

OSCAR EVANS

By Andrew G. Brenneis

In 1931 at Ranger School at Quincy, Oscar took us on for a bit of timber cruising. We all had our starting points so "off we went," happy as larks and wondering what was so new or different about cruising for Oscar. We soon found out. Pretty soon, strips were crossing one another and students were getting their tapes together like spaghetti. Why - how could this happen? Oscar had screwed up the works by resetting the declinations on all our compasses. Score one for Evans!

Oscar really didn't appreciate "raw humor" among his changes, especially at the dinner table. About 1930 or '31 an assistant ranger was assigned to Oscar's crew for training. Things at the dinner table were a "mite" quiet, so gregarious happy A.D.R. tells a few jokes, a bit off color. Hold the presses. Oscar wasted no time in calling things to order and telling A.D.R, "keep it clean or head back home with a bad report to the supervisor." And he would have done it, too, if A.D.R. hadn't gotten the word.

My last working association with Oscar was on the Trinity. His "boys" were covering the Indian Valley Working Circle. One day Oscar was driving towards Lymedike Lookout. We think he was cruising as he drove because he "racked up" his vehicle against a beautiful big sugar pine. I reviewed his accident report. Cause of accident: The Trinity National Forest, "It shouldn't have left the tree there."

As you know, Oscar had to have woman cooks. When he came to the Trinity we found him a female cook who had been working in a local restaurant.

She didn't last long - about a month at the most. One Saturday morning she and a local attorney came into my office. She was fit to be tied. "What's the problem?" "That so-and-so Evans just fired me and when he did he said I was not only a poor cook but without a doubt the worst cook he had ever had in all his years in the woods. I think I'll take some action against him."

I discussed this episode with Oscar and told him that, after all, we had to live with the people in Trinity County, while he could pack his tent and steal away. Don't think for a minute that Oscar softened.

After that season, we split the blanket as far as cruising on my home forest was concerned.

Oscar was a character!