.
- ERM One thing that impresses me as I look through your family papers is the tremendous number of letters exchanged by the brothers.
- FKW That's right.
- ERM There seems to have been a great reliance upon counsel and exchange of thoughts within the family.
- FKW That's right.
- ERM Did this go back to roots that sprang from their association with their own father? The correspondence of Frederick Weyerhaeuser is very thin in the papers, and I wonder to what extent this was a practice of his that set them off in this direction?
- FKW He wrote a great many letters by hand. Well, I don't know quite how to answer you. I think the family was very close, and they were separated geographically in their early life. In those days, you didn't telephone, you wrote. Or, I imagine, the long distance telephone call was pretty difficult to make in those days. You see, they were all financially interested to some degree in the other fellow's activity, and, of course, what each one of them did had some bearing upon the other's activity. F. E. went down to Warren, Arkansas—I think it was in 1900—with a man named Harvey Clatt. He built the Southern Lumber Company down there. That was F. E.'s own experience in directly running something.

ERM That was your only family incursion into the South, wasn't it, at a time when the Southern industry was just beginning to build up into something big? Most of your thoughts and enterprise was going to the West, isn't that right?

FKW That was true from 1900 on. I think grandfather would have gone south. He didn't have anybody else that wanted to go with him. He usually wanted partners at the various times when opportunities came. He did make two investments in the South in addition to that. One of them was the Calcasieu Timber Company; the other one was the Southland Lumber Company. I think that was the name. These were in Louisiana, but they never were operated there. The timber was held for a few years and then sold, and they were very profitable investments. I don't have the years in my mind, but they are covered in the Nevins book. As you say, they were peripheral activities that were not particularly important.

ERM Was there any feeling about the different way of life that would be led in the South as compared with that in the North or the West? Did this enter into the picture in any way?

FKW Well, it is according to the book, because, I think, Grandfather felt that it wasn't healthy to live in the South. Malaria and bugs, and then there was the whole business of—well, I don't know that the Negroes entered into it, but I think he felt it wasn't healthy compared to the West.

ERM Tell me a little about your earliest recollections of your grandfather. What do you recall as being your first recollections?

FKW Well, my mother died shortly after we went up to Lake Negagamon. I would guess it was in the year 1900, and there weren't any good doctors when she died. She became very sick. Father just couldn't get anybody that was a first-class doctor, and I think that's why she died. The snow was deep and you couldn't get out. I remember Father got a Mrs. Williams to come and take care of us. She had a daughter, a little girl, and Mrs. Williams looked after us for a period of time, and I think that Philip was just a baby. Father took him down to St. Paul, and Mrs. Jewett looked after him, so he and Fritz Jewett were just little tots together. Fritz is a little bit older than Phil.

I remember one incident, in particular, in the summer. There was a minister there who took me out on Father's sailboat. I must have been about five or six years old. I can't remember now. I enjoyed it; it was swell. I could walk up on the front and pull on the ropes and as the minister came back to moor the boat, I could see Grandfather standing on the dock watching this and when we landed and got on the dock, I never saw anybody madder than that. Boy, was he mad! He thought that I was in danger, you see. I was a little kid; I couldn't swim. He took me down to the railroad, and we rode over to Hawthorne on a locomotive. Gee, we sat on the back of the tender, on this little box there—I think it was a toolbox on the back of the tender—and rode to Hawthorne where

the Omaha Railroad station was. He took me back to St. Paul and turned me over to my grandmother, I suppose. But I'll never forget how mad he was!

ERM Was he a stern man?

FKW No, not really. He tended to be jovial. As he became older, I suppose he became more serious. He never was a joking kind of person. He used to love to tell riddles and teach us poems and things. At Christmastime we all had to get up and recite. Do you remember the old poem about "listen to the watermill"? He made us all learn that. It's about the value of time. I tried to get my grandchildren to learn it, but my children and grandchildren weren't interested.

ERM They never took to it?

FKW They didn't tend to take to it too well. Grandfather was full of little—he loved to ask riddles. We were supposed to find out the answer and he would be teaching a moral of some kind. He had sort of an indirect approach. For instance, I remember one story that they told about him. Once he was out in the woods to look at a logging operation, and he said to the logging foreman, "If you cut the stumps a little lower, I can sit on them." Well, that was an indirect hint that he was cutting the stumps too high, you see, which is a wasteful practice. Another one they used to tell about was when he used to make them take a log and tie a string around it, and he asked the foreman in charge whether they got any more for the log if the string was longer. In other words, if you tied it with a short string, you got less for the log than if you tied it with a longer string with the ends hanging down. Little things like that. He used to say you've got to buy timber when it was raining and sell when the sun was shining.

