

Forest History Foundation, Inc.
St. Paul, Minnesota

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Samuel Nickey, Sr.
Memphis, Tennessee
December, 1953

by John Larson

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by John Larson, Forest History Foundation, Inc.

I was born and brought up on a farm twelve miles from Fort Wayne, Indiana. Until I was about 12 or 13 years old, from the first day of May until the first day of November, I don't think I ever had on a pair of shoes or boots. All I had was a pair of overalls and a shirt.

My father was born in Indiana, too, about 1846. His father was a doctor, and they moved from Staunton, Virginia about 1831. They went with a covered wagon west through Ohio and up to Fort Wayne, where they took up land. They took up 160 acres there, and finally added a little more to it. When I was born in 1868 I think they had 200 acres. The land all had to be cleared; it was nothing but a wilderness.

Our place was located 12 miles northwest of Fort Wayne. My old town of Churubusco was 6 miles north of us, and Arcola was 6 miles south of us. That's where we got our mail, then later they changed it and we got it at Churubusco. No gravel roads, all mud roads. It was pioneering, believe me. It must have been about 1865 that my father went into partnership with a fellow by the name of Gandy at Churubusco. It was Gandy and Nickey for 4 or 5 years. They had a little portable sawmill that would cut 5,000 or 6,000 feet a day; it was a circular sawmill. Father was quite a trader, and he bought this little old circular sawmill. I remember my mother saying, "Addison's going broke now, just like all these fellows that's buying threshing machines."

He cut some of the timber that we had on the land; got his orders from the Wabash Railroad. They were cutting it into 6x8, 8x10, when they first started; they didn't get much for it - \$14 a thousand loaded on cars at Churubusco.

When I was about 14 or 15 years old, Father lost his health temporarily. They were feeding cattle then, and Father lived out in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He stayed out there one winter, and I had to take care of the cattle at home under his direction. During that time the mill was closed down. When he came back, I'd worked up a good cattle business; so for 4 or 5 years I didn't do anything else but handle livestock - up until I was about 20 years old. I was in the cattle, hog and sheep business. I'd ride an old sulky and buy up a carload of hogs or cattle or sheep and ship them to East Buffalo, New York. We couldn't make a living on the farm very well because it was so small; so Father naturally got into the lumber business a

little more at Churubusco, and then decided to build a mill at Auburn, Indiana, in partnership with a man by the name of Gandy.

They built this mill there, a band mill, in Auburn in 1888. I think it was the second or the third band mill that was ever built. It was made by Sinker-David Company, Indianapolis. Henry Maley is credited with buying the first bandmill after Hoffman Brothers from Fort Wayne. And I think that my father and Mr. Gandy were the third. I remember that we had a hard time getting it to run. We had to have a filer, and the doggone old saws would crack. We had trouble all the time. But they finally ironed that old thing out, you see.

When I was 20 years old, Father said, "You can't make a living on the farm. You'd better get in the lumber business." So I went to Auburn when I was 20 years old. I remember that distinctly, because we couldn't buy any land for the reason that I wasn't of age. We had to get the land in some other form until I came of age.

We started in with a Mr. Perine. For one or two years we had a pretty hard time getting along, but we finally got so that things looked pretty good - so much so that Father finally said, "I want to buy out Gandy and I want to buy out Perine, and I want you to take charge of it." Gandy was still running the circular mill down at Churubusco.

We started in there, and we made money every year for three or four years, mostly because we were cutting export oak. We did our own logging. I think we had 25 logging teams. We bought our own timber just around Auburn. They'd load the logs onto the wagon and bring them into the sawmill. These men lived at home with their families. You see, 12 miles was about the limit of our getting logs. There was enough timber to keep the sawmill going at that time for three, four or five years. While it was slow picking, still we made a little money, and we ran that mill for about ten years, till about '98. But the timber that we were getting, especially the oak, was all full of these black spot worms. We couldn't do anything with it except put it in railroad ties. It got so bad that my father said, "We've got to move out of here some way or another."

