Oral History Interview

with

L. T. MURRAY, SR.

Tacoma, Washington
November 4, 1957

by Elwood R. Maunder, Forest History Foundation, Inc.

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MAUNDER: Mr. Murray, just by way of introduction to this interview, I'd like you to tell us a little bit about yourself, where you came from, how you came out here to the West, and how you eventually got into logging.

MURRAY: I came out West in the fall of 1906, slightly before my twenty-first birthday. I might say that my desire to get into the lumber business started when I was a small boy without actually having had any direct connection with it other than the fact that I liked the outdoors, liked to play around the log rafts along the Ohio River. I spent my summers in a little village in Ohio where there were several small country sawmills, and it all had a fascination for me.

MAUNDER: Where were you born?

MURRAY: Cincinnati, Ohio.

MAUNDER: And your parents were from where?

MURRAY: My father was from Brandon, Vermont. He came out as a boy of about six in a covered wagon as far as Pittsburgh and then went down to Cincinnati, Ohio, on a raft. His father took up land on the Little Miami River twenty miles or so from Cincinnati.

MAUNDER: Your family had not been in the logging or lumber business?

MURRAY: No, they had not been in the lumber business. Father became internationally known as a statistician in agriculture and published a paper called the CINCINNATI PRICE CURRENT AND LIVESTOCK REVIEW which is rather interesting in that I, for the past fifteen years, have been interested in the cattle business in Central Washington and, for a while, in Arizona.

Getting back to lumber, I worked here and there for about a year and a half for various lumber companies in Oregon and Washington, and shortly decided to get into business for myself. I thought the opportunity was better in the logging end of the business, particularly in an area such as Puget Sound, where there was for a great many years an open market for logs.

MAUNDER: What do you mean by an "open market," Mr. Murray?

MURRAY: In an open market logs were purchased by various mills located at points throughout the Sound. That situation also obtained in many other areas such as Grays Harbor, the Columbia River, and British Columbia.

MAUNDER: In other words, you mean that there was a ready market for logs you cut as a logger?

MURRAY: Yes.

MAUNDER: There isn't an open market at the present day, it there?

MURRAY: Theoretically there is, but most logs today recorded as having been sold are generally logs traded from one mill to another in exchange for a particular type of log desired by that mill. For instance, a pulp mill would be interested in buying the pulp species of log or logs to be used in the manufacture of pulps. In their own logging operations they might have a certain amount of high grade Douglas fir timber for which they had no particular use, but a plywood plant would be very glad to have those Douglas fir logs, and in turn would be willing to sell on a trade basis the pulp specie logs for which they had no particular use. Trading today makes up a very large amount of the log market, if there is any such thing as an open market. Actually it is very difficult to buy logs without strings attached such as a trade.

MAUNDER: Well, let's go back to your beginnings in the logging field. You say that you had a year and a half's experience working in sawmills and you decided that you would rather get into the logging end of the game. What was your first venture in logging, where was it, how large was it, and how did you finance it?

MURRAY: I organized the Puget Sound Timber Company in the spring of 1908, and spent the greater portion of the year looking over timber in Washington and British Columbia, finally purchasing a tract on Pender Harbor in British Columbia about fifty miles north of Vancouver. About six months later we liquidated, getting slightly more for the timber than we paid for it. The total investment was about $10,000.

Then in the spring of 1909 I became a partner of the O. K. Logging Company, which was a very small outfit operating on a cutting basis. I was associated with it for about six months and would* up with a few rattletrap donkey engines which I later used in opening up timber in Lewis County purchased from Gustav Lindberg. That outfit, however, didn't get into actual operation. Prior to that time, in the latter part of 1909, I formed a partnership with W. R. Ripley to

*wound

take over a cutting contract on some timber in the Campbell River area on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. We had $10,000 to get that operation started. It was going rather well, or at least we thought it was going so well that we made the investment in the Lewis County operation that I referred to. In the summer of 1910, about the time we were ready to start logging, there was a serious softening in the log market that resulted in a drop of two to three dollars a thousand, which closed the operation at Vancouver Island and also prevented us from really getting started in Lewis County, so we lost out in both places.

MAUNDER: Let me ask you a couple of questions regarding that. With $10,000 to put into the operation in Canada, about what part of that money did you have to put into equipment?

MURRAY: Our entire equipment consisted of one donkey engine, rigging and supplies. The International Timber Company built the railroad and hauled our logs to the log boom on Campbell River and rafted them on a contract basis. This donkey was one of the finest I had seen up to that time and was made by Willamette Iron and Steel Works at Portland. It was a 10 x 11 compound-geared yarder known as the Humboldt yarder. I had seen many other donkeys manufactured by other West Coast concerns but up to that time, at least in my opinion, it was way ahead of the others. I was very much taken by it when I saw it on exhibition at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909. In later years I had many of them of larger size.

MAUNDER: What did a donkey engine cost at that time?

MURRAY: It cost about $2,500. Our last car-mounted donkey skidder cost about $75,000, fully equipped!!!

MAUNDER: So one quarter of your investment was taken up by the purchase of a donkey engine?

MURRAY: Of course, we had to build camps too, and buy our rigging and other supplies.

MAUNDER: How much did that leave you to operate on as far as paying your men and paying for your hauls from the woods by rail?

MURRAY: A lot of that was done on a time basis. We had to be able to pay our labor at any time, but our railroad haul and stumpage was not paid until we had returns from the logs that we sold. I got started logging again in 1911 with nothing much but ambition.

MAUNDER: How many men did you have working for you at that time?

MURRAY: At that first camp out on the Island? About twenty-five or thirty men.

MAUNDER: Did you work in the woods with them there?

MURRAY: I didn't very much as I was traveling back and forth from there to the little camp we had on the Sound and also was getting ready to open up the one in Lewis County. In the fall of 1910 after we had been closed down everywhere I put in time making the sum of about $2.50 a day logging for an outfit that was getting ready to build a sawmill on the Lewis County site near the camp I built in 1910.

While I was doing that I was batching, living in the camp. It was no longer mine or under my control but I was batching there, and on Christmas, 1910, I was invited to have Christmas dinner with Mr. O'Kelly, who had been my partner in the O. K. Logging Company which finished logging the fall before near Bremerton on Puget Sound. I had a little spare cash, since I received a check from home occasionally, and put it toward the Christmas dinner. We had dinner in the middle of the day, and after dinner I decided to see if I could get a deer up in the hills. I started out, probably about one o'clock, with O'Kelly's young son, who was about sixteen.

We crossed the Tilton River in the valley near the campsite, later called Coal Canyon, and started up into the hills. There was snow on the ground here and there and the country was a lot higher than I had imagined, not having previously been up into the higher ground. We were enthusiastically looking over the country while looking for deer and at about three-thirty decided we'd better be wending our way back to camp. We started back and after going about three-quarters of an hour we came back across our trail in the snow. Apparently we had made a circle.

I didn't have a compass, nor had I been in that part of the country or seen any maps of it. I finally decided we were lost and couldn't go home the way we had come, so the best way out of there would be to drop down-hill from one canyon and draw to another, getting lower and lower and not traveling over the same ground again. It was beginning to get dark and it looked like maybe we were going to have to spend the night in the woods. It was well on the way to nightfall when we came to a good-sized stream which we crossed on a big fir windfall, and on the other side we found a trail. It was like finding Park Avenue in New York. After following

the trail down for about three miles we came to an old puncheon road with which I was familiar. I have overlooked saying that we had been coming through a lot of good old growth fir timber for several hours. When we got back to camp it was dark.

The next morning I retraced my steps and went back up to what was called the "West Fork of the Tilton River." Our camp was on the main Tilton River, near the East Fork. I saw a lot of good timber, much of which was dry (dead). There had been a bad fire in that area several years before. I thought it was a real opportunity. I contacted the owners and in about three or four months I had a contract to buy some of the timber on a cutting basis and made arrangements with the Milwaukee Railroad to furnish rail, ties, and so forth.

MAUNDER: What kind of an arrangement was that? Were the railroads ...?

MURRAY: Leasing the rail to me.

MAUNDER: Were they doing this for all kinds of loggers?

MURRAY: They did it occasionally as they replaced their old rail with larger rail and had large quantities of what they called "relay" rail on hand. Most logging operations used relay rail, about a 56 to 60 pound rail. The railroads were putting in 90 to 100 pound and heavier rail. By the fall of 1911 I was operating as the West Fork Logging Company. I got equipment and all the stuff that was needed to build a camp on a credit basis.

MAUNDER: It would be pretty hard to do that these days, wouldn't it?

MURRAY: Well, I set my son up in business -- that is, as a division of our company. He had an outfit of his own, doing salvage logging for the St. Regis Paper Company, and at the same time he was on our payroll as forester for the West Fork Timber Company, supervising and overseeing the contract we had with the St. Regis Paper Company. I did not want to have him continue with two separate interests -- his own individual interest in this small logging enterprise and at the same time being our forester. I told him I thought we had better buy him out and carry on his operations under the name of Silver Creek Logging Division of West Fork Timber Company. Then I was able to arrange a deal with the St. Regis Paper Company

for us to take back several sections of timber which we had under contract to them. These sections were probably saleable for about a million dollars, and our company invested $250,000 in equipment and road building for this little job. Well over a million dollars went into this little logging job at Silver Creek and West Fork started with $500 capital originally.

MAUNDER: Going back to the original West Fork operation that started about 1911, how large an area did you buy?

MURRAY: We started with 160 acres and were able to add considerably to it right from the very beginning. We bought some from Weyerhaeuser, and a considerable amount from the Northern Pacific Railroad, the state, and many private owners.

MAUNDER: Did you buy those other tracts with cash?

MURRAY: Some of them. From Weyerhaeuser, for instance, we bought on a cash basis with twenty-five per cent down and time payments on the balance. The same thing was true with the Northern Pacific and others, but some deals were on a cutting basis (stumpage as cut). We were not operating on a very heavy basis -- about ten million feet a year -- but we made a little money right from the beginning and I was my own camp foreman, salesman, and so forth.

MAUNDER: To whom were you selling your logs?

MURRAY: To mills in the market for logs. One of our first deals was with a mill on the Milwaukee Railroad. In those days, in the fall of 1911 and the spring of 1912, most of our logs went to the Young and Johnson Lumber Company on Lake Kapowsin and we averaged about $7.00 per thousand for logs delivered to their mill by the Milwaukee Railroad (then the Tacoma Eastern).

MAUNDER: What do you figure it cost you to get those logs?

MURRAY: It cost us about $1.50 common carrier freight, and that gave us about $5.50 a thousand for the logs f.o.b. cars our camp, out of which we had to pay our stumpage of $1.00 to $2.00 a thousand. *?

MAUNDER: That left you $4.00?

MURRAY: It left us $4.00 for logging and profit. It is slightly different today!!! In those days we had a labor cost of less than $2.00 a thousand, inclusive of road construction. It might be interesting to compare some items of cost and log prices today with those of forty-seven years ago. Our labor cost in the woods today on an average would be somewhere near ten times the figure it was then.

MAUNDER: You mean about $20 a thousand?

MURRAY: The cost of standing timber, referred to as stumpage, operating costs, common carrier transportation costs, taxes and over-head of all kinds would probably put the average cost of logging today, including stumpage, somewhere $50 and $75 a thousand.

MAUNDER: Your margin of profit today, compared to when you first operated, is what?

MURRAY: Our margin of profit today, percentage-wise, is probably near the same figure. A reasonable profit today, with all the chances and risks involved, would have to be a minimum of $10 to $15. A dollar in the old days was enough to interest operators to get started, although in many cases it turned out to be a disastrous gamble.

MAUNDER: You mean $1.00 per thousand was a good profit in the early days, whereas today you have to figure at least $10 per thousand?