ERM Did you spend much time with your grandfather, or were his visits rather short-lived?

FKW Well, of course we spent a lot of time with him. I think we spent a month or two one winter with him next door, at his house there.

ERM This is when he brought you back from Nebagamon?

FKW Oh, no. This was later. I don't remember what happened after that experience on the boat, but I must have been taken back to Nebagamon. I can't remember. There must have been some hot words said, but I don't know what they were.

ERM Then you eventually moved down here and went to school in St. Paul, is that right?

FKW We moved here in 1907, when I was twelve years old. Then Father bought a house on Goodrich Avenue out here, and we lived there from 1912 to 1915.

ERM But you had started school, then, in Nebagamon, right?

FKW Well, I started school—I was a little bit of a guy—I was about five or six years old. There was a kindergarten in the public school. It seems to me that we had a governess who was a friend of my stepmother's. Father married again about--well, my mother died in 1900; he married the second time to my own mother's best friend and who taught school in Moline, Illinois. She was a New Englander with very strong ideas about discipline and raising children. She was a wonderful mother to us. Anyway, she thought the schools were not very good, so she had this governess who was with us from about 1902 or 1903 until 1910.

ERM So you got most of your elementary education from her?

FKW Yes.

ERM Did this include the education of your sister and brother, too?

FKW Oh yes. I can't remember the exact time. Well, we moved here to St. Paul in 1907, and I went over to the Earling School, which was a new place. It's torn down now. It was on Grand Avenue. Well, it was an old yellow building that, I think, has been torn down. The building was only about a block toward the river from the Christian Science Church over there. I think now it's just an empty lot. I went there for a month or two; then Mother decided that I wasn't learning anything. I don't know why. She took me out and sent me to the Mechanics Arts High School. I finally landed in the St. Paul Academy, and from there I went to the Hill School in 1910. That was in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. I went to Hill for two years, and I finally went to Yale.

ERM As a boy growing up in, first of all, up in Nebagamon, and then later here in St. Paul, what do you recall—vividly—about your early childhood? What would you spend your time doing? What were your interests?

FKW Well, when we lived in Lake Nebagamon, we usually had cousins visiting us, like Ed Davis or Fritz Jewett in the summer. We usually spent the winters in the South and West. One winter we spent in Florida, another winter we went to—I think we spent three winters near Santa Barbara, California. I remember we spent the winters of 1903 and 1904 near Santa Barbara. We had an old Packard automobile—that was one of the early Packards—and I remember we toured up the coast of California. We called it "touring." Touring meant that you traveled from city to city. It was quite unique in those days. You'd get a shovel and an extra tire, an extra frame and tie it on the back and lower the top. And Mother used to wear a veil around her head. We traveled at a high rate of speed, like maybe twenty miles an hour, and the only question was: could you get over the mountains? The roads were rough and you had to ford streams, which was even rougher. I'll never forget, we had to ford the Ventura River and got stuck in it. And the story was that the farmer used to dig it out at night and charge you ten dollars to pull you out. But whether that was true, I don't know. We got out, but the motor was wet. When we got out, the chauffeur just stopped the car and ran the engine to dry the motor out, and pretty

soon a picnic wagon, a big wagon drawn by one horse, came along with some nuns and a lot of children in it. A boy was driving and this one old horse was pulling the whole works. The horse wouldn't go by the car because the engine was popping and backfiring, so they stopped and got out. We picked up a handful of gravel and threw it in the horse's mouth. They piled back on the seat and drove right by. I guess that was one of the most amusing times and it's absolutely true. It shows the importance of diverting your mind from your trouble.

ERM With a mouthful of gravel?

EKW He didn't care what happened! I've often wondered about that kid and how he ever reined that horse, but he did.

ERM Apparently you did quite a bit of traveling around as a youngster, then. You were not very long rooted in one place.

EKW Well, that was the first time we went. I think that was the first long trip I remember—going to California in 1906. At that time, I was eleven years old.

ERM Now, was this traveling, in the winter time, in any way associated with your father's feelings over the death of his first wife? To get you out of that isolated situation up there?

EKW I don't think so. He had a physical breakdown in 1904, and I think that was the result of fighting the camps. I think he was just exhausted. He used to worry about himself. What do you call—what's the word for it?

ERM Hypochondriac?

EKW Hypochondriac. Anyway, he was in the hospital for over three months, and it took him a long time to get over that.