At that time we were doing business with a fellow by the name of Brown of North Manchester, Indiana, who was furnishing some of the materials that we were furnishing the Wabash Railroad. We were buying stuff from him in addition to what we cut because we couldn't always get the quantity they wanted. At that time we had a fellow who was a timberman, and we decided to send him South. We figured out what it would cost us to send him down to Memphis, and I think it was \$200, or \$250 for 2 weeks or something of that kind. So he came down and I don't know whether he came to Memphis or where he went, but he came down here and came back and said there wasn't any timber down here. Something happened to him, anyway; he didn't bring back a favorable report. This man, Brown, in North Manchester, went

down to Vincennes, Indiana, and he bought a tract of timber in the Wabash bottoms, and he told us about it. About that time, I said to Father, "Let's go down to southern Indiana and let's see what this man Brown has. The timber up here is getting too doggone scrappy and wormy. We ought to go some place where the timber isn't full of worms."

So we went down to Vincennes, and went down to where this timber was. It didn't suit us at all, because it was gum and water oak, and at that time it wasn't worth anything. Mr. Brown was logging, had a sawmill out there. We came pretty near giving it up and going back home, but we went out to the railroad, the E. & T.H. at that time, at the station where he was bringing out his lumber, logs, etc. And we saw 8 or 10 cars of White Oak logs, beautiful logs; they were just top-notchers. And we didn't know where they were coming from. We were just about ready to go back to Auburn, but we said, "Well, tomorrow's Sunday, let's go down to this little town of Princeton, Indiana and stay over there. Maybe we can find out where these doggone white oak logs come from." We went down to Princeton, and went to the hotel and asked the hotel manager, "Anybody around here using timber, logs, etc.?"

"Yes," he said, "Got a fellow here by the name of John S. Dickson." So in an hour or two Mr. Dickson came in. We told him what we were looking for - told him about these logs. As luck would have it, he was the fellow that sold the logs to Brown. Well, of course, he was pretty cautious about trading, etc. He was interested in piling. We told him that if could get as much as 300,000 feet of saw logs like we saw at that switch of Brown's, we might build a sawmill right here in Princeton. Well, that was pretty interesting to him, because he knew darn well that he'd get 300,000 feet. He was right down there in the section where there's the finest white oak in the world. The next day was Sunday, and we drove off, and we saw a lot of good white oak timber. We just about made up our minds that that was the place that we ought to put a sawmill. I think I got a telegram from our partner, Perine, up at Auburn. I went back to Auburn, and Father went with Mr. Dickson down in Posey County.

The latter part of the week I got a telegram from Father saying, "I've seen more timber than ever, the finest in the world. Make arrangements and close our business immediately, and we will build a sawmill in Princeton, Indiana." And that's the way we got into Princeton.

We closed out our entire Auburn business, and came down and built a sawmill at Princeton. Bought a location at Princeton and were there for 10 years. That was in '98. We were in it, a man by the name of Chris Meyers, and Dickson was with us. We were partners with this Dickson for 6 or 7 years, under the name of Nickey & Sons. And we made plenty of money and were successful. The Green River Lumber Company was a separate corporation. A. B. Nickey & Sons had no interest in it except individual shares.

We were at Princeton about 10 years and made - oh, we probably had half a million dollars in cash and didn't know what to do with it. We made our money because, well, when we first started the mill at Princeton, why, we thought we would still be getting our orders mostly from the railroads in dimensions, etc. But when we got these logs in, they were so good that in place of plain sawing, we started to quarter saw them. That revolutionized our methods of handling timber; we not only commenced to quarter saw, but we quarter sawed everything. That became a policy in our company. My father was in charge, and I got a letter from him saying, "We don't want any more dimension if we can borrow the money. All we want to do is cut these logs and quarter saw them and then let the lumber dry and sell it. And I think we can do it." And I went down there and we sawed some logs from the sawmill, beautiful stuff. Then we put in the slogan, "Finely figured quartered white oak."