MURRAY: Yes. Today $10 would hardly be a fair profit on the total amount of money required to operate a logging and timber business.

MAUNDER: Let's go back to the West Fork operation and pick up where we left off there.

MURRAY: The West Fork operation continued on the West Fork of the Tilton River until about 1917. In the meantime, however, about 1915 I tied up pretty much of the timber on the East Fork of the Tilton River and by 1916 had both operations going. At that time we were running with a daily capacity of about 250,000 with a couple of hundred men in our camps. Later on it got up to about 400,000 daily.

MAUNDER: Well, Mr. Murray, that would indicate you had a very rapid growth from 1911 when you were sort of running a boot-strap operation with a $500 investment, to one in four or five years which had risen in size to that which you now described. To what do you attribute that tremendous growth? What were the factors involved which made it possible for you to expand your operation as you did?

MURRAY: Well, of course, I was ambitious to produce more and get to the point where we felt the volume was important in making a much more efficient type of operation, enabling us to buy the best equipment there was available at that time. Methods, planning and equipment were always hobbies of mine.

MAUNDER: Did you develop some new methods in those years that gave you some kind of advantage in the market, or was it the growth of demand for logs with World War I, or what was it that permitted such a rapid increase in your operations?

MURRAY: The only thing that I can say is that I was probably quite ambitious and always looking for new and better equipment and better methods. It was about 1918 when we started to use a type of engineering that had been used very little, if any, in the state of Washington, but had been used by a few firms in Oregon. It included a relatively accurate contour map that gave us a good picture of our area so that we could plan our road building and our strategy of logging settings more easily, with more accuracy. We were able to build roads better and cheaper because often times it prevented us from making errors -- which were not difficult to make sometimes with the use of somewhat haphazard engineering methods.

MAUNDER: Was that new method one which permitted you to operate in a more efficient manner and thereby build up capital reserves which permitted your expansion?

MURRAY: Oh, I don't think I would say it quite that strong. I would say that it was just one of the many things that we think contributed to a more efficient operation. We built up more of an operation, buying more timber from time to time, and finally got to the point a number of years later where we did not desire to increase our capacity particularly but began to look ahead to a sustained yield, permanent type operation. That type of operation requires a great deal more timber than the ordinary institution that goes in for five, ten or twenty years and then is through.

MAUNDER: Let me ask you this. As you developed your business in the years prior to and during World War I, were you reinvesting a majority of your profits in purchase of new equipment and new timberlands?

MURRAY: Practically all of it for many years. The West Fork Logging Company, and later the West Fork Timber Company -- the Timber Company being incorporated in 1913 and the Logging Company in 1911 -- the first paid a dividend about 1944.

MAUNDER: In other words, you were reinvesting profits almost continuously until 1944?

MURRAY: That's the advantage I had, not having a lot of stockholders looking for dividends.

MAUNDER: Yours was purely a family matter?

MURRAY: Yes.

MAUNDER: You mentioned utilizing this new method of mapping your land so that you could operate more efficiently. This might imply an interest in forestry per se; were you interested in forestry? Did you have forestry advice in making this step?

MURRAY: At the time I first started it, I'll have to admit that it was purely from the standpoint of the cheapest and best way of logging.

MAUNDER: Where did you get your idea for this?

MURRAY: It was an idea of the Lumbermen's Engineering Company of Portland, headed at that time by Henry Thomas. As far as I know, Mr. Thomas of Portland is still active in some phase of the lumber industry. They did a splendid job and got us started in good engineering.

MAUNDER: In other words, you sought out professional people to give you counsel on this matter?

MURRAY: That is what it amounts to. I think they might have sold us in the first place.

MAUNDER: In other words, they did a professional job for you and you followed their advice and it paid off in handsome returns?

MURRAY: It is one of the important contributing factors to good logging practice.

MAUNDER: Well, now, your operation on the West Fork started out very small -- a matter of how many acres?

MURRAY: One hundred and sixty acres.

MAUNDER: Within a matter of four years, by 1915, you had expanded to how many thousand acres?

MURRAY: By that time probably somewhere between 1,000 and 2,000 acres. Present ownership is approximately 120,000 acres.

MAUNDER: Can you give me an indication of how the size of your operation expanded, not necessarily year by year, but over the years, taking peak years?

MURRAY: You've asked how it expanded in peak years. It was quite true that we have had peak years, but some years we hardly logged at all because of a very poor market situation. I was one of those who believed in conservation of our timber rather than cutting it just to keep operating to liquidate. Oftentimes the cause of depressed conditions in the lumber business was the bond issues you referred to this afternoon, when an operator continued to operate at a loss to make some liquidation.

MAUNDER: You rode with the market? When it was good you logged, when it was bad you shut down?

MURRAY: I was one who believed in riding high when the going was good, although we did take into consideration as much as we could the general effect, at least in later years, on our employees.

MAUNDER: I was going to follow up with the question, how did you maintain your labor force?

MURRAY: Well, the labor supply in those days and up until twenty or twenty-five years ago consisted mostly of transient single men who didn't average a very long time on the job. I can remember one time in 1916 we made a check, and although we had a reputation of having a lower turnover of labor than most operators, there were men coming and going all the time. With 200 men employed when we were running what we called three units of operation -- two at the East Fork Camp and one at the West Fork Camp in 1916 -- during a month's time we would have about 200 new names on the payroll. We had a complete change of crew on the average of about every month. We had a lot of men who worked hard for two or three days, some for a week or ten days. A man who stayed on the job for a month was a fairly long stake man. We had a few of the so-called "home-guard" type who were steady to all intents and purposes, but for the majority it was just natural for them to come and go.

MAUNDER: You're talking now about the old style lumberjack?

MURRAY: Yes. That's what we had until about twenty to thirty years ago. Then the automobile came in and gradually the improvement of things in general. In some cases logging headquarters were in little towns, like our operation at Mineral where the headquarters was located in the town of Mineral. We had a hotel there where we handled transient men. We had no camps in the woods there until about ten years ago. When I say ten years ago I mean the St. Regis Paper Company, as we turned over the actual logging operations to them in 1943. The situation started to change about thirty years ago -- we opened up at Mineral in 1927. Eventually half of our men were local men, either married men with families or the sons of married men there.

MAUNDER: In other words, two things began to have an effect on the character of your labor force -- the automobile and that marvelous invention, the female?

MURRAY: Yes. I think so. The family started to come into the picture.

MAUNDER: And they stabilized your labor force?

MURRAY: They helped very much. As I said before, we had no camps in the woods at Mineral until ten years ago, although we had camps in the woods at all other West Fork operations. I think I told you the other day that we bought steam-heated passenger coaches, which were quite satisfactory for a long time, and took the men back and forth every day by railroad.

MAUNDER: Did these new devices tend to attract a different type of man?

MURRAY: Not necessarily, but we probably had a much lower labor turnover than the average operator. It wasn't altogether those more modern things, but it helped to bring a slow change. Many men liked a little personal contact with the boss and in many cases they are a long way from the actual owners. There are some advantages, but also disadvantages, to the owners being that close to the job.

MAUNDER: I've heard it said that you helped pioneer a good deal in this whole trend toward the creation of better living conditions in the woods. I wish you'd relate a little bit about what steps you took in that direction.

MURRAY: I would hesitate to say that we were leaders in that because there were quite a number of others. In fact, it became a competitive situation, although we did take pride in our outfit.

MAUNDER: Were there others who were ahead of you in this idea?

MURRAY: Most all of the better outfits were from time to time making improvements in things that were practical for themselves and the men. We got away from the old idea of just a cookhouse and a bunkhouse. That is all there were in the old camps and the bunkhouses were generally pretty large and without plumbing except the outside kind. How well I remember the first bunkhouse I slept in -- it held ninety men. Our Camp #1 had one bunkhouse which held twenty-four men, but in our later and newer camps we built bunkhouses to hold no more than eight men. In the first camp I had there was no water system except rain barrels to catch water from the bunkhouse roof or hand-carried from the creek. We had no refrigeration of any kind. We built Camp #2 in 1916 on the East Fork of the Tilton River and in those days it was considered ultra-modern.

We later got down to only four men to a 10 x 24 bunkhouse by cutting out the top bunks and having only single bunks. We built a recreation hall and had billiard tables and things like that, including a place to play cards, drying room for clothes, washrooms and shower baths, inside toilets, and so forth. I don't know who thought of them and did them first but we were among the early ones.

MAUNDER: And you found that it was good business to do this?

MURRAY: Yes, good business -- although many did not always appreciate it.

MAUNDER: Were you persuaded to take these steps merely because you thought they were ways toward a more efficient operation or did you feel any pressures to do these things from the men themselves?

MURRAY: No, we never felt any pressures but we liked to feel that it was our own idea, our own imagination, in many cases of improvement. Sometimes we would hear of something that somebody else was doing in the way of equipment and we'd go to see it. If it was anything that could be applied to our operation we would put it into effect. I used to take a lot of trips around to the different camps and always enjoyed it -- not only in this area but in other regions. It was seldom that I went to a camp and did not discover something worth-while, no matter how small or how haywire an outfit it was.

MAUNDER: Where did you travel on some of these trips? To what regions did you go?

MURRAY: Well, of course, the bulk of it was in the Douglas fir region, in Oregon and Washington and British Columbia. I used to get over into eastern Oregon quite frequently, once in a while into Idaho, and once in a while into the redwood country.

MAUNDER: Did you ever go east into the older logging regions, or south?

MURRAY: Yes, I traveled down south several times -- in Alabama, Texas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

MAUNDER: In other words, throughout your experience in this business you made a point of consistently searching for new ideas?

MURRAY: I liked to find new equipment and methods of practical nature.

MAUNDER: Just to digress a little bit from the history of your own operations, in making your surveys within your industry who did you find as being the most progressive, the most forward-looking of all the companies and institutions that you visited?

MURRAY: Well, it would be hard to say which one.

MAUNDER: Well, not necessarily which one, but which ones.

MURRAY: Of course, I'll have to put Weyerhaeuser way up on top of the list, and the Simpson Logging Company, and a great many others. There were some who were way out in front, but who also did much that was impractical. Some of those who came out from the South and plunged in out here on a big scale of logging did some things from which they had to back up very materially.

MAUNDER: Did you encounter anybody in the South who impressed you as working on a very sound basis?

MURRAY: I forget the names of most of those I called on in the South.

MAUNDER: Did you ever call on the Urania Lumber Company in Louisiana or the Great Southern Lumber Company?

MURRAY: Yes, I visited the Great Southern and went over their operation in 1922.

MAUNDER: What was your impression of that operation?

MURRAY: Great Southern was starting in on a reforestation program early in the game and had a tremendous investment there. I was impressed with their sawmill, built with steel framing instead of lumber. I also visited the Putnam Lumber Company, Brooks-Scanlon, Standard, and many others. I forget the name of an outfit I visited in Louisiana, near New Orleans, that cut a lot of cypress.

MAUNDER: Was that the old Lyons Lumber Company?

MURRAY: I've heard of that company, but I don't think it was. More recently, just a couple of years ago, I spent a few days in Maine and New Hampshire looking over the St. Regis operations. In just a passing way, a great many years ago before I came out here I visited in upper Michigan and Wisconsin. They were pretty well cut out of pine even then and were getting into hemlock and hardwood. Logging in Maine today has not changed much, except for trucks.

MAUNDER: Who were the real leaders in early day logging?

MURRAY: That's a pretty hard question because there were a great many outfits which have been leaders in one way or another for a length of time, depending to some extent on general timber conditions and market conditions and the individuals who were running the outfits. There have been so many with which I have been quite familiar over the years that to just pick them out of the air and say which ones were leaders would be rather difficult.

MAUNDER: Well, I thought you might have some specific contributions that stand out in your mind. I know that it would be impossible for you to delineate a whole list of all of them, but usually there are a few that stand out as uppermost in a person's mind.