ERM Well, was he traveling then with you on these western trips?

EKW He'd go out with us on those trips. You see, by that time, the Nebagamon Lumber Company had been liquidated because Father was sick. Grandfather had a chance to sell the whole works to Hines, so he sold the mill and the stock of lumber to Edward Hines and Father had no specific responsibility at that time.

ERM Who were your boyhood friends? Were you pretty much related to your own family, your cousins and your own brother?

EKW During the years up to the time we moved to St. Paul, up to 1907, most of the friends I had were my brother and my cousins. I don't recall many other people in Nebagamon. Well, there were members of the O'Neil family. Mr. William O'Neil was in charge of logging and railroading for the Nebagamon Lumber Company, and he had a large family

--several sons, one of whom was afterward manager of the Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company. We used to see them a great deal, and we had other visitors than them, but that was generally it. It seems to me in the summers we were on the water a great deal—boating, swimming. Father had an old launch called the Oneida, which was very difficult to start, and many of my early recollections center around that. Then there was the Brule River, only a little way off.

ERM How was that spelled?

FKW B-R-U-L-E. It means “burned” in French, as I understand.

ERM Leading into Lake Superior?

FKW It goes into Lake Superior, but it has its origin near Lake Nebagamon. It was possible to go down what we called the Nebagamon Creek, out of Lake Nebagamon into the Brule. But what we generally did was take canoes with a team of horses and haul them over to what we called Stone’s Landing. We’d ride over in carriages and put into the Brule at that point, and we’d take guides either on the Brule or we’d take one or two men from Nebagamon. They’d guide the boats down to a place called Winnebijou. I don’t remember how you spell Winnebijou, but anyway. Then we’d pull them out. It was a station on the Duluth Railroad, and the train came through from Duluth about six in the evening. We’d put the canoes in the baggage car, climb aboard, and ride back to Nebagamon. It only took about fifteen minutes to get back. But those were great experiences. As years went by, we became sufficiently expert with canoes to run the rapids ourselves.

ERM And who were “you”? Was that your brother Phil and your cousin Fritz? Who were involved in these experiences?

FKW Ed Davis, Fritz Jewett, Philip, and myself. I guess that was it. They were the usual foursome we had.

ERM During this period, did you develop any interests that stayed with you through your life?

FKW I think fishing was one thing we learned to do and enjoy. We built things. We built a building that is still up there. We called it a workshop. I’ve forgotten, but we must have gotten the lumber from the sawmill.

ERM You boys actually put it together?

FKW Oh, yes, sure. We put the whole thing together until we got to the framing around the eaves. At that point, I think Father got a carpenter to do the finish work for us. We did all the rest.

ERM But you were just little sprouts at that time. You couldn’t have been very old.

FKW Well, at that point, I think that I was around fifteen or sixteen. That was in the summer. But earlier than that, Philip and I built what we called a Daniel Boone cabin, the idea for which we got out of a book. It had four big posts and on top of that you'd put a platform. Then you'd put lumber up and make a box out of it, and then you had a kind of mishugalated top. Is that the right word? (*Laughter.*) One boy would go higher, the next boy would go lower, so I remember when we were nailing those boards on the side wall, Philip leaned over a little too far, and he went head first down about thirteen feet and landed in a bucket of nails. It didn't hurt him a bit, but we had many experiences with things like that. Father finally decided it was dangerous, and one summer when we got back there it was all gone. We were horribly disappointed about that. Then we slept out in a tent in the summer and had many experiences out there. In the pump house behind the outhouse there was an old locomotive bell. In the morning when breakfast was ready, the cook would go out and ring the bell. One night when nobody was looking, we climbed up on the top and nailed the rope to the roof, so when she went out to jerk the rope, nothing happened to the bell. We heard a big fuss about that.

ERM You played your share of pranks, then.

FKW Oh, we had a lot of fun doing different things in those days.

ERM Was this the time in which your lifelong interest in hunting began to develop?

FKW No. I never shot a thing up there. I couldn't: I didn't have a gun. That came along much later.

ERM To what extent did you have experiences that you could share with your father in those years?

FKW Well, he loved to take us fishing, and he's take us on canoe trips. Father felt a great responsibility to be with his children. We were very, very close.

ERM You apparently had a very happy boyhood in this locale in northern Wisconsin.

FKW We certainly did, yes.

ERM And you must have been very close, then, to your brother Phil.

FKW That's right.

ERM How far apart are you in age?