I went down personally, and Father said, "We don't want any more dimension. Look at that beautiful stuff if you quarter saw it." Then there was another angle to it. At that time, the railroad would hardly haul logs - thought they were too dangerous, you know - and it was pretty hard to get a rate on logs. So we got the freight agents of the L. N. & St. L. - afterwards it sold out to the Southern - the V. & T.H. and the E. & I., freight agents together and we were able to have them jointly put in a rate on logs. And it was cheap as dirt, 25 or 30 miles down into Posey County, freight was about \$10 a car, and no limit as to how much you could load.

We bought quite a lot of land down there, and brought logs into the mill from a radius of about 40 miles. We made a lot of money there.

We were there about 10 years, had this half million dollars, when we said, "Let's go South and see what we can find." So we went down to Memphis. The first place we contacted was along the Illinois Central Railroad, the Y. and V. There was a tract of timber of about 8,000 acres, at Pritchard about 34 miles south of Memphis. Got off at Robinsonville and got some mules and rode across through the woods. We stayed about two weeks in this timber, this 8,000 acres, came back to Memphis and bought it, the whole 8,000 acres, for \$5.13 an acre. The company bought it - it was a partnership, A. B. Nickey & Sons. After we bought that, we waited 30 or 60 days, and came down here and bought 3,000 more acres at Marks, Mississippi, spending about \$100,000.

My father still had some timber left after he'd moved the old mill away. He contacted a Mr. Peabody (brother of Peabody in Columbia City, Indiana) to buy it; he had a mill at Columbia City, 9 miles away. Well, Peabody bought it; came out and gave Father a draft for, I think, \$1,100. That was a big amount of money to me in those days. And Father said, "Well, timber's getting awful scarce around there now, isn't it?"

Peabody said, "Yes, it is. I think we'll have to quit sawmilling shortly. Too far to haul." That's what happened at that time, but that saw-

mill at Columbia City is still running. They put in a small band mill and it's running up there today. I don't know if they still make money with it; the Peabodys are both dead and gone.

As a boy, I would go to Columbia City on my way to get groceries or feed for the cattle or something, and I'd pass this lumber yard. In the winter they would get their logs in, a big lot of logs, because the logs wouldn't spoil like they would in this country if they were stored. They would cut on those logs until the middle of the summer and they wouldn't be damaged much.

About that time Mr. Peabody's brother had met a fellow who came from Washington State to try to promote and sell an interest in a copper mine claim in Washington. So they selected me and Mr. Peabody's brother, Tom, to go out and investigate this copper mine. We went out by the Great Northern Railroad and got into Seattle, met these fellows. The copper mine was about 100 miles up a river and we went to Everest, Washington and there the railroad took us up to another trace crossing the Schagit River where we got some ponies and went on further about fifty miles. This was probably in 1901 or 1902. Anyhow, going up this river with ponies, I had never seen the West Coast and didn't know much about its timber, but anyway, I got off my pony in a dense stand of fir that would cut maybe 100,000 to the acre. Trees up there, why, they were 200 feet high. I took off my hat, and I said, "If the Lord lets me live, I'm going to own some of this timber some time." We went up to this place, crossed the river on an old log bridge, crawled up the mountain to this copper mine. We stayed there about a week and chipped off the face of the tunnel he had and made about 25 small sacks of samples which we took back. We had them assayed in Seattle, San Francisco and Denver; it was a fizzle all around. It was a complete bust. That was our report. But we knew about it, and I knew about the timber; so I said to Father, "You can talk about your fine timber down in Mississippi, but I think we ought to buy some out on the Pacific Coast." So at that time I got acquainted with Angus McDougall who was a cruiser with the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company. He cruised on the Saginaw River in Michigan. When I went out there, I happened to meet him, and when I got back I wrote him a letter and told him that we might be interested in some Pacific Coast timber, if he knew of anything.