MURRAY: Generally speaking, in recent years, conditions in operations have become rather standardized and generally dependent upon the broadness of view and finances.

MAUNDER: Let me be a little more specific. I think you said earlier that Weyerhaeuser stood out foremost in your mind as being pioneers.

MURRAY: I wouldn't say pioneers necessarily, but leaders in methods.

MAUNDER: All right, leaders. What was there about the Weyerhaeuser organization that stamped it so indelibly as being a leader?

MURRAY: They are very definitely carrying on permanent operations as far as lumber and forest products are concerned and their whole program of planning and research does put them out in front.

MAUNDER: Would you say that that in any way stems from their feeling of stewardship for the resources they are using?

MURRAY: Well, I have felt that they have not spoken out loudly enough at times. I think that has been a characterisitic of Weyerhaeuser in the past. On the other hand, they've been doing a great deal for the industry as a whole, as for instance the contribution they have lately made in Stanford Research from which the whole industry is benefitting.

MAUNDER: What about the area of improving working conditions in the woods?

MURRAY: Over the years they are certainly way up on top, there's no question about it. In the old days they weren't always on top. I'm reminded of a statement made to me by George S. Long of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, who for many years was looked upon as the dean of the lumber industry. He said that while he was in Prineville, Oregon, he was sitting with a bunch of loggers around a big stove in the hotel lobby. When one of the loggers found out that he came from Washington he asked Mr. Long if he knew of the West Fork Logging Company, and then proceeded to tell Mr. Long that West Fork had the best food of any camp in the state of Washington. At that time we were operating a small camp of less than fifty men and although we believed we were doing a good job of feeding, if

that same lumberjack had come back a couple of months later and we had changed cooks in the meantime, he might not have made such a complimentary statement.

In those days our logging railroad was anything but a good example of high-class construction. The soil in the West Fork area was mostly clay loam. We were not equipped to handle gravel or rock ballast as we were in later years, so the only way we could hold up a roadbed for any length of time in wet weather was by having the ties open at the end so they would bleed automatically. It was difficult to teach a main-line section foreman how to handle that kind of a situation and therefore much of the time the ties were not bled as much as they should have been and consequently a ride on the railroad reminded one of a roller coaster. Derailments were frequent and putting cars back on the irons was often a tough job and required a lot of timbering up. Our early locomotives were geared type 45 to 60 tons -- burning wood, later coal, before we went to oil.

MAUNDER: The history of logging, its methods and machinery, in a sense is the history of power and transportation. First of all there was sheer manpower, later aided by the ox and horse, and then by sled and high wheels, and then by the steam donkey and railroad, and then later by the Diesel engine. Now there are trucks and in more recent years all this host of new highly-mechanized equipment such as we've seen at the Logging Congress. Now, the historian is interested in the evolution of logging for the light it sheds on an important industry of our country, the harvesting of one of our continent's richest natural resources, and for a greater understanding of the part it has played in stimulating the great revolution in mechanical engineering and transportation. Who do you consider the really outstanding men in the history of logging, going back before your own time if you can, of course, and continuing right up to the present time? Who were the men who really made the greatest innovations?

MURRAY: You're talking now about the Douglas fir region?

MAUNDER: I'm talking about the Douglas fir region, and if you know of anything that relates to that region but ran prior to its opening, fine.

MURRAY: One of the best known loggers on the Columbia in the old ox team days was Yeon.[1]

MAUNDER: After whom the building down in Portland was named?

1. John B. Yeon, logger on the Columbia River in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

MURRAY: Yes. A lot of those fellows' names I cannot remember. I think Gordon Manary's father was one of the old-timers down on the Coast, Gordon Manary of Coos Bay Logging Company.

MAUNDER: Formerly with Pacific Logging down at Scotia?

MURRAY: He is with the Simpson Timber Company now, I believe, in California. Of course, up here on Puget Sound the Polsons were old-timers who were commencing to fade out early in my career, and such old-timers as Ed English, who was around seventy-five to eighty years old when I knew him. There was Pat McCoy, Sol Simpson, Levy (Til) Shelton -- Til Shelton worked for me forty-eight years ago; he had been superintendent of logging for St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company.

MAUNDER: What made these men stand out from the rest of the people in the field of logging?

MURRAY: Well, probably one reason was they were able to continue at it. They had logging in their blood and they were able to continue over a period of years and oftentimes increase their operations.

MAUNDER: They were successful?

MURRAY: Some of them were successful for years and some wound up being not too successful. As is usual in any line of business, there are men who are extremely ambitious and move ahead rather rapidly and imagine they're making money when they are not. That, of course, is one of the greatest sources of failure in industry of all kinds, particularly small businesses where good accounts are not kept. We find it with the small loggers and small sawmills, and we find it very much so in the cattle ranching business and farming. Most of them haven't the slightest idea of the importance of accounting. When they get to thinking of costs they generally take the direct costs, mostly by rule of thumb.

Getting along further on the logging, Mark Reed, who later became the head of the Simpson Logging Company, was the son-in-law of Sol Simpson. Mark Drahm of the Mud Bay Logging Company in Olympia and the Schafer brothers of Grays Harbor were among the old-timers with the third generation now in active management.

MAUNDER: Well, you've mentioned the importance of keeping records. What part did cost analysis play in the determination of logging methods? How long has keeping records of that kind been a part of the logging industry -- been used as a means for determining the policies of the company?

MURRAY: In operations of any size accounting has been done for a long time, but in many cases the methods were very bad. About 1916 or '17 the Loggers Information Association inaugurated a standardized logging cost statement and the members of the association joined in giving their accounting over to the association to put in standardized form. When the job was completed, every six months the average was sent out to the members and the figures for each individual operation, but without giving the names of those operations. Sometimes it wasn't difficult to tell what operations the figures were from. A fine job done on the whole and it was a help to the industry.

MAUNDER: That was done by an association of loggers?

MURRAY: Yes, they employed a very high grade accountant and it really was quite a move. It suited us very well in our operation. A standardized type of cost accounting enabled us to make comparisons with the average and with other concerns, and while there was a lot to read between the lines -- the different conditions that existed between one operation and another -- nevertheless it was quite enlightening.

MAUNDER: Was this practice brought in consciously to reduce costs or did it evolve gradually from existing practices?

MURRAY: Of course, any thoroughly good cost accounting should be the means of determining whether you're increasing or decreasing your costs, to let you know what you really are doing. I am reminded of a statement one time made to me by a fair-sized operator when I asked him what his logging costs were going to be for that year. He enumerated the costs and the total figures he gave me were very low. I said: "What does that include?" "Oh," he said, "that takes in all the labor." "What about all of your supplies, all of your overhead, your insurance and taxes and general administration expense and all?" He said: "We don't figure that until the end of the year." He was willing to talk about his costs being lower, however. This operator went broke about two years later.

Labor over the years with us ran in the neighborhood of twenty-five to fifty per cent of our costs. When I talk about a logging cost I am not counting common carrier hauls nor am I counting stumpage -- I am really counting the cost of the actual logging operation, putting the logs on railroad cars or trucks headed for market, so I would say that over the years our labor cost was twenty-five to fifty per cent of our total logging cost, exclusive of stumpage and main-line or common carrier haul. People sometimes think of it as though it is the whole cost. Percentage-wise I think it is higher now than it used to be. I am reminded of a statement made sometime ago -- that the cost of building an ordinary residence or home twenty years ago was one-third labor and two-thirds material; today about two-thirds of the total cost is labor and the other third is material, supplies, and administration.

MAUNDER: What relation did these early cost statistics, or cost analyses, have to the estimates that the logging boss prepared of what his expenses would be to log a given area in a given season?

MURRAY: Actually it is a good many years ago that the so-called logging boss made those estimates. Never in my experience did the logging foreman, except when I was foreman myself, ever make those estimates. The person who had to know costs was the person who conceived the idea of buying a particular piece of timber and opening it up, although he might have had some help from a foreman. I can only give you my way of doing it. Whenever I looked at timber with the idea of buying it I went over it very thoroughly and then made an estimate of the various phases of the logging costs, such as building roads, cutting the timber according to the size and quality of it, and then the actual so-called logging operation consisting of the yarding conditions, loading of the logs, and the road haul -- whether it be railroad or whatnot, nowadays largely truck haul -- and overhead. Does that explain it? This could be very much elaborated upon.

MAUNDER: Yes, I think so.

MURRAY: In other words, logging foremen as a rule were not very well versed in actual costs. From experience they knew that with a given number of men with certain equipment and for a certain type of development there should be so many logs a day or so much volume a day, but they were not accustomed to figuring the actual cost. There are two distinct branches in cost -- you might even say three. There is the fixed cost of the stumpage to start with, and then the fixed cost of road development and that sort of thing, and the day-by-day cost in the actual falling and bucking and yarding, loading and hauling. You may have a lot of trouble with yarding and loading and delays of one kind and another, but that has not affected to any great degree the cost per thousand on road development nor has it necessarily affected stumpage cost except in liquidation. It should not in any great degree affect falling and bucking because that is all done ahead independently of daily logging operations. Overhead depends largely upon production. Maybe I still have not made it plain enough, but I hope that more or less answers your question.

MAUNDER: I think it does. Now, let's go on to something else. What in your mind stands out as the major stages involved in logging methods, the history of logging methods in the period in which you have been active in logging? What radical changes have come into the picture that have made the most important changes in the character of logging?

MURRAY: There are two or three basic changes that have come in during my lifetime, during my life in the woods. The first was getting away from long skidroads or fore and aft road hauls, sometimes up to a mile or more, and building more railroad developments which shortened those skidroad hauls. Next, along with the better type of donkey engines, was using so-called overhead logging. Instead of building fore and aft roads or skidroads where we would haul with a big road donkey that might have as much as a mile of line on a main drum, by developing a better railroad system -- nowadays a better truck road system in most cases -- many so-called skyline systems were developed. An overhead stationary line with carriages would go out in the neighborhood of 1,500 feet to do a good job.

MAUNDER: How many logs would ride that skyline at one time?

MURRAY: That would depend upon the system of skyline operation which was used and the size of the logs, equipment and rigging and length of haul and the ground conditions.

MAUNDER: There would never be more than one bundle riding the line at one time?

MURRAY: As a rule, with the systems used out here, not more than one. It isn't a continual proposition. The well-known skyline systems are used to eliminate difficult railroad or truck roads -- not actually to yard the logs, but to swing the logs from a yarding point to be loaded. The outstanding one used here on the Pacific Coast was the so-called North Bend system, which is the simplest of them all. Ordinary donkeys can be used, having drum capacity and power sufficient for the main-line and the haulback and good braking power. It consists of a carriage hung on the skyline with the main skidding line running from the donkey up to lead block on a spar tree and through a fall block. The fall block is in the bight of this line that tailholds on the carriage and the haulback is fastened to the fall block. On the fall block is hanging what we call a butt line. The butt line has a hook in it to which several chokers can be fastened. Sometimes we have used a couple of butt lines maybe twenty or thirty feet apart on a long swing road, trailing one behind the other so that it would be taking in two turns of logs at a time.

Then there is what we call the slack line system. Instead of using a stationary skyline there is an extra machine built with a big drum to hold the overhead skyline and the skyline leads up to a lead at the head spar tree at the landing and is tailholded out to back stumps or spar trees, the same as the North Bend. It is moved from time to time in a road 20 or 30 or 40 feet wide and they work off the side of it the same way as the other system. The butt lines are attached directly to the carriage, which is in the bight of the skyline, and the skyline is lowered to permit the rigging crew to hook on a turn of logs, then raised when yarding the turn in. The bight of the skyline could be pulled to one side or the other, depending on the position of the tail haulback.