FKW He was just exactly four years younger and two days. He was born on January 18, 1899, and I was born on January 16, 1895. We were very close, and we were all our lives. We would discuss things together and would know pretty well what the other one was thinking about. We did many things together.

- ERM Well, your early training was greatly influenced, also, by your grandfather's notions about basic principles that should be developed in your character. This, too, I presume, was picked up and accentuated by your father. I would gather from what you said that your stepmother, too, was probably a rather large influence on you in your early years.
- FKW Yes, that's true. I don't know that it was any different than many other people. Grandfather was a great believer in work, in thrift, in finishing up what you had to do, doing it right, paying your debts, and honoring your obligations.
- ERM How did he convey his ideas of these things to you?
- FKW Well, just by example. I think he just talked that way. I think his sons all had it, and my father certainly had those values to a very high degree.
- ERM He also influenced you to some extent in what he gave you to read. I saw a book in your office today that indicated how his influences were brought to bear on you. Would you like to comment on that book?
- FKW Well, he gave each one of us a copy of *Poor Richard's Almanac*, which, you know, emphasizes all these virtues. He asked us to learn this poem by Sarah Dowdney about "listen to the watermill," which emphasized the importance of time and using your opportunities to the best advantage.
- ERM He certainly was dramatic evidence of the philosophy itself, wasn't he, in his busy life? Did you observe your grandfather making his regular trips around the camps?
- FKW Well, you see, when I knew him, I don't think I was particularly conscious of his business life. Not until I was twelve or fourteen years old, and I don't think I was even then so much. See, when I was two years old, it was 1905, and I think by that time he had been sick and he wasn't anywhere near as active as he had been. He took us all out to Yellowstone Park. What year was that? I have pictures of it.
- ERM Was that a railroad trip?
- FKW Yes, he took us out in his private car on the Northern Pacific. He took those grandchildren who could dress themselves and brush their teeth and do the essential things for themselves.
- ERM In other words, he limited the participants in those trips to those children who had reached a certain degree of self-sufficiency?
- FKW Well, just for this one trip.
- ERM Was this a trip that he made after he had more or less started to retire from active participation?

- FKW No. I should remember the year, but I don't. Somewhere I have a whole bunch of photographs of him. Those are different.
- ERM Was this the only trip that you ever made with your grandfather?
- FKW Well, let me see. There probably were other things we did together, but I just don't remember them at the moment. Somewhere here we have a bunch of these photographs. I've got wonderful pictures of many of these things.
- ERM Well, this photograph looks like a gay lark, here, of a bunch of people. It looks to me as if they're on a steamboat on the Mississippi with log rafts and a lot of hijinks aboard a vessel known as the *E. Rutledge*.
- FKW That's right, *Edward Rutledge*. They had three steamboats, as I remember, that pushed. They were the *F. C. A. Denkman* and the *Edward Rutledge* and the *F. Weyerhaeuser*.
- ERM Who were all these children on the bow of the *Edward Rutledge*? Are you one of those?
- FKW I might have been, but I'm not sure. The man at the right was William McIntyre. These are very poor pictures. That one might be better. There's my father there.
- ERM Standing on the right side of the group?
- FKW Oh, I can see my mother. She is right back there, the top at the left, and this is Mrs. S. S. Davis, who is the mother of Ed Davis.
- ERM This is the larger group sitting on the box of the *Rutledge*. There's another lady holding a child in the center.
- FKW I have no idea who that is.
- ERM And this is your father.
- FKW I'm guessing I'm there. My sister is right there, but it's hard for me to tell who everyone is.
- ERM Possibly you are the little fellow in the middle with a cap on.
- FKW That's probably right. There's nothing about me there that would really give you much of an impression.
- ERM Well now, over here there seems to be a lot of hijinks going on. Was there some kind of play acting or anything? Do you remember any of the details?
- FKW I can't remember.
- ERM Do you remember any of those dressed-up characters?

