

Some of my memorable contacts with Oscar Evans.

(1)

John M. Buck,
* About 7/1/32 - Drove on Sunday from Lake County to New Bieber.

At 8 am on Monday I ~~found~~ camp on Ash Creek some 15 miles east of Adair. The crew was already at work but Evans was in camp. It was the first of the month and bill-paying time. He gave me a typewriter and a stack of Purchase Orders (Form 815?) to type. I had a very slow "hunt + peck" typing method that was really never perfected.

He had me put the typewriter on the ground under a ponderosa pine tree. I was a bit unhappy with this arrangement but did my best for a couple of hours in spite of an aching back.

I was soon to learn that Oscar had a strong interest in "a days work for a days pay". I was leaning against the tree having a smoke and resting my back when the man approached me and with a big flourish, ~~he~~ grazed his watch chain, pulled out the large gold watch and looked at it and loudly exclaimed "young man in this camp we work from eight to five". He then turned on his heel and returned to his tent.

* Note: I was detailed from the California U. F. ^(unemployed) for one month to learn the R-5 timber ^{survey} ~~surveying~~ method. 1931 was my first year in the California Region as a permanent employee.

The above incident illustrates Oscars way of letting a new recruit know that he was boss and that his word was the law of the camp. Throughout my career I had many bosses but never saw this "tactic" used again, ^{needless to say he failed to} gain my respect.

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Irving and I went on for a way. I asked Irving to go ahead and find our starting point as near as he could remember and place a red flag for our check. This he proceeded to do and I waited for Oscar. Eventually we found Irving and started the check cruise. We were close to the original line but not exactly as it even though Oscar asked if we were on the original line, and I told him we were ~~at~~.

That night the check measurements were compared to the original cruise and as was to be expected the results left something to be desired. Oscar's comment on the discrepancy was "that's the ^{loopt} check cruise ever made in my whole career".

I of course had gotten that I came for. I knew enough about the ~~method~~ method to proceed with a timber survey on my own at anytime. In addition I had learned from observation of Oscar's management of ^{people} a few things to avoid.

Many years later and after Oscar had been retired a few years, we attended an S.A.F. meeting together at Challenge. It was the spring field meeting and it rained ^{continuously} continuously. The roads were extremely muddy and only Power Wagons and Jeeps could travel to the designated places. The back of my Jeep station wagon was full of bodies and Oscar was riding "shot gun" beside me. I took the occasion to remind him of the "worst" check cruise and told him of the reason for it. His only reaction was to chuckle a little. I often wondered if he had a spy watching over me while I was a visitor in his camp.

About 1942 or 1943 funds for operating timber survey disappeared with the war effort. Oscar was assigned to the Eldorado where I was Timber Staff Officer. His crew was to come from the Snow Line Conscientious Objector camp. His field man as well as the cook would be C.O.s.

In the summer of 1925, I was doing range survey work on the Stanislaus and Oscar had a timber survey crew on the forest. Two man crews ran lines started at a known corner and, without making any attempt to retrace the lines, used the compass direction used by the GLO. They put a light bark blaze on the trees on or near the line. They ran out the proper distance and jabbed a Jacob Staff in the ground where their line ended. At this point they started looking for the corner. If they found it, well and good; a notation was made of the direction and distance to the corner. If they didn't find the corner, a cruisers Tag was placed on the closest tree and it was designated as an approximate corner.

In the range survey work we generally used the topographic maps for control. However, a portion of private land was selected for its grazing value. These areas I ran out on foot. I got hot under the collar when one of Oscar's lines decoyed me off the proper line.

Needless to say, when Oscar and I met in the Sonora office, a wild argument ensued. A part of Oscar's argument that I could not refute was that he wanted to be able to tell where his men had been. The best part of my argument was that retracing the line was more accurate. I was finding an occasional corner that his men were missing. He conceded that that was likely true but that I had had a lot more experience than his boys. That could be true. I consider myself the last of the section corner hounds that started with Harvey Abbay and progressed to Ivan Cuff, Oscar Evans, Marc Edmonds and yours truly.

An interesting byplay with Oscar follows. On a late spring day in the Ferry Building, Oscar was rushing around wildly loading his field office equipment in a pickup. Out of the goodness of my heart I decided to help him. Oscar was urging me to hurry up and, in my haste, I clumsily dropped something and swore. For a long moment he stared at me in a very disapproving fashion. Finally he said, "I thought you were a Christian."

Russ Beeson