Another rather popular system that was developed in the South and the East was the Interlock system. When I talk about these overhead systems I'm talking entirely of a swinging and a roading system which came in on the West Coast before the actual high lead and skyline yarding systems came in, but it was only a short time after these skyline systems were developed out here that they were used for yarding as well as for roading and swinging. I might say that one of the biggest changes in logging was the system of yarding logs either through a skyline system or high lead system, rather than yarding on the ground. That is what we call ground yarding as compared to overhead logging. That is the biggest change that I have seen. Mechanically, the biggest change has come from changing from the slow, compound-geared yarders to the higher direct-geared yarders.

MAUNDER: When did that take place?

MURRAY: That started to take place around 1915 and 1916 to 1920. Then the change went from steam to diesel and gas in these donkey engines. I had considerable to do with the development of the Simplex yarder type as compared to the compound yarder. Many operators used to think that there wasn't enough power or pull unless a set of compound gears was used, but it was merely a question of getting the right ratio in the bull gears and pinions on the crankshaft and proper drum diameters.

MAUNDER: A lot of these technical developments that you speak of were actually worked out right on the job by trial and error by the men who were doing the logging?

MURRAY: Yes, that's right.

MAUNDER: Then what did you do? Did you take your ideas to engineers or people in machinery companies?

MURRAY: To the companies that were making them. Whenever we were in the market for additional new machinery, instead of taking just what they had, once in a while we would require certain changes. It was a difference in application of standards they already had, maybe using them in a different way. By and large, the manufacturers of logging machinery have been very willing to incorporate new ideas. In some cases the changes turned out to be impractical. They have had many different suggestions and generally were willing to give almost any new idea a try.

MAUNDER: It has been said that the history of logging has moved from east to west across the continent but that the history of logging methods has moved in the other direction, from west to east. What would you have to say about this?

MURRAY: Well, I think there is a certain amount of truth in that. To see yarding, loading, and skidding operations in certain parts of the South and parts of the Atlantic Coast -- not so much in New England, but in the mountains of the coast and eastern seaboard, and some phases, but not many, in eastern Canada -- generally their actual yarding operations still are much the same as they have always been -- mostly snow operations. I think crawler tractors have gone from here back there, although they were used extensively in the Inland Empire pine region in logging before we started to use them to any great degree in the Douglas fir region.

MAUNDER: Where do you remember seeing tractors used for the first time?

MURRAY: We had some contractors who used them for some of our work as early as 1922, '23, at Hood's Canal.

MAUNDER: What was that -- a regular farm tractor?

MURRAY: No, it was a crawler -- the crawler type as well as the wheel tractor is used in farming.

MAUNDER: Crawler tractor in 1922, '23?

MURRAY: Of course, there was the old steam tractor that was the forerunner of the gasoline and diesel crawler tractor, made by the Holt people in California. The Best tractor was the forerunner of Caterpillar. As a matter of fact I gave some consideration to a steam tractor in 1909. There was a certain tract of timber which could only be taken out by a poor county road or over the railroad operated by the Cherry Valley Logging Company -- a joint operation of the Fishers and Weyerhaeusers. They very naturally didn't want me in there as they intended to buy it and log it themselves to their railroad, which crossed a corner of it. I finally gave up the idea of the steam crawler tractor because of the length of the haul and the condition of the road. We had no such things as logging trucks or rubber-tired rigs in those days.

MAUNDER: Do you have any recollection as to where steam was first used in the woods to transport logs?

MURRAY: Transport logs? You mean on that type of a tractor?

MAUNDER: Not necessarily on a tractor, but any form of steam transportation that was used in the woods. Do you date it back

to any particular time or place? Was it used first out here in the West or was it used in the Lakes States, or where?

MURRAY: Steam may have come into use at much the same time in the woods throughout the country. There was use of Lidgerwood skidders and overhead systems down south long before we started using overhead systems on the Pacific Coast. They were using steam for loading in Michigan and Wisconsin. There were some interlock overhead skidders of the Lidgerwood type used in Michigan and Wisconsin. We normally do not talk about skidders as transportation, but they are a part of the transportation of logs from where they lie after felling and bucking to the loading point.

In the early days of logging in this part of the country there was a tremendous lot of timber close to tidewater or big rivers on which the mills were located, and there were a good many different systems of getting logs into the water. Going out a relatively short distance, up to half a mile or a mile, there were a lot of fore and aft roads and cross skidroads used. Cross skidroads were used where bulls or horses were used on the road. The fore and aft road, which was more or less like a trough, used big road donkeys pulling as much as a mile. However, in many cases in the early days when bulls or horses were used, skidroads were often two or more miles in length. We had one big road donkey at one unit of our operation where we had several hauls that were practically a mile in length on fore and aft roads. Spur development and skylines changed the picture.

MAUNDER: Well, I think it's F. W. Criswell who says that yellow pine operations used steam railroads for the first time.

MURRAY: What Criswell is that -- of Pacific Car & Foundry?

MAUNDER: F. W. Criswell is the name that I have a note on, and I think I saw that in one of the Pacific Logging Congress proceedings.

MURRAY: If it was Pacific Logging Congress, chances are it was Criswell of the Pacific Car & Foundry. I used to do a lot of business with him.

MAUNDER: It's the south?

murray: Where steam railroads were first used? Probably so.

MAUNDER: The Dolbeer donkey came along in the early 1880's, didn't it?

MURRAY: Down in the redwood country. Very shortly after that, maybe almost at the same time, the manufacturers of industrial hoist equipment -- the Lidgerwood was among them, and the old Mundy, and several others made back east . . . . Donkey engines made back there were very small and used for such things as hoisting and pile driving. The actual development of the logging donkey with its changes over the years started from the hoist manufactured in the East. They made them bigger and stronger and better in every way as time went on, with different drum arrangements for different purposes, and finally developed such machines as that big skidder you saw pictured in our office.

MAUNDER: I think it's E. G. Swigert of Hyster who says that the steam-driven tractors came as early as 1893.

MURRAY: They were not used to any great degree -- I never heard of them being used out here in the woods.

MAUNDER: They had eight-foot driving wheels.

MURRAY: There might have been some here but I think there were more in the pine country and to some extent in the redwoods. They did not become universal at all in the industry. The so-called "big wheels" were a forerunner of the logging arch of today. They were used quite successfully for many years in the pine country.

MAUNDER: They were imported out here from the Lakes States?

MURRAY: Yes, they used them back in Michigan.

MAUNDER: They were called the "Michigan high wheel."

MURRAY: I have seen quite a bit of logging with them doing very good work. When they first started using cats, crawler tractors, they still used the big wheels behind the tractors before the arch came into use. The tractor arch was finally developed and that did away with the big wheels. The tractor arch had the crawler the same as the tractor itself, although now many rubber-tired arches are used.

MAUNDER: Is that perhaps why the crawler tractor was used in the pine region first before it was used in the fir?

MURRAY: Horses pulled the big wheels before the tractor was used, but with a bundle of small stuff the big wheels could be pulled better with the tractor than with horses. It was kind of natural for the crawler tractor to come out. The problem was to design one that could pull the big wheels and do a better job than the horses.

MAUNDER: Here in the fir region and the redwood region I would imagine it was harder to handle the big-size logs with a thing like that.

MURRAY: They couldn't use the big wheels in our terrain with the roughness of the country and the heft of the timber on the ground. In the Inland Empire pine country, where much of the land was smooth as a pancake, logs were skidded to railroad spurs by the big wheels and horses, later with arches and crawler tractors, and were either decked for loading later or loaded hot with the so-called skid-type loader or McGiffert loader. Later on the shovel-type loader was used. This type has been in use by the Murrays for about fifteen years.

MAUNDER: Then, of course, there was the coming of the logging truck. When did it first make its appearance?

MURRAY: The rubber-tired truck?

MAUNDER: Yes.

MURRAY: The first ones that I remember were somewhere between 1915 and 1920. They weren't very successful for more reasons than one. The trucks themselves were a long way from being very well built. It was a new proposition and only small loggers and those who didn't know too much about logging would try to haul logs with trucks. They only went after very small patches of timber that didn't justify building railroads. I can remember how we used to think that no logging except small patches would ever be done with trucks. We used to wonder how soon these patches were going to be cleaned up. They were generally a depressing influence on the log market because the little fellows would often sell to the first buyer who came along. Most of them would go broke in time.

In the past ten or fifteen years, however, railroads have been pulled up and trucking has come in as in cases like our operation and like Weyerhaeuser's operations at Snoqualmie and White River, and many other places. Actually, sometimes it is a little difficult at first glance, particularly in certain operations of high volume, to beat the railroad. As a matter of fact, the railroad still does come in on extra long hauls. The unit cost in some cases may actually be higher hauling by truck on a main-line haul even on not too long a distance. However, there are so many other advantages, principally in spur development where the flexibility and strategy of getting into the timber and having a good location for settings for logging is tenfold better by truck than by railroad in rough terrain. The railroad is limited to grade and curvature, whereas to all intents and purposes there is no limit to grade and curvature of a truck road. It also eliminates most of the long donkey hauls, skyline hauls and long cat swings.

MAUNDER: To what extent do you think the coming of the bulldozer has influenced the ability of loggers to use trucks?

MURRAY: Well, I'll put it another way. The coming of the bulldozer was a development in the use of the tractor. Before the bulldozer came in we had to rely on shovels and chunkout donkeys. There is a great deal of logging road construction that is much cheaper, better, and oftentimes faster without a shovel on the job, doing it altogether with a dozer. With a large operation, though, in rough country there will be some situations, some areas, where a shovel is indispensable. But, if I have your question accurately, it was more or less how the bulldozer benefited logging to start with.

MAUNDER: I thought perhaps from what you had said earlier that one of the advantages that the truck has is that you can take the truck to points in your operation that are not easily accessible, where you can't always make a railroad go. Well, now, was it possible to take the truck into these points because of a revolution in equipment for road building?

MURRAY: No. You could build the same road with a shovel, but in a good many cases you could probably do it cheaper in certain areas with a dozer, but there are some places where you could do it cheaper with a shovel than with a dozer.

MAUNDER: Then, too, the truck did precede the bulldozer on this thing, didn't it?

MURRAY: You are confusing the dozer. The dozer is used mostly in construction, although there are a lot of things you can use the dozer for -- in yarding and around landings, such as rigging a dozer to push logs off a car or push logs into the water or clean a rollway or a landing. In yarding, a dozer on the front end of the tractor speeds up the yarding. Where you are yarding logs with a dozer and cats, it makes it easy to chunk out roads for the individual logs, in addition to making it easier to put chokers on by rolling out the logs.

MAUNDER: One of the things I was building up to ask you was this: World War I, as all wars seem to do, greatly stimulated the development of vehicles like the truck, things like the crawler tractor, and I wonder whether or not it didn't have quite a profound effect on your industry? Trucks came in for the first time after 1920, didn't they? It was in the twenties that they began to log with trucks on a bigger scale?

MURRAY: Well, it was a long time after the twenties before they started using very many trucks on a larger scale.

MAUNDER: When did truck logging start with a real rush?

MURRAY: Between '35 and '40, and, of course, there has been steady improvement in the technique of truck hauling and in the type of trucks being made and improvement in road construction.

MAUNDER: In other words, it didn't come really in any serious degree until the depression years?

MURRAY: Yes, and I would say that trucking as it is done today by the big outfits has only been going on for ten or fifteen years. In our own operation we gave up the railroad only two years ago. We were probably a little slower than most in doing it, but the fact of the matter is that I had in mind cutting out the railroad before we sold the West Fork Logging Company operation to St. Regis and I was very anxious to see them cut out the railroad at an early date.