- FKW Oh, sure. I know who they are. This is William McIntyre, my father over here, S. S. Davis, and I don't remember this man. He was a friend. It was a regular house party. Oh, they're having fun.
- ERM Here's a line-up of the kids. They're dressed up in costume, too.
- FKW I can't tell who they are. That's my father doing a kick.
- ERM Do you recognize this little girl? Is that your sister?
- FKW No. I'll bet that's Ed Davis! His mother used to dress him up in dresses! It looks like E. W. Davis. This looks like my sister. I didn't think she'd be that old-looking. Those are very poor pictures.
- ERM Do you recognize yourself there?
- FKW No, I don't. I think that's Eddie McIntyre. This is Miss Amy, Miss Lyford, who was our governess. This is S. S. Davis, my father, and Edwin Davis. And this lady here is Mrs. S. S. Davis. This picture was taken at Lake Nebagamon, I would guess about 1903 or 1904.
- ERM And here you had a pony, evidently.
- FKW Yes. Here's the sawmill — you can't see much of it. There's Elizabeth and my father. That shows looking from our house down to the lumberyard.
- ERM So you weren't very far from the lumberyard.
- FKW Not far from the lumberyard. We used to have old wooden sidewalks just like that. Well, this is sort of interesting. This is a bridge over the Brule, right down at the old Pierce place, which is now Jack Orderly's place on the Brule. That's some of the rapids, which look pretty little when you go back. That's part of the Pierce place.
- ERM Looks like a family meeting.
- FKW Well, that's a cousin of my father's, and that's my stepmother and Miss Amy—Miss Lyford.
- ERM Ed Davis with a baseball uniform.
- FKW With his baseball suit on. Here's Fritz Jewett and Elizabeth and myself. I don't know what we were doing with baseballs. Well, those aren't particularly good photographs. This wagon was given us by Mr. Ed Denkmann, a cousin of my father. We were down fishing at White Bear Lake. We spent a summer there.
- ERM White Bear Lake was another familiar scene to you as a child, I take it.
- FKW Yes, we spent a summer there. I don't remember the year. It might have been 1904 or 1905.

- ERM Some of these pictures probably were taken in that summer, then.
- FKW Here's a picture that was taken of Grandfather when he was up in the woods and traveled with this kind of sleigh, with his big fur coat on, to the logging camps. There he is up at Everett looking at the logs. Those are a fine bunch of logs.
- ERM He was a pretty big, solid man, wasn't he?
- FKW He wasn't tall, but he was heavy. There's a picture of the old mill. Now there's a picture showing the logging camp. Those logs are sort of hollowed out and split and you alternate them. You put one up this way and the next you go that way, you see, so you get a good runoff of the rain and snow. I don't know who that is. I think that's Mrs. F. E. Weyerhaeuser. She's a very handsome person.
- ERM Beautiful woman. Is there a key identifying these pictures?
- FKW I had written in on some of them. I should go through them and do it. Oh, that's my two uncles, R. M. and F. E. That was my fiftieth birthday, so they gave me a big party. Here's George, Ed Titcomb, Jack Titcomb, Fred Davis, and Phil Weyerhaeuser, George's brother. These were taken at my sister's wedding. I think the year was 1917. Here's one with the Denkmans. That was the fiftieth wedding anniversary of the S. S. Davises, I think. It shows that generation together, more or less.
- ERM There appears to be a key to these because they have numbers written on the backside of the photo.
- FKW They knew them so well it wasn't necessary to key any more of them. But I agree that I should go through and make a record to these big groups of people. The Denkmann family gave the public library—wait a minute, was that the library? Yeah.
- ERM Where's that, in Rock Island?
- FKW In Rock—I think that's at Augustana College. These pictures are pretty. You see, they're interesting to the people concerned because they were, well, these names are all here. This is Warren, who was the manager of Snoqualmie in those days. He died. And these other people are Richard Jewett, the father of Fritz. That, I think, is C. A. Weyerhaeuser, my uncle. F. E. Weyerhaeuser. William Bancroft Hill, who married my oldest aunt. This is R. M. Weyerhaeuser, and my father is sticking in behind. There's Grandfather and Mr. Musser.
- ERM That's old Peter Musser.
- FKW I think. That's John's grandfather.
- ERM Yes, that's right.

FKW And this is Allison Laird, who ran the mill up at Potlatch. Now, he didn't know any more about running a sawmill than I do about speaking Arabic. He was a very nice, kindly man, but he was utterly unfitted to run that plant. It cost us, God knows, millions of dollars. Now here's a photo of a log jam at the Chippewa Falls boom in 1869. Here is my grandfather's original office, at the lumber yard at Coal Valley, Illinois.

ERM Is that still standing today?

FKW It was standing when this was taken, but I think it is now.

ERM When was the last time you went back to those old haunts?

FKW Oh, I've been back to Rock Island, the first Coal Valley office, many times.

ERM You have?

FKW Well, to Rock Island. I never went to Coal Valley after I went there once. It's just a little town outside of Rock Island. That picture is of F. E.'s sons, I think. This is Mrs. R. M. Weyerhaeuser. Here's a picture of R. M. There's a picture of us. I'm sitting in the middle here. That's Fred, my cousin, who is twelve years younger than I, and that's David, my cousin, who is about fourteen years younger. Phil, Ed Davis, Carl Weyerhaeuser, and Jewett.