It went along for a month or two. He said he had, I think it was 1,800 acres on the Columbia River, forty miles from Portland, and it looked to him like a pretty good buy. So I said to Father, "You haven't seen that Pacific Coast timber, you go out and look it over." As I remember, he said it could be bought for \$60,000. So Father got on the train and went to Portland, met McDougall and McDougall took him out, down the river. They walked up the mountainside into the timber, and it happened to be some of the best timber in the world. They spent about a day in there.

Father says to McDougall, "Well, McDougall, I guess I've seen all I want to. Let's go home."

McDougall said, "If you feel that way about it."

Father said, "Let's go back to Portland and see the fellow that owns this timber."

McDougall said, "Do you want to buy it?"

"Yes, I want to buy it. I've seen enough."

And he pulled off the deal and came on back home. Well, to make a long story short, they sold that timber about three years after for \$250,000.

When we first came to Memphis, we bought our land as the Green River Lumber Company over on Thomas Avenue, but when we purchased land in the Pacific, it was A. B. Nickey & Sons. The Green River Lumber Company was a separate corporation.

Mr. Dickson had a brother and so we formed a corporation, called it the Nickey-Dickson Lumber Company. And they were stockholders and they bought a piece of timber at Galloway, Tennessee. That's where this company really originated, at Galloway, Tennessee. But Dickson became a little dissatisfied because we weren't turning our stuff quick enough, so we said, "Well, John, let's organize another company and call it Nickey and Sons." Which we did, and built a sawmill on a triangular piece of ground adjoining our present location. We were partners with Dickson for 6 or 7 years under the name Nickey and Sons. And we made plenty of money and were very successful. He got so he wanted to sell out entirely, so we bought him out. He was out of business about a year, then he went over to Shannon Brothers.

Then we changed the name to Nickey Brothers and Bass.

But Nickey Brothers and Bass didn't last very long - it was still the same corporation. Then we formed the company Nickey Brothers, Inc. And we bought this property here. And then we bought the Nickey-Dickson Company. That was liquidated and Nickey Brothers bought that. They had nothing to do with the Green River Lumber Company, except in a corporate way. That's the original Nickey Brothers, Inc.

My particular job with the company was anything that came up - make out invoices, measure lumber in the stack, inspect lumber, wore my shoes out. Gained a lot of experience.

C. A. Marsh was instrumental in our spending a lot of money out West. He was leaning toward Socialism, pretty bad, and this timber that we had was on the town grants from England, and it was a watershed in the Capilano Valley. The water was part of the water supply of Vancouver, B.C., and they made us vaccinate all our employees, and we had to build camps on wheels, etc. We spent a lot of money on that experimenting. We had to employ Hindu labor, and we had to have toilet facilities for them like they got.

And we put those in the camps, and that cost more money. We had several fires. We had one piece of timber up there of 50,000,000 feet all cut down lying in the woods on the side of the hill, and we had a little labor trouble with the I. W. W. and evidently they set fire to it. I had a \$250,000 fire, just went up in smoke in an hour's time. It got so hot up on top of the mountain it melted the rocks. That was in about 1920. We have had several fires up in there.

If we could just have foreseen how it would come about, as it has come about in the matter of logging out there - if in place of building a railroad, if we had put in a regular concrete road up there, and had done selective logging, there's no telling how it would have turned out. We had a billion feet of timber up there, and if we could just have foreseen - noone is building railroads out there any more; it's all truck logging. Then if we could have foreseen the development in the manufacture of wood pulp into paper, why we would have had a continuous stand out there. They're making pulp out there, and shipping it all over the world. They don't make paper out there such as they do in Canada in the east part, but they make the wood pulp. But it's a long way out there. Too far away, that was part of the trouble.