As a matter of fact, my son Tom in his thesis for his master's degree in logging engineering at the University of Washington wrote a very interesting and fine report on the replacement of railroads with truck operations. Of course, the situation up there was especially fine for it as we had a lake at the town of Mineral. Using a truck of the right type -- the so-called "off-highway equipment," with 12-foot bunks on the truck -- obviously meant a much bigger load and easier handling. The Mineral operation has no public highway hauls all the way to the lake. The logs are dumped into a fresh-water lake where they are sorted and stored and then loaded onto the Milwaukee Railroad to Tacoma. It is quite advantageous having the lake to store logs and take care of situations such as car shortage and market conditions.

MAUNDER: Mr. Murray, could you give us some background of your experience in labor relations during the time you have been in the logging industry?

MURRAY: I like to go back in my labor relations to the time when I became in direct contact with the men in the woods, at the time I started the West Fork Logging Company in 1911, when I was chief cook and bottle washer. We had no IWW or organized trouble in those days. In the early years, between 1911 and 1916, '17, and '18, probably among the worst years, we did have a big percentage of short-stake men. A big portion of the men were good for only a short time, then would go to town and shoot their wads in a few days or a week or two. They might come back to our camp or go to some other camp.

They often got their jobs from the employment offices on Pacific Avenue in Tacoma or the skidrow in Seattle. There were a flock of such offices there and you would see jobs pasted up on the board here and there, and they'd pay something for them. A lot of "do-gooders" used to come out with

a lot of stories about the evils of the employment offices taking the men's money to get them a job, but ninety-nine per cent of them were untrue. I never came in contact with outfits where men were canned by the company's foreman or superintendent in order to provide more employment fees for the employment agents. I don't say that it probably hasn't been done, but I have never in all my experience come across it. A major percentage of the men were unmarried and were a pretty shiftless lot. You could never depend on many of them for any length of time. They were here today and gone tomorrow, and if something happened that didn't quite suit them -- down the road they'd go. You had to get used to handling men like that.

In 1917 we had the first IWW trouble and a big strike was pulled off in 1919 throughout the country. We had our Camp #1 shut down, not because of the strike but had shut it down because of the logging situation there. We did have Camp #2 going with about 120 men there. We heard about the IWW strikes here, there, and everywhere, and we were on the lookout for them. My camp superintendent was away and I was running the camp myself.

As I said, we were on the lookout for any IWW organizers, and sure enough, one came in. I can see him now, walking up the track. He came in just about noontime and walked into the cookhouse along with the crew. I sat down close to him; he didn't know who I was because I was dressed the same as the rest of the men. In those days we were working fairly close to camp and took the men back and forth on flat cars. We brought them into camp at noon because we weren't working more than a few miles out. There was a long row of bunkhouses along the railroad track and when I was ready to roll out the men after lunch, I'd have the locomotive whistle, and they would climb aboard to go back into the woods.

When I rolled them out this fellow hastily climbed up on one of the flat cars and called the attention of the crew and they all gathered around him. He told them about the big strike that was on throughout the whole country in the lumber industry and went on to say that those who did not join the IWW would not be able to get a job anywhere and wouldn't be able to buy food in a week's time as they were taking over the whole country, and all that sort of thing. He hadn't more than said it than I climbed up myself and said, "All aboard." Everybody got on the train with the exception of twelve Scandinavian railroad graders. Most of our grading was done by hand in those days. We did have a shovel about a year or two later. At that time we had what we called "station men" who

took contracts and worked by hand.

It wasn't very difficult to build railroads in those early years as our construction was fairly light and in good country. These Scandinavian graders, mostly Swedes, were scared to death by this proclamation spieled out by the organizer and they all walked over to the office. I didn't go out on the train with the men but went to the office. When these men -- some of whom I'd known for quite a time -- came into the office for their checks, several wept. They didn't know why they were quitting -- this fellow just bulldozed them into it. None of the rest of the crew quit and we ran there all during the entire strike. The outfit nearest to us and all the other operations in that area went on strike. We logged continuously through the strike but I had to keep very close contact with the men because of the wild rumors being broadcast -- not radio.

I finally got hold of an undercover man who happened to be an ex-Canadian soldier and put him to work in the cookhouse. Every time a new man came to camp he would be closely watched and when the men went to the woods the undercover man would go through his roll or bag or suitcase, if he had one. Once in a while he would find some IWW literature, but that fellow would be going down the road in a short time unless I personally thought him OK. One time a letter postmarked from Seattle came for one of the fellows of whom we had been suspicious -- it was opened illegally. The letter was written by a fellow who had already been there and he said, "I can't see anything wrong with that outfit. The boss is just like we are. I've seen him out in the woods working as hard as anybody." Another fellow wrote a letter and he said, "I can't understand it, but it just happens that our men are being laid off and we don't know why." It was rather amusing. We ran that whole season while practically all the rest of them closed down.

MAUNDER: And you think you were able to do this because you had inside information?

MURRAY: The percentage of my men who would fall for that sort of stuff was very small. These Scandinavian station men were just scared into the thing.

MAUNDER: What were most of your men? Were they of any particular nationality?

MURRAY: A lot of them were Scandinavians. In those days we did not have a big percentage of Greeks or Hungarians or Austrians. We had some, yes, but not a lot. We had a larger percentage of so-called "white men" than most other camps as I was a little partial to them and most of the men liked to work in a so-called white man's outfit. A lot of Americans

liked to be where there were mostly Americans. Some of these Americans weren't worth much either but, by and large, they averaged better.

MAUNDER: I'm not quite sure I understand what you mean by Americans.

MURRAY: Well, we used to call the Greeks, Hungarians, Austrians, and Italians "black men." The Greeks were the poorest and I drew the line on Japs. We had a few Italians on the railroad section, and that's the only place we used Greeks, but we did use quite a few Austrians on the rigging -- and the Scandinavians -- the Norwegians, Swedes and Finns.

The Finns were apt to be troublesome. Some of them would get to be pretty wild when drunk and would fight with knives. I remember a good many years later when I was running a camp and the bullcook came to me this particular morning and said, "I couldn't sleep any last night because fighting was going on all night in the room next to me." They were fighting with knives and had been quite drunk (we weren't often bothered with their packing that stuff into camp).

Later in the day I was in the office when one of the Finns came in for his time and he was quite groggy. The bullcook had told me in the meantime that he had gone and looked at their room and there was blood on the beds and some on the walls. I said, "You come with me and look at this layout." I got hold of the other fellow also and took them both to the room. There was blood all over the beds and some splashed on the wall, but they weren't badly hurt. I said, "Now you fellows are going to pay for all of this." They were just as meek as lambs, both of them, when I got rid of them. I had the timekeeper charge them fully. Those things used to happen, but not often.

The 1917 strike ended in the fall and we lost no time but we were a little short-handed. By and large, the majority of the men in the woods weren't for the strike at all, but it was just like the Communist situation today. It only takes a handful of them to make an awful lot of noise and trouble. In highly unionized outfits you may have ninety per cent of the men who don't give a damn one way or the other about the union, but still the organized action is about one hundred per cent. When my son Tom started for St. Regis in the woods at Mineral in 1946, he had to join the union in order to get a job on the section gang and occasionally he went to a union meeting. They had a call from the union office in Tacoma for an assessment of a dollar a man to help put over some political job. The secretary didn't do much talking about it but said he wanted to put this assessment to a vote. Tom stood on his

feet and asked what it was for -- they couldn't tell him, but they all voted for the assessment except Tom and the man sitting next to him.

MAUNDER: They all voted for the assessment?

MURRAY: Yes. Psychologically, the individual man votes for it because he thinks he's probably the only one opposed to it or he doesn't want to run the chance of being bawled out. Generally, I know when they are telling me the straight stuff and when they are not, when they talk to me. The one thing that you can't convince them of easily, or you don't try to, is that so-and-so believes the same way. You probably know that out of a hundred men psychologically you may have half a dozen men or less who are running the show. They have it all figured out -- one gets on his feet and one or two of the others are framed up in support, and the rest sit back and don't do a thing in opposition because they are fearful that they might get into difficulties. If they are kicked out of the union, they might not get a job where there is union organization, and they don't hesitate to let you know that. The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen was helpful to some extent during the IWW troubles in 1917-1918.

MAUNDER: What was the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen? How was it formed?

MURRAY: I believe it was the idea of General Brice Disque of the army who organized the so-called Spruce Division to further the production of spruce lumber for airplane construction.

MAUNDER: Was this a war-time measure?

MURRAY: Yes, it was. In the 1919 IWW trouble two men were shot and killed during the American Legion parade on Armistice Day in Centralia, Washington. At that time I was on the Law and Order Committee and had received a letter written in red ink giving me three days to live.

MAUNDER: Did you keep it?

MURRAY: Yes, I did, but have been unable to find it for a long time.

MAUNDER: Were you active in the 4L movement?

MURRAY: I supported it but was not very active.

MAUNDER: Was this something that the members of your crew belonged to?

MURRAY: Yes, most of the men did.

MAUNDER: Was the 4L something that had to have members of both management and the men?

MURRAY: That was the general idea.

MAUNDER: Well, what was your next experience with organized labor?

MURRAY: As I said, we had trouble in 1919 but after that we had little difficulty with any type of organized labor until 1935.

MAUNDER: What provoked that?

MURRAY: Franklin D. Roosevelt for one. The New Dealers were largely responsible for the Wagner Act and the support of militant organized labor.

MAUNDER: How did your difficulty arise in 1935?

MURRAY: The AF of L Carpenters and Joiners Union decided to organize the Lumber Workers Union out here on the coast as being a fertile field for dues. They started in the spring of 1935, giving out a lot of press releases about the big strike that was to take place in the entire lumber industry. Practically nobody knew much about it except what they read in the papers. Those of us who were watching it closely couldn't get very much information until a few days before the strike. Pickets came to our operation and were largely professionals -- they hadn't worked for us.

MAUNDER: When was that? In the summer of 1935?

MURRAY: In May of 1935, if I remember correctly.

MAUNDER: How many pickets came to your operation?

MURRAY: At one time we had 400 or 500 for a few hours one day.

MAUNDER: And what did they do?

MURRAY: They swarmed around and kept us from getting our men out to the woods on trains. The day of the strike we had a full day in the woods, but it was the next day the trouble began.

MAUNDER: Did you keep your operation open?

MURRAY: No, we were closed down by force. We had no protection of any kind until we made an attempt to start up a month or so later. We still were bothered by pickets who moved in almost overnight and we decided to get some protection. The Governor

in Olympia arranged to give us two highway patrolmen to be stationed at our headquarters at Mineral.

MAUNDER: Who was the governor at that time?

MURRAY: Clarence Martin.

MAUNDER: What representations were made to you by the unions at that time?

MURRAY: None at all.

MAUNDER: They didn't come to you before the strike?

MURRAY: They didn't come to us at all.

MAUNDER: What did they do when they started to picket you? Did they come to you then?

MURRAY: No, not to start with.

MAUNDER: When did they make their first appearance?

MURRAY: I don't remember how long it was after the strike started. After it had settled down and the professional pickets left, they had about twenty or twenty-five of our former men on the picket line. One of them acted as speaker for the group and came to see me every once in a while, sitting down and talking about the thing when there wasn't much to talk about. I don't know that he was an organizer but he was chosen to be the boss of the pickets up there. We didn't take any of them back until about October.

MAUNDER: In the meantime what were you doing? Were you operating?

MURRAY: We started up in July with the help of these patrolmen and got going again with a seventy-five per cent crew.

MAUNDER: What did the patrolmen do?

MURRAY: Not much of anything. It was more or less a psychological effect. They were armed, of course, and they had some gas bombs which they did not have to use, but they were ready to throw them several times.

MAUNDER: What did they do -- station themselves at the hotel?

MURRAY: Yes, they were stationed in our hotel at headquarters.

MAUNDER: They were permanently assigned?

MURRAY: Yes.

MAUNDER: You told me earlier about how you brought your men in to the camp when the pickets were there.