ERM Carl's still living down in Massachusetts, isn't he?

FKW Massachusetts, yes. Oh, this is a picture taken at Rock Island when we were back there on some occasion. I don't know what it was.

ERM Family get-togethers have always been a great tradition in this family, haven't they?

FKW Oh, sure.

ERM And still are.

FKW Yeah, that's true.

ERM You have a family meeting—when, tomorrow morning? When is the traditional family meeting held?

FKW We usually have it in May. Here's a picture taken on a raft boat. That's the kind of a dinner table they used to have.

ERM It was a long one, wasn't it?

FKW Yeah. Well, you had a big party, you had to get them in there somewhere. I don't know who the people were there, but that was a characteristic thing.

ERM All that on a raft boat!

- FKW Oh, sure. Here's a photo of the kind of boat it would be. See the old stern wheel pushing this raft? This is quite a trick, see? They've got to divide the raft into two parts, one down one side and one down the other. Down here you can just see the bow boat crossways. When you get it out there, the bow boat had to pull them to tie them together again. That's a great piece of navigation.
- ERM Did you make many such trips like that on the Mississippi?
- FKW Well, raft boat days were over about 1905 or 1906, so obviously I didn't make . . . But I did see them do this as a child and thought nothing of it. I really didn't understand it very well.
- ERM Did you know George W. Delaney?
- FKW Sure. I knew him very well.
- ERM He told me in great detail his memories of going down the river on a raft. Now there's your grandfather with one of the grandchildren in Virginia.
- FKW In Virginia, yes. There's my grandmother and grandfather.
- ERM What do you recall about your grandmother as a personality?
- FKW Oh, she was a wonderful person. I suppose she contributed more to the family than my grandfather did. She raised them—and, you know. When the family was young, raising seven children wasn't an easy job.
- ERM And your grandfather must have been obliged to be away rather a large part of the time, wasn't he?
- FKW Sure he was. He was away a great deal. I think he was away half of the time. There's the bow of the steamboat, you see? That's the kind of a crew they had on the boat. Good looking bunch of thugs, aren't they?
- ERM Well, I imagine that they needed to be a pretty hard bunch of guys to live that life.
- FKW I think they were a pretty tough bunch, but I don't—I think, in a way, they were more amenable to leadership than the modern workers. You see, here's the bow boat plying across the current, and here's the steamboat pushing the raft.
- ERM Was the bow boat always pushed broadside to the current that way?
- FKW Sure. Otherwise, you see, it couldn't hold the two rafts together. Here's a picture showing the raft and the boat. You see? There's the bow boat going through, down at MacGregor, I think that was. You see the size of those things? They just squeaked through. Here's a picture with my sister Elizabeth.

- ERM Your grandfather was evidently rather partial to his grandchildren. I gather he was a very loving grandfather.
- FKW Oh, he was. He took a tremendous interest in his grandchildren. There's my grandmother going down the Brule. She looks kind of worried. Dr. Jewett caught that muskie, which was a forty-two pound muskellunge.
- ERM Say, that's a big fellow.
- FKW Brought it back to Rock Island. Weighed forty-two pounds.
- ERM Looks almost as big as you.
- FKW It was one of the biggest muskies I ever saw. Of course, bigger ones have been caught, but that was pretty big.
- ERM Is that still a good muskie river?
- FKW This was up in Flambeau, or the Chippewa. I don't know which.
- ERM That's still great muskie country, isn't it?
- FKW Yes. I think one of the aspects of our youth that I haven't touched on was the requirement that we do some work.
- ERM All right. Let's talk about that.
- FKW We used to have to pile wood in the woodshed. We didn't cut it. I guess Mother was afraid that we'd get cut with the axe or something. Maybe we wouldn't have been any good at it, anyway.
- ERM But you had regular chores to do?
- FKW We had regular chores, and, when we were very young, each of us had a square yard of garden that we had to develop. We'd plant lettuce and radishes and a couple stalks of corn and maybe some carrots. I know the stuff that I planted was what I liked to eat. We were supposed to go over that and weed it and keep it going.
- ERM Did you have any other duties around the house?
- FKW We had to carry wood into the wood box.
- ERM Were you ever responsible for cutting the grass or shoveling snow on the walk?
- FKW Well, we didn't have a real lawn in the sense that we have today. I think the caretaker used to go around with a scythe and cut the grass down, so it wasn't too high. But we never got involved in that, that I can remember.
- ERM Were you kids put on what we now call an allowance?