I got interested in plywood about 1917. About 20 years ago we had a little press and I experimented a little with it. And after I made a few panels, I commenced using this Tego glue. Pretty discouraging at first, but I kept on at it. I made my panels to build some cotton houses on the plantation and then the high water came along and covered our plantation seven feet deep except at headquarters. It took some of these cotton houses and turned them around, took some of them a half-mile. The water went down and we turned them over and washed them up and only lost two or three of the 25 or 30 that we made. I made up my mind there was something in the plywood business. Kept going along, learning more about the glue, and this, that and the other thing, and we have a good business in plywood now.

About 1902, up near Princeton, we got some fellows to put in a well, and darned if they didn't strike oil, about 1,100 feet down. We all got excited about it. It shot up and I got oil all over my clothes, shoes and hat and every place. Had some stock in it. We piped it up, and there was a switch of the L. A. and St. L. Railroad right alongside of it. We sold about a dozen tanks, I guess, to the Ohio Oil Company. Then they said, "Your oil has too much other stuff with it. You'll have to heat it up." They started that for a little while, then it got so that they had to heat it up two or three times. They were doing everything they possibly could to kill it. They took the oil, gave us a pretty good price to start out with, then they commenced pinching, pinching, pinching. Finally we sold out; we piped the gas to Princeton and put in a lot of pipe, put hot water into all the houses of the Princeton Company. But the oil kind of petered out. Of course, in all that, the big oil companies figured better keep the oil in storage rather than have it producing. Well, I don't know how many wells they've drilled around there, but probably 50, down to about 1,100-1,200 feet. About five years ago they started up there and put down a

well 3,000 feet and darned if they didn't strike oil, again. Another layer of it. And if you go up there now, I'll bet they got a hundred wells around there. They're all striking oil at the greater depth. The big oil concerns didn't want that to be developed.

During the last ten years there have been a few lumber concerns that have bought timber in large tracts expecting to operate their plants by selective cutting of the timber, cutting the most mature timber and also cutting the worst so as to leave the balance to produce a better growth and in doing so they will have a perpetual annual growth that will keep their mills supplied for all time to come.

We have one man here who does nothing but help farmers take care of their woodlots. I think we have about 50,000 acres under contract of that kind. These people that have these are tickled to death with it. We have no claim on their land in any way. The only claim that we have is that they won't sell their timber unless we get a chance to bid on it, and that's the only obligation that they have. The services that we render them like going in and telling them to cut this tree or that tree, etc., we don't charge them anything for. We do that just for the simple reason that they agreed in selling to give us the first chance at it.

Having a large number of acres under the above tree management, together with what lands we have purchased, we believe that the growth on the lands that we own and control will give us enough timber to supply our present investment in Memphis that it will make it a perpetual operation for all time to come.

Mr. S. M. Nickey, Sr.

It has been quite ably demonstrated that this is the era of the young man; never before has the young man been so dominating a power in political and business life, and public opinion in large measure has come to regard this condition as comprehensive and, consciously or unconsciously, has relegated those beyond their seventh decade to the ranks of the useless.

Other testimony, however, is voluminous to the contrary. It shows some of the greatest achievements of mankind to have been accomplished when their perpetrators were well beyond the so-called shady side of 60. The live men of today are not included in the ranks of the young exclusively; some of the most influentially active, physically and mentally and in actual achievements, are men well advanced in years.

A thoroughly illustrative instance is Samuel M. Nickey, Sr., of Memphis, Tennessee, a man now 85 years of age, as active and enthusiastic in his business as he was at 25.

Mr. Nickey started his extremely colorful career in the state of Indiana where his father, essentially a cattle man, was just beginning to engage in the lumber business. In the 90's of the last century Mr. Nickey, his father and brother erected a large band mill at Auburn, Indiana and about 1896 moved to Princeton, Indiana with their mills, where their business assumed still greater proportions. In 1905 they moved to Memphis, Tennessee and incorporated the Green River Lumber Company, and later in 1915 organized Nickey Brothers, Inc.

Mr. Nickey was among the first sawmill operators in this country to use the band saw for the quartering of lumber. Not only was he among the first manufacturers to avail themselves of this invention but he has kept pace with all the modern improvements in the lumber business from that time to this. At 85 he is still vitally interested in anything new.