MURRAY: These were new men. They weren't the men who were living there. As we needed new men to add to our crew I used to go to town and bring in a caravan of cars with men.

MAUNDER: Down where?

MURRAY: Seattle and Tacoma. We hired a bunch of new men and talked sense to them and got many up to the woods that way. Once in a while we'd start out with four, five, or six cars and we'd end up there with only three or four. The pickets would stop them along the road and talk to them -- some would get cold feet.

MAUNDER: Was there any violence at all?

MURRAY: Yes, there was. Several of our men were beaten up quite badly.

MAUNDER: When were they beaten up? Under what conditions?

MURRAY: Just going across the street from the hotel to the pool hall. They soon found out they couldn't do that without getting hurt. We did have one shooting scrape. We got started with a crew again in July of 1935, after having been closed down for about six weeks. They still had pickets along our railroad tracks at headquarters every morning when we would go out. Of course, we had a couple of highway patrolmen there who prevented any violence.

We did have violence, however -- such things as having a couple of oil tank cars turned loose on a grade and wrecked. In one area the railroad track was blown up, and our log boom on Mineral Lake was opened up and logs strewn all over the lake. One of our men who had been tormented several mornings by one of the pickets with a slingshot decided he was going to take matters into his own hands. So he took a six-shooter with him this particular morning. The picket was standing on the roof of a woodshed near headquarters, getting ready to aim his slingshot. Our man took a shot at him with his six-shooter and knocked the slingshot out of his hand. Of course, that brought about his arrest.

MAUNDER: Was he prosecuted?

MURRAY: No. They let him out after they got all the circumstances that led up to the shooting. Pickets were there every morning for months, and once in a while rocks were thrown from the brush along the railroad. I had one little souvenir. I was driving a speeder myself one morning when a rock about the size of an egg was thrown at me. It hit the brake lever of the speeder and dropped dead there. I still have the rock as a paperweight. Rocks were thrown at the passenger coaches and I can remember at least one occasion when we stopped the train and all the loggers got out with me to try to locate these fellows, but we were not fast enough.

The situation remained much the same until the middle of October, when we decided to let a few of the pickets who were our former employees go back to work. The pickets who had worked for us were railroaded into the picket line. They were camping and sleeping in tents in the middle of the street in front of our hotel and the weather was cold. For one reason and another I told the fellow who was assuming to be boss of the picket line that I would put them all back to work, with the exception of the one fellow who caused the shooting by using the slingshot. We put them back to work without dealing with the union. It was the next summer before we entered into a union contract with them. Our neighbors had done so a few days after the strike started in May.

MAUNDER: Your neighboring logging operations?

MURRAY: They all caved in to start with, except Mr. Demerest* of the Pacific National Lumber Company and Tom Mills of the Pacific States Lumber Company. If the rest had done as we three did the union might not have gone so far. I don't believe that the unions are all wrong theoretically. I think they have as much right to exist as business organizations -- if properly run.

Business is very competitive within itself, whereas there isn't much competition between one union workman who is supposedly a good union member and another workman who is a strong union man. They apparently do not believe much in competition. The situation was tough because all during the strike period they were trying to pick off our crew one at a time to join the union and I was trying to talk them out of it, watching this fellow and that fellow we thought might be susceptible to union propaganda.

It worked all right until the latter part of November when I went to New York on a business trip for about ten days. When I returned to the coast I immediately went up to the woods. The section foreman who was standing in front of the

*Demarest

counter in the office was a chap who had been with us for a good many years -- a rather harmless sort of fellow, but I remembered that in years gone by he had often talked of the advantages of unionism -- the railroad men were fairly well organized. He made the statement that things were going to run quite smoothly from then on because most of the boys had joined up while I was away. I said, "I don't know, Herman, whether you're going to be any better off or not. You may have a lot of trouble. The first thing you know some union business agent might come in here and tell me that I'll have to have blue door knobs instead of white ones and I'm going to ask him what's he got to do with what kind of door knobs we have around here."

Within two minutes after that remark a chap came in to tell me he was the business agent for the union up there. I guess he didn't know the section foreman, but he said, " I understand you're having some trouble here," although there hadn't been any trouble. That was the beginning of it and it is a rather long story. By the following summer we signed a contract with the union.

MAUNDER: By the following summer you say you signed a contract with the union. Did that derive from the fact that a growing number of the men in your employ indicated their desire to be a member of the union?

MURRAY: I certainly would not say it indicated their desires by a long shot. I would say they were made to believe that they had to join the union and all that sort of thing. The rest of the industry pretty much caved in and all the log booms in Tacoma have been organized for a long time.

We have had a strike on for the last two months now and our log booms are down tight. There are about five or six log booms in Tacoma, which employ a total of about 75 or 80 men, and that has thrown about 3,000 men in the woods out of work and it is still going on. It so happens there is quite a softness in the log market and an over-supply of logs so it hasn't hurt too much at this time. At Mineral we put logs into Mineral Lake until less than two weeks ago. I'm just as sure as I'm sitting here that a few Communists are at the bottom of it.

MAUNDER: You mean in the present union?

MURRAY: In the CIO rafters' union.

MAUNDER: Is that a part of the CIO?

MURRAY: Yes.

MAUNDER: Is there an IWW?

MURRAY: It's not IWW -- it's IWA. There have been some good results from unionism, but not because of the treatment many union officials like to hand out. After we got started, on the whole we managed to get along fairly well with the union officials in our particular area. As far as feeling toward the company, our men seem to be very little affected by having joined the union, although they are subject to whatever the union bosses tell them to do.

MAUNDER: Do you think the unions have done anything for the men or that it's improved their lot any?

MURRAY: Yes and no. We were talking the other day about the demands made here in the boom and rafters' strike. This was two or three weeks ago, and they estimated then that it would take six years to make up for their lost time, providing they kept on working steadily. What makes me think it is Communistic is that they are asking for a very small raise; however, any raise at all is not warranted in the face of the lumber market being in the bad shape it is, with prices dropping. In my opinion, it was a very subtle move to show their power to make the industry come through with a raise, probably thinking many in the industry would say, "Well, it's such a small amount we might as well give in instead of being on strike." But there are just enough in the industry who for the principle of it are not going to give in. It so happens that our Silver Creek Logging Company is still operating as it trucks all the way from the woods to the mill.

MAUNDER: Can we talk a little bit now, Mr. Murray, about the history of forest fire in the woods as you've seen it? What was the attitude towards fire on the part of the loggers in the days when you were starting to log as compared with what it has become in recent years?

MURRAY: We've had laws in this state and most of the forest states which require abating the slash hazard after logging operations. The vast majority of the logging operations in the Douglas fir region are on a clear-cut basis which leaves no timber standing but leaves a terrific amount of debris or slash on the ground. The philosophy back of that type of abatement means burning the slash at a time when it

is possible to control it, either in the spring of the year or in the fall.

There are two schools of thought -- one is for the spring of the year when the standing timber in the woods is still very, very wet and even the outside slash sometimes isn't too dry. If the humidity gets down low enough in the early summer or spring you can get a quick flash fire which will burn very lightly over the fine stuff, but not much more than that. When that's accomplished it will blacken the ground and make it fireproof to the extent that no fire will start there from a spark. However, the bad part of early summer or late spring burning is that unless you do a good cleanup job in getting out fires that persist around old landings or snags, brush piles, and so forth, fires can carry into the summer and the dry season. Over the years the fall burn has been the most popular burn on the part of the old-timer logger because he felt that there was not much danger from carry-over fires. The ideal situation would be to have a streak of low humidity in the late summer or early fall, with indications for rain in the forecast, and then properly handling the starting of those fires -- which in itself is quite a technique in knowing how to do it and where to do it and when. For instance, if you have a big hillside slash, wherever possible you would start at the top and work down because if you start from the bottom the heat rises and generates more heat and you get a terrific fire that may get away and go over the top.

Getting back to the difference between the fall burn and the spring burn, the former is generally a much more severe burn and if rain does not materialize you may have a more serious situation than you would in a spring fire when the woods are still moist from the winter rains. A crown fire, which is a top fire and the most dangerous fire, will get started on the ground and run up dead trees. The dangerous fire in the fall is the big fire that gets started when everything is so dry from the ground up and sparks fly from the tops, particularly into dead trees, creating a dangerous and difficult situation to control. The fall burn makes the ground a lot safer from probable future fires but there is no way of absolutely fireproofing the ground as a lot of these areas will burn two and three times under certain conditions. With the advent of much better fire fighting equipment to put out fires I have been in favor of the spring burns. I think that's what is meant by the term "light burn."

MAUNDER: There's a fellow at Montana State who's doing a paper on the history of light burning and I thought maybe the term had some application here. It's evidently a term that's used over east.

MURRAY: Maybe it is. A quick flash fire burns up the fine stuff so that a spark or match or cigarette would not start a fire afterwards. The quick flash fire hasn't hurt the soil, whereas a hard fall burn often destroys the humus of the soil and sets the land back centuries to produce the same type of timber as was there originally.

MAUNDER: What can you tell me about the efforts that have been made over the years of the loggers to fight fires?

MURRAY: There have been tremendous improvements. In the first place, the loggers themselves, the management, and the public are becoming more fire conscious and a lot of important rules and regulations have been put into effect. Humidity instruments are used extensively so that the low periods of humidity are carefully watched. Relative humidity of 30% is considered the danger point.

MAUNDER: What about the cooperative efforts of the loggers? A number of associations were formed to prevent fires. Did the loggers have an active part in these?

MURRAY: The loggers and timber owners started the associations.

MAUNDER: They formed associations like the Washington Forest Fire Association?

MURRAY: Yes, and that is a private association. Unless the timber owner pays into the Washington Forest Fire Association the state levies a patrol tax.

MAUNDER: The associations started back about 1908. Do you remember the beginnings?

MURRAY: No, I don't. There has been a Washington Forest Fire Association for as long as I can remeber.

MAUNDER: When did your company come into it?

MURRAY: Right from the time we started logging at West Fork.

MAUNDER: That would have been about 1911?

MURRAY: Yes. Unless you are in an area where you have an effective private association like the Washington Forest Fire Association the state assumes the obligation and attempts to provide necessary protection. There is no fire association east of the Cascade Mountains, and there the state levies the patrol tax.

MAUNDER: There aren't as many big conflagrations as there used to be?

MURRAY: There are not. As I said before, a lot of that is due to fire consciousness and better planning, better equipment, and in later years logging the ground cleaner, leaving less inflammable material. Actually, there has been a great change in the whole fire problem. In many cases now the state is not forcing slash to be burned, recognizing that proper policing in many cases will do a better job in the long run than burning the slash. With proper policing preventing fires from getting started they may save a conflagration. Many of the conflagrations of the past have resulted from fires purposely set to burn slash. I would say, going way back, that the majority, or at least a large portion, of our tremendous losses have been from fires getting away which were purposely set. The big Tillamook fire was a forced burning, so I understand.

MAUNDER: Wasn't that the fire that started with a logging chain running over a punky log and the friction starting the fire?

MURRAY: That's the way a lot of fires start but I had heard that the Forest Service had a good deal to do with forcing slash to be burned and it got away from them. There are many ways a fire can get started in the woods by friction of lines and so forth; however, fires have been fewer since we stopped using steam donkeys, particularly donkeys burning wood. That was our greatest fire hazard, in addition to oil and coal burning locomotives. Now we're getting away from spark-emitting locomotives and spark-emitting donkey engines. It is possible, however, for a diesel to throw some fire, but not very often. There was also the possibility of fires starting from brake shoes throwing sparks in railroad operations.

Part Two

(This is the second in a series of interviews with Mr. L. T. Murray, Sr., made in his home in Tacoma).

MAUNDER: Mr. Murray, I think tonight we'll see what we can do about covering another area of history and perhaps we can start out by having you review changes in the marketing of logs over the past fifty years.