- FKW Oh, sure. We all had allowances. I remember when we had visitors to the house, like Jewett, he didn't think it was right that we should have to work, so we had a strike. (*Laughter.*) He was a radical, and he thought we shouldn't have to work, so we struck. And my mother said, "All right. No work, no food!"
- ERM Did she make it stick?
- FKW Oh, yeah. The strike was over right there!
- ERM What was your father's attitude on the work bit?
- FKW He was all for work. He thought you ought to work.
- ERM To what extent did he introduce you to the lumber industry by taking you around the mill, out into the woods, and things like that when you were a kid?
- FKW Well, as the years went on, he took us around a great deal. He'd talk about lumbering, about manufacturing, and about planning machinery and doing a good job, and about many of the aspects of manufacturing, drying, and seasoning lumber. He knew a lot about it. I think he knew more than anybody I ever knew.
- ERM Do you feel that, from a very early age, you were seriously interested in going on in the business?
- FKW Yes. I think we all were. Both my brother and I were, yes.
- ERM Your family is remarkable evidence that this persists generation after generation. Was there a conscious effort to keep the family going in the field?
- FKW I think that my grandfather and my father had the idea that the young men should go into the business—we should be productive people. Not only be productive, but be productive, hopefully, in the business that they were in. Nowadays, this is called nepotism, but in those days it was talked about as a good example to set your children, to make them work. I think, in my generation, Philip, Fritz Jewett, Ed Davis, and I all became interested in some phase of the business and spent our lives at it, really. I think it's a little less true of the next generation, but it's still true of a few. I suppose, as their children grow up, they'll be something else. I don't know. It's hard to predict.
- ERM It's interesting to see that such a good number of the family have taken a strong interest in going on with the business.
- FKW That's true.
- ERM This isn't always true in many families in American business history. There's a departure from the scene--the kids just turn right away from what their fathers have done--but this seems not to be the case in your family's story. There must be a formula here. There must be some successful way of keeping the interest alive.

- FKW I think the basic thing is that you have somebody who wants to do it and that maybe has a little talent in that direction. I think you'll find some people that just don't ever fit in, and, when you get that sort of situation, its better not to try to. It's better to do something you want to do. In any case, that's always true.
- ERM In the second generation of your family, all four of the brothers went into the business, didn't they?
- FKW That's right.
- ERM And got into it with both feet.
- FKW Yes.
- ERM But in your generation, a somewhat smaller number.
- FKW There were seven grandsons of whom my brother and I and my two cousins—that's four. Dave and Fred went in different directions, into different parts of the industry. They all took some part of the business. Carl's the only one that never did, and it really was more because Carl never found a niche to fit into. He wanted to, but if you know Carl, you can understand a little bit. He is just more of a literary sort of person. His interests run in other ways. And, well, that's one of those things you just can't tell about.
- ERM Sometimes the older generation shows by example a strong interest in the business which is catching to the younger generation. Without having it pushed on them too hard, they're allowed to cultivate this interest. I wonder to what extent that might be in your family's history.
- FKW Well, it's hard for me to put my finger on it, but I know of cases when a father who almost forces his children to do something, they just never like it as a result. I know Rod Titcomb loves to fish, and he used to make his sons go fishing with him, but they never liked it. They really just never liked to go fishing with him. My father used to take us fishing, but we just loved it. He never had to force us to go. We used to have wonderful fishing up in Nebagamon—we didn't realize how good it was. Once in a while we'd snag onto a fish up there you'd never be able to get in the boat, and, golly, I used to get a terrific bang out of that. I remember cooking a fish one day that—my mouth still waters when I think of it. I had a hand line out and I hooked onto this thing, and, gee whiz, it almost took me out of the boat. I hung on and he jumped about six feet out of the water. I never saw him again, and he was a great big one, too.
- ERM What, a big northern pike?
- FKW Oh, I'm sure he was a northern, but he was a big one. He could have been ten or fifteen pounds. I did catch trout down there in later years. Northern pikes are mean, but it's a good fish.