Mr. Nickey personally put the first slicer in the south, and was one of the first southerners to install flooring machinery. The Nickey Brothers plywood plant was the first of its kind in that part of the country - although the corporate minutes show that he wanted to build one in 1919! Only a very few years ago he became interested in the manufacture of Pres-to-logs as a means of utilizing waste, and this installation, too, was the first of its kind in the south.

In Mr. Nickey's youth the red gum tree was considered worthless. But he just couldn't believe that God would make so fine a tree without some use for it, and pioneered in its development as one of the great woods of this country. He was also the first man ever to steam Walnut to obtain a uniformity of color - a practice followed consistently now.

Mr. Nickey has traveled extensively and has a vast knowledge of foreign woods. As a result of this interest, he is one of the biggest importers of logs in the United States.

Although strongly devoted to southern hardwoods, he disappoints his fellow lumberman in one respect. Many times it has been explained to him that bourbon whiskey is cured in White Oak kegs, but he stubbornly refuses to leave the product of his native Scotland.

Another remarkable thing about Mr. Nickey is his active interest in forestry. He has never been, even in the old days of lush forest growth, a cut-oyt-and-get-out lumberman. Today his company owns 17,000 acres of demonstration forest land, and manages an additional 20,000 acres in tree farms.

Mr. Nickey served as president of the Lumbermen's Club in 1916, and as president of the Southern Hardwood Traffic Association in 1920-21-22. He testified in several important Interstate Commerce cases in the early 1920's.

Mr. Nickey's interests and capabilities are by no means confined to lumber products. He owns a plantation near Hughes, Arkansas and another in Mississippi about 30 miles from Memphis. Here again his passion for new developments has been demonstrated. He built one of the first alfalfa dehydrating plants in the state of Arkansas, and recently began the growing of rice on the Mississippi land. Both have proved to be profitable decisions.

Mr. Nickey, known to his cronies as "The General," has a special chair in the Grill of the Tennessee Club, which no one else occupies. The Tennessee Club has recently done some decorating in the Grill, and the small dining room adjoining the bar has been renovated and paneled in Plain Sliced White Oak with one wall of Walnut Wovenwood, a specialty of Nickey Brothers, and the flooring is Quarter Sawn White Oak. A plaque will be placed on the door showing that this is the "S. M. Nickey Room."

Mr. Nickey is perennial Chairman of the Election Commission of the Memphis Lumbermen's Club. He generally makes a worthwhile speech on election night, and gives the younger generation an opportunity to know how they should conduct themselves on such occasions.

Mr. Nickey spends his vacations at his cottage on Walloon Lake, Michigan, near Petoskey, where he always distinguishes himself as an angler for black bass, pike and perch; angling being about the only recreation in which he indulges himself.

Associated with Mr. Nickey in his various enterprises are his son, Samuel M. Nickey, Jr. and his son-in-law, W. Jeter Eason.

If further proof of his rugged individualism is needed, in April of this year Mr. Nickey underwent a cataract operation on his left eye. Before he left the hospital, three months later, the doctors had performed four additional operations on various parts of his body. Today he is at his office every morning, and inspecting his plantations every afternoon!

Lumber Personalities

by Ethalind "McCarthy"

SAMUEL M. NICKEY, SR. : : : The Pace Setter

Samuel M. Nickey, Sr., president of Nickey Brothers, Inc., Memphis, Tenn., and a dynamic personality, is a "first" in many phases of lumber manufacturing. Now 85 years of age, he is as active and enthusiastic in his business as he was at 25, and he is still just as vitally interested in anything new as he was then!

Mr. Nickey started his colorful career in his native state of Indiana, where his father, essentially a cattleman, was just beginning to engage in the lumber business. In the 1890's Mr. Nickey, his father and brother erected a large band mill at Auburn, Ind., and about 1896 moved to Princeton, Ind., where their business assumed still greater proportions. In 1905 they moved to Memphis and incorporated the Green River Lumber Co. Nickey Brothers, Inc., was organized in 1915.