MURRAY: Roughly speaking, up until thirty or forty years ago logs were generally sold without segregating or sorting them into various rafts or packages, so to speak. For instance, Douglas fir logs and whatever hemlock went in with them were generally rafted together and shoved through the mills that way to make lumber out of them. Of course, for years there were some special logs of the lower type of cedar that had gone to shingle mills with the higher type of cedar going to the sawmills to make cedar lumber. Not until about forty years ago were logs graded to such an extent that a certain type of old-growth yellow fir was put into what we call the shop-type of raft. It was a lower grade log than logs going

to the plywood plant, but it furnished the opportunity to cut door stock and that sort of thing. The higher type of the old growth was commencing to go into plywood. The medium-sized logs and the small logs went into two different kinds of sawmills. The very small ones commenced to go into the gang-type mills which made just a certain type of lumber, generally dimension, small lumber and boards. The mills that cut medium-sized logs cut a general run of lumber from the ordinary grades of common lumber up into a fair percentage of the higher clear grades.

Forty years ago logs were rafted only three or four ways -- today there might be a dozen pockets for sorting logs that would suit a particular type of mill. As an example, today we raft hemlock and white fir for pulp, and the higher type of hemlock and white fir (noble fir) for plywood stock and lumber. During the last ten or fifteen years the sawmills operating on Puget Sound have been forced to use a much bigger percentage of hemlock than before with the lower grade going for pulp.

MAUNDER: Let me ask you something. In your early operations did you have many customers or only a few?

MURRAY: We had many customers but they were scattered from one end of Puget Sound to the other because there were a lot more mills then than there are today. Today we have more specialty mills, like the plywood plants, the pulp mills, and the shop-type mill, in addition to the cargo-type and the general all-purpose rail sawmill.

MAUNDER: What I'm getting at is this: As the volume of your logging increased, did the number of your buyers increase commensurately, or did you begin as time went on to sell a higher percentage of your logs to big purchasers?

MURRAY: In the open log markets such as Puget Sound, Grays Harbor, Columbia River, and Vancouver, B. C., logs were generally sold to large operators, and sales were generally good-sized deals -- maybe from a raft to several rafts, which might be a few hundred thousand to a million feet or more. Oftentimes contracts were made for several million feet and sometimes deals were even made for a year's supply of a certain type of log. A lot of it was done on verbal understandings which could be cut off by either party at any time. There isn't much of that sort of thing being done today, partly because there are fewer mills and fewer areas of timber, and because much of the timber now is tied up by the mills in existence and is often operated on a trading basis, as I made reference to earlier.

MAUNDER: In other words, the bulk of your production in more recent years has been pretty much earmarked for a relatively few companies? And as time has gone on the number of these companies has gradually diminished in number?

MURRAY: That's quite right.

MAUNDER: Now, in just the last few years most of your logs have been going to what companies?

MURRAY: Most of them have been going to the St. Regis Paper Company, the Harbor Plywood Corporation, and some logs to other mills in the Sound area. A few have been exported.

MAUNDER: Exported where?

MURRAY: To Japan.

MAUNDER: For what purpose?

MURRAY: For lumber manufacture there.

MAUNDER: All different species or just one particular kind?

MURRAY: To some extent all species, yes, but one of the species that has probably had the biggest call in recent years has been the so-called white fir, the proper name being Pacific silver fir, or the Latin name of Abies amabilis. Much has gone in the form of cants rather than logs.

MAUNDER: The Japanese have been making that into lumber?

MURRAY: Yes. They bought cants as well as logs to re-saw into smaller sizes. A good many logs have been sent to Japan in the past and some of them are being sent now -- probably a bit more recently than for quite a few years.

MURRAY: Can you tell me a little something about the mechanics of selling logs in the open market from the beginning up until now? How have you sold your logs?

MAUNDER: Many of the mills on tidewater have done little or no logging over the years and have been classed as log-buying mills, generally owning no timber. Others have done some logging but have bought most of their logs in the open market. Today, however, most of the strictly log-buying mills are out of business because of the timber situation. In the old days when there were plenty of logs on the open market many of the most successful mills were those which bought a large portion of their logs. They were able to fill their orders better by buying certain types of logs, rather than depending entirely upon their own log production, if any. We had what might be called regular customers to whom we sold from

time to time at the prevailing market prices for the different species and grades. Some sales were made in rather large quantities, either at set prices or market prices at the time of delivery of each raft of logs.

MAUNDER: Were you your own salesman for your logs in the early days?

MURRAY: Yes, I sold our logs for a good many years, but later on many sales were made by our log boom manager. Today our volume of logs sold on the so-called open market is relatively small.

MAUNDER: They're sold before they ever come out of the woods?

MURRAY: Today the logs cut from our timber are going to St. Regis Paper Company, under contract, although our Silver Creek Division does market some logs.

MAUNDER: Now you have a market of scarcity. Years ago when you began you had a very dissimilar market. Isn't that right?

MURRAY: Well, there were many periods when there was a scarcity of logs for one reason or another -- because of an exceedingly good lumber demand or bad conditions of weather -- which ultimately was an incentive for over-production resulting in lower prices for logs. The log market was also affected by the general economic situation. Even today with fewer mills on Puget Sound there often are periods of over-supply of logs, with generally lower prices.

MAUNDER: Let's go back to the time when you were beginning as a logger about 1909. What was the method that you used then? You would go and buy or contract to cut a piece of property?

MURRAY: We bought most of our timber outright, although we have over the years had many cutting contracts somewhat similar to the contract with St. Regis Paper Company in connection with cutting our timber. We did, however, buy timber based upon the sale of the logs as most of our logs were sold, as I stated before, on the open market. Many years ago we sold logs delivered to mills along the line of the Tacoma Eastern Railroad, which was a branch of the Milwaukee Road, but the bulk of our logs went to Tacoma to be sold in rafts. Like any other commodity, the scarcity of logs generally made buyers plentiful, whereas a plentiful supply had a reverse effect.

MAUNDER: You would take your logs out of the woods and bring them in by railroad. You would either sell them to mills along the line or you would put them into a log boom. At what point did the buyer of the logs take over the transportation job? Would he assume the problem of getting the logs from the boom to his own mill or would you have to do that?

MURRAY: Generally the logging operation would put the logs into rafts of different types of logs and have them scaled for grade and volume, upon which the sale invoice was made. Logs sold to a rail mill generally would be on an f.o.b. scale basis at the mill. On tidewater they generally paid the towing of the logs from the operator's boom wherever the boom was located on Puget Sound.

MAUNDER: Did you ever own tugboats of your own?

MURRAY: Yes, we did, but sold them after a short period of operation as it was a business all its own and very few loggers ever found it profitable.

MAUNDER: Well, how has the marketing picture changed? Can you detail the changes any more than you already have over the last fifty years?

MURRAY: I believe I have pointed out that we are selling logs now in very many more different grades and types than we used to. If you were to go to our log boom you might see as many as a dozen different rafts being made up -- large logs, small logs, high quality logs and different species of logs of many different grades.

MAUNDER: When did the change take place?

MURRAY: It has been going on for perhaps twenty or thirty years. Most of the mills desire special types of logs.

MAUNDER: When did logs for pulpwood begin to be a factor in your business?

MURRAY: Pulp logs became an important factor beginning thirty or forty years ago, although prices have remained relatively low, permitting little or no profit. For a good many years we have been carrying on tree selection, logging both for economic and silvicultural purposes. Until recently the principal pulp species of hemlock and silver fir have not provided any profit in logging.

MAUNDER: Can you detail a little bit the changes in the pattern of timberland ownership over this same period of fifty years?

MURRAY: The pattern is pretty much the same except there are fewer ownerships in private hands and a larger portion of log production comes from state and federal lands.

MAUNDER: The people who have been most successful then are people like yourself and the Weyerhaeusers who saw the importance of going in and blocking up areas and buying out blocks which were available and holding these and cutting them as the market demands? Is that right?

MURRAY: Yes. It sometimes took a pretty long look ahead and a lot of imagination to purchase a large area of timber, taking into consideration the financing and all the carrying charges as well as the general economic situation over the long pull ahead.

MAUNDER: When did you first become aware that this was the proper pattern to follow? Did you take your lead from someone else or did this result from your own thinking?

MURRAY: It was probably due to my ambition to enlarge our operations and to have timber for many years ahead and the desire to accumulate timber in excess of our operating requirements, anticipating that as time went on it would be more difficult to acquire. In the years 1908-09 when I started I planned the layout in size, location, and so forth. I have had a good many different camps and have made many purchases large and small, but I started early to acquire holdings that would justify long-time operations on a conservative basis. There were very few loggers who actually had control of more than a few years of timber, but they relied to a large degree on buying from time to time as they cut out in their operations.

MAUNDER: Of course, in the early days of your logging experience, closeness to water or to rail heads was the important thing, wasn't it? Now, with the coming of truck logging that has changed?

MURRAY: Not necessarily. The principle is still the same, but for the most part the remaining timber is farther from tidewater and is high up in the mountains. The development of trucks and crawler tractors has contributed enormously in rough mountain country where in many cases railroad development would be impossible.

MAUNDER: You at least saw the handwriting on the wall and proceeded to go ahead and buy up large tracts, whole sections, and to block up as much as you could of these with the idea that you would eventually have a chance to go in and take the timber off this land, didn't you?

MURRAY: Yes. Sometimes I had to move fast before someone else might have the same idea about certain tracts.

MAUNDER: You were doing this contemporarily with others in the industry who were doing likewise. Who were these other people who were taking these same steps and who have subsequently become large timberland owners in this part of the country?

MURRAY: Actually, there were not so very many who started as late as I did to acquire considerable timber holdings. Most of these outfits in the state of Washington, like Weyerhaeuser, Simpson, St. Paul & Tacoma, Merrill and Ring, Polson Logging Company, started buying their lands earlier.

MAUNDER: They bought in earlier than you did?

MURRAY: Yes, ten to twenty years earlier.

MAUNDER: And did they buy in with the same thought in mind of blocking up areas?

MURRAY: Most of them had in mind the buying of enough land to block up in such a manner as to control areas to be purchased at a later date. Controlling a large area permitted practical railroad development and often reduced competition in the purchase of the smaller holdings, contributing to such railroad development.

MAUNDER: Because if someone else were to come in, they would have to use your railroad?

MURRAY: In many cases another railroad development would not be justified, taking into consideration the cost of bringing out the timber. In some situations arrangements have been made to log with the logging company which owned the railroad hauling the logs from contributory lands not of their own operation. In 1909 I had a small operation on Vancouver Island near Campbell River where the logs were hauled on the railroad of the International Timber Company to tidewater. In those early years I was turned down several times in trying to make similar deals and in most instances it was understandable. The right of eminent domain to condemn across roads and lands could be used but it is an expensive procedure and has very seldomly worked out.

MAUNDER: Were there others like you who did the same thing at about the same time?

MURRAY: Not many that I know of who have much of any timber left. A good many of them built up considerable holdings to start with but did not continue to add to their holdings as they carried on their operations nor did they reduce their operations to a basis justifying sustained yield. There are a few relatively new outfits in business here on the coast, like Georgia Pacific, who have only started buying timber within the recent past. Although they have made very large purchases during the last few years, the extent of their operations makes it necessary to depend on continuing purchases for any operational lifetime. Such opportunities to continue purchasing have been diminishing rapidly.

MAUNDER: Is the pattern seeming to change so that the tendency is toward larger and larger individual holdings?

MURRAY: No, not generally, except for larger outfits which in many cases are buying out the remaining timber of other concerns. However, much cut-over land is being added to the holdings of the larger operations for future use.

MAUNDER: Mr. Murray, I think we should try to study a bit the history of your relationship with your competitors over the years here in the Pacific Northwest, particularly in the state of Washington.