- ERM Yeah, it is. Well, Fred, I think you've given me a pretty good start here.
- FKW Now I have here a summary of facts that are not anything like the details that we've been doing here. The first thing I put down is general recollections. That's what we've been talking about. Then there is Hill School and Yale. During that period I was working at Cloquet for a month and spending the summer with—Philip and I went up with a cruiser, cruising timber up—oh, where was it? Not far from Olympia with John somebody. Gosh, I can't remember his name now. Then I spent a month at Ferry, Idaho.
- ERM These were summers when you were going to Yale?
- FKW Yeah. Then we did some work during the summer of 1916 for the Weyerhaeuser Company, I think it was about then. When was that, anyhow? Some of my recollections are pretty vague. I guess the work we did in the woods. And then the war period, which I don't think you want to take too much time on. I wouldn't if I were you.
- ERM For instance, what do you see there on that page that you could elaborate on?
- FKW Well, here's 1934. Now my job, the big thing I was trying to do, was to build up lumber sales in 1934. That was the primary job, because we had a lot of sick companies crawling out of the Depression without any business. And the first thing we did was to start this finance company. That was a basically important endeavor to stimulate our lumber business, you see.
- ERM Was that to give aid to yards and things like that?
- FKW That was to help finance the sale of lumber through modernization or through . . . This was at the start of the Federal Housing Administration—government guarantee of housing loans, you see. These laws were passed in 1934, so we organized a little company and fiddled around to try to see how we could take advantage of it. Finally, we organized what was called the General Home Financing Corporation. Later it changed to Allied Building Credits, Incorporated. When we ended up, we had about three million dollars in it and were borrowing about twelve to fourteen million. It finally got to a point where our directors were afraid of it because it was necessary to borrow so much money to do business, you see. Rates to the Coast, Inland Empire, water rates to the East Coast, down the Mississippi. We were trying to get lumber back here cheaper. Here's something about a sale to Pepper. Well, I sold some lumber to Mr. Pepper to build a freight yard down on the Northwestern Rail near Chicago—the Proviso Freight Yards.
- ERM You must have had something to do with the discussion surrounding the National Recovery Act and the Lumber Code Authority that I would like to talk to you about, because I'm doing a great deal on that with Dave Mason. What do you recall about those days and the role of your company and trade associations with which you were affiliated at the time?

- FKW Well, I was not in that as much as others were. Now Harry Kendall was in it very heavily and Laird Bell took a part. I went down to a meeting in Washington to discuss the . . . No, I guess I'm talking about something a little different. I'm talking about efforts to keep the price of lumber from going out the roof. This was when Senator Joseph McCarthy was playing a big part down there. He wanted to get the industry to make some concession on the prices, so he picked on us. We finally agreed to reduce the price of lumber ten dollars a thousand on lumber going into the construction of houses.
- ERM Now, this would have been in the 1950s, right?
- FKW Yes, this was not the NRA at all. I'm confusing that a little bit. But, anyway, I think there were three times in the history of the company when we froze the price of lumber. The first time was in 1920, when we froze the prices or reduced the prices. Then the market broke, and everybody blamed us for the terrible losses which followed in the twenties—1920, 1921, and 1922. Actually, the economics would have brought it about anyway, the next time we did that was in the thirties, when we went through a terrible time. Everybody was pretty near dying on the vine in the thirties.
- ERM Was there an effort at price control, then, under the NRA?
- FKW During the Second World War, the prices were being controlled, but the big jump in prices occurred after the war. The minute the price controls were taken off, prices jumped very sharply, and then they gradually steadied. Then again, in the middle fifties, I guess it was, prices began to boom again. I think that's when McCarthy was playing a very big part. I remember that some of us went down to Washington, and I got the flu and was sick as a dog down there, so I was of no help at all. But McCarthy . . . We finally reduced our prices ten dollars on lumber going into the construction of houses, and it had no more effect than spitting in the ocean.
- ERM Why did McCarthy go after the lumber industry? Do you know?
- FKW Well, he had a lot of complaints about the high price of lumber, and he wanted to do something that would pacify them.
- ERM Make a little political capital for himself?
- FKW Political capital, yeah, by reducing the price. He wasn't the only one. There were a whole bunch of them.
- ERM Did you ever have any personal contact with the man at this time?
- FKW I never did. I think some of the crowd did, but I never had—I was sick. There's so much to tell. For instance—now here's the year 1941 when I was a salesman. Merchandising, traffic, price problems, public relations, general timber service, general research and development, economic research, taxes, office space, Allied Building credits, financing, Northwest Paper Company, Rock Island Millwork, Rock Island Lumber, Rilco, First Trust

Company, family matters, personal matters, O'Hara family—that's my wife's family—Midwest Investors, House of Hope Church, University at Cairo, Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Company, Department of Justice, N.A.M., forestry.

ERM I think all this reveals to what a great extent the modern businessman has a very much more complex kind of life than his grandfather or even his father had. You have a direct involvement in so many things.

(End of recording)