

OSCAR EVANS

By Harry Camp

The tales of "Oscar Evans and his boys are legend. The members of the very exclusive club--those who were not one of Oscar's boys-- must be jealous of those who had this unforgettable experience.

My season started in June 1933, immediately after graduating from the University of California. I reported to Oscar on the Modoc National Forest at his camp, not far from Adin, California. As I recall the camp was on Ash Creek or it could have been Horse Creek. The camp was in a nice location right near the creek - but the site was also enjoyed by rattlesnakes. Gray Evans and I installed a floor in our tent using an old door we had found. This wasn't the smartest thing we did all summer. Shortly after we installed the floor in our tent Gray and I were dressing to spend the evening in the big city of Adin and whenever we stepped on the floor we heard a buzzing sound, and it wasn't a door bell. Upon lifting the floor we found our third roommate was a good sized rattler. The combination of three didn't last long. Neither did the floor. This was only the beginning of our experience with rattlers. We all had good collections of rattles before leaving the Modoc.

Our crew consisted of Jack Mitchell and Roy Wagner as straw bosses, and working people--Ben Bolt, John Haderle, Gray Evans, Dick Wilson, Byron Beattie, Dick Mors, Irving Pierce, and Harry Camp (me). This was a good gang and we stayed good friends all summer through the Modoc, the Klamath, and the Lassen National Forests, plus a short session on the Sierra for one two-man crew.

Many incidents to which Oscar contributed occurred during our summer, but I'll concentrate on only a few. Except for the snakes, the Modoc

was fairly calm. It was here though that after one week I quit, and was rehired the next morning. As others will relate, if you showed up well you became an estimator and leader of the two-man crew. For reasons not quite clear I started as an estimator, but overstepped my authority and made a decision on where to run our line. This was unforgivable and led to words between Oscar and me. I resigned that night, but next morning both Oscar and I saw things in a slightly different light. I needed the grass, \$100 per month, net \$53.16, and Oscar felt that maybe with a little experience I might work out. Except for brief periods, I remained a compassman the rest of the summer.

The topography of the Klamath National Forest was considerably more rugged than the Modoc and hiking became much more strenuous, even for Oscar. He solved his problem by getting a small riding mule from the Klamath Forest remuda. Oscar wasn't much of a horseman, but the mule was gentle so they got along very well. That was until.....Oscar left the Klamath to make a check-in visit to the Regional Office in San Francisco and stayed away over the weekend. There isn't much to do in an isolated camp on the Klamath, but we did have a mule and we decided to have a rodeo. The mule wasn't very cooperative, but we finally found a way to make her buck. Roy Wagner was our cowboy and he would get the mule running up the trail, then we helpers would jump out and scare the daylights out of the mule. She would jump, but never did become a real bronco, so we soon lost interest. On the following Monday Oscar returned to camp after we had gone to the field. He saddled up the mule and started out to check on his boys. Things went well until the mule reached a certain point in the trail where we usually jumped out and scared her. She had learned her lesson well and automatically started jumping, and she and Oscar parted company. Oscar never did understand why the mule changed her temperament, but the next day she was returned to the Klamath remuda.

Our third main camp was in Humbug Valley on the Lassen National Forest. This was a beautiful spot and one we all enjoyed. It was here that Jack Mitchell eloped with the lady who owned the hotel, much to Oscar's great disappointment. He never forgave Jack.

During the summer we learned that Oscar expected us to do an average of 2 miles of line a day. The only thing different was that he expected you to do no more nor no less than that. In this way you could always meet the average. In the tall open stands of old growth ponderosa pine we quite often completed our two miles early in the day and then rested in the woods until quitting time. Other days we worked our tails off to meet our quota. One day Byron Beattie, estimator, and I, compassman and mapper, were assigned a beautiful stand of open old growth pine. The trees were uniform in size and the area was practically flat. By 10 a.m. we had finished 2 miles and we decided to see just how much we could do in a day. As I recall we completed about 6 miles of strip. This wasn't so bad because we could take the next couple of days pretty easy. Unfortunately, Byron goofed! He turned in all the cruise slips for the 6 miles of line. Oscar came boiling out of his tent announcing to the world in general that someone would be checked cruised the next day. The flatness of the country and the uniformity of the trees saved our hides and we checked out well within the allowable limits. Oscar never again put those two unreliable, fun-loving boys together as a crew.

As I write, memories of experiences, with a great deal of meaning for me, keep returning. I learned many lessons, but most of all I learned what a boss was. He was someone who expected you to do what you were told, no more, no less. As long as you remembered this, did your work accurately, and without complaining, you received the best of treatment. No one ever worked for Oscar without learning a significant lesson.

OSCAR EVANS

By Earl E. Bachman

I cannot think of any good stories regarding Oscar Evans. I do remember he was a man of unusual ways of bossing his crew.

I do remember a member of the crew (Brockway from Washington State, Spokane, Wash.) who was kept in camp, on Thompson Creek about five miles east of Quincy, to cut wood for the camp. It was mid-September with some light snow. Brockway said to Oscar, "he did not sign up to cut wood but to cruise timber." Oscar said "It's time for you to go home." In other words he was fired.

Our timber survey party started out from Mt. Shasta June 16, 1924 via McCloud Railroad through McCloud to Camp Ponderosa where Ben Hughes picked us up and we went on across the lava beds to Egg Lake on the Modoc. As I recall the party at that time included myself, Brockway, Thorpe, Cole, and Hughes. Paul Kevin, A.B. Everts and Thompson joined us later and in late July Oscar Evans arrived from the Stanislaus with Jim Averill, Don Smith, Hazel Austin, and Scherer. Hughes then left the party.

On August 31 we left via two Ford trucks for the Plumas to do fire damage cruising on two fires caused by the Western Pacific Railroad and one from the Feather River Lumber Company. We worked on the Crocker Mountain fire first, then one north of the railroad and later the Thompson Creek fire south of the railroad. We had some rain in mid-September and snow before we finished the job October 11.