Among the first sawmill operators in this country to use the band saw for the quartering of lumber was Sam Nickey, Sr., and he has kept pace with all the modern improvements in the lumber business from that time to this. He, personally, put the first slicer in the South and was one of the first Southerners to install flooring machinery. The Nickey Brothers plywood plant was the first of its kind in his part of the country, and the corporate minutes show that Mr. Nickey wanted to build such a plant as far back as 1919! A few years ago he became interested in the manufacture of Presto-logs as a means of utilizing waste, and this installation, too, was the first of its kind in the South. Mr. Nickey was the first man ever to steam Walnut to obtain a uniformity of color—a practice followed consistently now. In Mr. Nickey's youth the red gum tree was considered worthless. However, he just couldn't believe that God would make so fine a tree without some use for it, and he pioneered in its development as one of the great woods of this country today.

During his sixty years in the industry, this "old-timer" has traveled extensively

and has a vast knowledge of foreign woods. As a result of his interest, he is one of the biggest importers of logs in the United States. However, the Southern Hardwoods are his great love.

Never a cut-out and get-out lumberman, even in the old days of lush forest growth, he maintains an active interest in forestry. Today his company owns 17,000 acres of demonstration forest land, and manages an additional 20,000 acres in tree farms. He thinks there is a great future for the lumber business because of the technical advances being made in woods, particularly the hardwoods, and because "we are growing good timber." He very frequently says "I just wish I could live another 20 years to see what's going to happen in the lumber industry."

This energetic and enthusiastic lumberman thinks the most interesting part of his business is whatever is the newest part. Looking back over the years, he thinks the methods of operation, manner of conduct, and ethics of the industry have grown and matured with age. "Operations are better, more complete; ethics are better, but there is still a lot we can learn in the way of operation," he believes.

Mr. Nickey served as president of the Lumbermen's Club of Memphis in 1916, and he is a perennial Chairman of the Election Commission of the Club. He generally makes a worthwhile speech on election night, and gives the younger generation an opportunity to know how they should conduct themselves on such occasions. He is a three-term president of the Southern Hardwood Traffic Association, having served in 1920-21-22, and in the early 1920's he testified in several important Interstate Commerce cases. His company also belongs to practically all of the other lumber trade associations.

This dominant personality has by no means confined his interests and capabilities to lumber products. He owns a plantation near Hughes, Ark., and another in Mississippi, about 30 miles from Memphis.



Sam Nickey, Sr.

Here, again, his passion for new developments has been demonstrated. He built one of the first alfalfa dehydrating plants in Arkansas, and recently began the growing of rice on the Mississippi land. Both have proved to be profitable decisions.

Known to his cronies as "the General," Mr. Nickey has a special chair in the Grill of the Tennessee Club, which no one else occupies. The Club recently has done some decorating in the Grill, and the small dining room adjoining the bar has been renovated and paneled in Plain Sliced White Oak with one wall of Walnut Wovenwood, a specialty of Nickey Brothers, and the flooring is Quarter Sawn White Oak. There has been some talk of naming this the "S. M. Nickey Room."

The "General" spends his vacations at his cottage on Walloon Lake, Mich., where he distinguishes himself as an angler for black bass, pike and perch; angling being about the only recreation in which he indulges.

Mr. Nickey is the father of two children, Sam, Jr., and Mrs. W. Jeter Eason. Both his son and his son-in-law are associated with him in his various enterprises. Mrs. Nickey died in 1949.

Convincing proof of this old-timer's rugged individualism is the fact that in April of this year he underwent a cataract operation on his left eye. Before he left the hospital, three months later, the doctors had performed four additional operations on various parts of his body. Today he is at his office every morning and inspecting his plantations every afternoon! Hats off to a most remarkable person and outstanding lumberman!

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