MURRAY: Our competitors were large, medium, and small, in the purchasing of timberland and also in the sale of logs.

Over the years we had various associations that the majority of logging operators belonged to. The Pacific Logging Congress, founded in Seattle in 1909, included in its membership a large percentage of the logging operators of the Pacific Northwest. Its main purpose was to improve logging methods.

The Loggers Information Association, which went out of business quite a number of years ago, originally was formed for the purpose of following legislation affecting the lumber industry, railroad freight rates, and information concerning exports and imports, and for a time carried on a purchasing department handling logging rope, fuel oil, and so forth, based upon quantity prices. As an example, we joined with others through the Loggers Information Association in purchasing our fuel oil by the tanker. Information such as inventories, prices, and so on, was reported regularly to the membership of the association. In this connection the Pacific Northwest Loggers Association functions along these same lines, furnishing information as to inventories, prices, common carrier freight rates, imports and exports, keeping abreast of legislation affecting the industry, such as unemployment compensation insurance, and carries on education in safety.

There were also sales organizations, such as the Washington Brokerage Company and the Sound Log Sales Company. These concerns had a membership of most of the operators of any importance.

MAUNDER: Was that the same sort of thing as a log and boom company?

MURRAY: Not in this particular part of the country. There were many companies rafting and booming on the Sound; some were operated by independent operations, some by tugboat companies, and some by logging operators who, like ourselves, not only raft our own logs but also do it on a custom basis for others.

MAUNDER: What were some of the other associations?

MURRAY: Getting back to the loggers' associations -- they were started around 1915 or 1916. The Washington Log Brokerage was before that -- I joined in 1909. We had small meetings of loggers several times a year in the various districts, such as Columbia River, Grays Harbor, and Puget Sound. These meetings were entirely for information, with no secretary, and in those days our principal discussions were about log prices and inventories. Those meetings went out many years ago. I joined the Loggers' Information Association in 1916.

MAUNDER: Where does the Pacific Logging Congress come into the picture?

MURRAY: As stated before, the Pacific Logging Congress was an organization principally interested in logging efficiency, improvements, equipment, etc. It had its first meeting in 1909 at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition.

MAUNDER: Who were the organizers of this congress?

MURRAY: George Cornwall of Portland, publisher of THE TIMBERMAN, was the moving spirit, along with E. G. English, one of the old-time Puget Sound loggers and head of the English Lumber Company. Many of the old-time loggers were there -- such as Sol Simpson, Mark Drahm, the Bordeaux of the Mason County Logging Company, the Polsons, and Joe Irving of Everett, and probably the best-known of any of the lumbermen was George S. Long of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company.

MAUNDER: Were you at that meeting, too?

MURRAY: Yes.

MAUNDER: What reason did these men have for calling this congress into session?

MURRAY: I imagine it was to get the industry together for the first time to look into some of the general operating problems of the industry.

MAUNDER: Was that perhaps what motivated a man like Cornwall who wasn't an operator himself?

MURRAY: Cornwall undoubtedly was interested because of being the publisher of the leading timber journal on the Pacific Coast at that time.

MAUNDER: Was he at all interested in conservation? Was this part of the reason?

MURRAY: Conservation as such did not play much of a part in the Logging Congress proceedings; however, the Western Forestry and Conservation Association, which was formed about the same time and which generally meets shortly after the Pacific Logging Congress, deals principally in conservation matters, although many of the problems of the logging industry are closely associated with forestry and conservation of our resources.

MAUNDER: The reason I asked the question is I was wondering if the upsurge of the so-called conservation movement which came in the late nineties and the first part of this century had any stimulating effect which brought about this kind of an organization.

MURRAY: I would say that was in the minds of some who attended the 1909 meeting, but in the main the actual problems of logging were the principal interest.

MAUNDER: It was more for a discussion of the practical problems that each logger was up against?

MURRAY: Opening up the timber and producing logs.

MAUNDER: How large was the membership in the beginning?

MURRAY: Probably several hundred. As stated before, it was held at the time of the AYP Exposition, which was quite a drawing card.

MAUNDER: That's quite a big group for an initial meeting. As the organization got started what was the early attitude of the man in the logging field? Was there a rush to membership in this organization, or did some lag behind in joining?

MURRAY: Oh, I don't think there was any great rush to join the Logging Congress. There was a certain amount of publicity given to it in our lumber journals, such as THE TIMBERMAN published by George Cornwall of Portland, and THE LUMBERMAN published originally in Tacoma by George Cain and Associates. Some other publications such as the LUMBER WORLD REVIEW of Chicago later on became interested in the accounts and proceedings of the Logging Congress.

MAUNDER: Was it an idea that grew rather slowly and painfully or did it immediately go ahead and become a successful thing?

MURRAY: It went ahead, I would say, in rather good strides. I have attended all of the sessions of the Logging Congress since that time with the exception of three. I attended the first one in 1909; then in 1910 and 1911 I was tied up with logging troubles of one kind and another and in getting started again

after pulling out of British Columbia where I originally started our logging. Then once quite a number of years later I missed a Congress because of an illness.

MAUNDER: How do you evaluate the Congress in your own experience?

MURRAY: I was strong for it and I enjoyed meeting with loggers from different parts of the Pacific Coast and discussing various problems and different ways to do things in the woods. Later on I was quite active in the organization and in 1919 I was elected to the board as one of the representatives of the state of Washington.

MAUNDER: How long were you on the board and what other positions or offices did you hold?

MURRAY: I was on the board two years and in 1921 I was elected president to serve until 1923.

MAUNDER: What do you count as being the most important contributions the Logging Congress has made to the field in which you've been engaged -- apart from, of course, first getting all the loggers together to consider their problems -- but then what specific accomplishments of the Congress do you recollect as being of most importance?

MURRAY: The Congress has played a great part in engineering methods and improvement of equipment. Labor relations as such were never a part of the program of the Logging Congress except probably in safety matters.

MAUNDER: Why was that?

MURRAY: I think we were too much interested in hearing how the other fellow got logs, the methods he used, his planning, and that sort of thing.

MAUNDER: Did you discuss labor relations privately at the Congress?

MURRAY: No. In those days the term "labor relations" had not been invented.

MAUNDER: It didn't exist. Would you say that the Congress played any important part in bringing loggers into more intimate relationship with the men and companies that manufactured the tools they needed?

MURRAY: Very much so. Right from the beginning most of the manufacturers of logging equipment were well represented at these meetings. The manufacturers generally lent a willing ear to the any ideas in equipment; in fact, many of them went overboard, way beyond reasonable steps, in trying to help meet some of the loggers' problems.

MAUNDER: Did these manufacturers play an active role in the discussions at the Logging Congress?

MURRAY: Yes.

MAUNDER: Were they members of the Logging Congress?

MURRAY: Yes. their membership was always solicited and they were a very important segment of the Congress.

MAUNDER: At what point in the history of the Logging Congress did on-the-spot displays of equipment and tools of logging become a part of the Logging Congress?

MURRAY: There was some equipment on display at the first Congress in 1909 and the displays have increased to such an extent in later years that the total value of the equipment and supplies on display runs into several million dollars. Oftentimes field trips have been arranged to give those attending the Congress an opportunity to see actual operations, generally near the city where the meeting is held. In 1934 the West Fork Logging Company entertained about 700 loggers at our operation near Mineral.

MAUNDER: Did any of the manufacturers of equipment make sample copies, let's say, of their equipment available to you or to other loggers on the prospect that they would be seen in operation on your land and therefore might be more easily sold to other people in the field?

MURRAY: Not in any case that I know of.

MAUNDER: Then if you wanted to buy them you could, but there was not any reciprocity on the part of the manufacturer of giving you a special price?

MURRAY: I have never heard of a special price in any such case. You may have read that the Silver Creek Logging Company had a Westinghouse LeTourneau rubber-tired tractor in use for about three weeks. That's a combination of diesel motor and electricity. The rear wheels of the arch were powered by electric motors and the front wheels by the diesel power of the motor. I don't know what the arrangement was but I understood that Silver Creek might pay for some of its use.

MAUNDER: The thought occurred to me that these manufacturers, eager to get a market established, might find the best way of advertising their product was putting it in use on some operation and perhaps doing this by making some concession to the operator in either purchase or actually giving him the machine.

MURRAY: I don't think that is often done, but it might be a good way of getting new equipment started.

MAUNDER: Can we swing over into another area? Could you tell a little something about the change in the character of the labor supply?

MURRAY: There has been a great change in the type of men working in the woods during the last fifty years. The majority of the men in the woods on the West Coast originally were pretty much on the same order as the lumberjacks in the Lakes States, New England, and eastern Canada. They were mostly single and spent their lives in the woods. The bunkhouses were their homes except when they were in town and then they frequently stayed in the flophouses. The majority of the men today, however, live at home with their families. The change was brought about by a lot of things, particularly the automobile. Doing away with the logging railroads has enabled individuals to drive their own cars over logging truck roads and the use of buses has enabled them to live in small communities many miles from where the work is actually going on in the woods. The biggest change in the character of the men started probably in the twenties and has been gradually changing ever since. Within the last ten to twenty years there has been a tremendous increase in family men living in their own homes as far away as twenty to thirty miles.

MAUNDER: The coming of the automobile and the change in transportation was a big factor in this. There certainly must have been other factors involved. In the early days there weren't many women around to be married to, were there?

MURRAY: In the early days there were practically no married families living in the woods and most of the men in those days were what we called "short stake" men. When they left the woods, they headed for the skidrows of Tacoma, Seattle, Vancouver, and Portland -- particularly Seattle where the big labor market was and they hired out through employment offices. Often the foreman of a camp had to go down to the skidrows and hire the men there. That was their life -- living two places, one was their home in the woods, the logging camp, and the other down on the skidrow in the city. They went to the cities often, "shot their wads," and went back to the woods, but not necessarily to the same camp they had left. They moved around a great deal and many of them were called "camp inspectors" because they made the rounds of scores of camps; they were sort of edgy to see something different all the time. It made the labor very inefficient as compared to later years regardless of the fact that many people say, "They're too much of a kid glove outfit today." But the men in the woods today are, generally speaking, a much higher type than they were forty to fifty years ago. The automobile gave them the opportunity to live in better ways and have families.

MAUNDER: Did the changing character of the towns out here have anything to do with that, the public school system?

MURRAY: In some few instances there were schools for the children of married families living in some of the larger camps. In later years logging headquarters were located in small towns where there were the advantages of schools, shops, and and so on, and then there were the so-called "company towns" and "mill towns." It has been the same way in the woods. Some of them have been carried on in a fine way, making them worth-while places to live. Larger communities are now available by means of the automobile and better roads. It makes the men more independent and gives them the opportunity to have some land. In our operation at Mineral we had many years past a good percentage of what we called "stump ranchers" who had a few acres of land on which they built their homes and had small farms or gardens.

MAUNDER: To what extent did your company encourage that sort of thing?

MURRAY: The only encouragement we actually have given in this connection was making it easy for the men to buy houses from us.

MAUNDER: Did you ever offer land for sale?

MURRAY: We did not offer for sale any land suitable for farms.

MAUNDER: You sold none of your cut-over lands?

MURRAY: No. For many years we have held onto all of this for re-forestation -- except for the few houses at Mineral, but it wasn't a very extensive practice.

MAUNDER: To what extent has the labor supply in the logging field been derived from the same families, generation after generation? Of course, there've only been two generations in this period.

MURRAY: There has been a reasonable amount of it.

MAUNDER: Do you have many sons of fathers who worked with you?

MURRAY: Yes, we have some. You met one the other day when you talked to George Sokol. My son Tom told you what a great chap Sokol was on a cat, loading donkey, yarder, or almost any job. His father was a donkey engineer for us about thirty years ago.

MAUNDER: Is this true of any substantial number of the people who are working in the woods?

MURRAY: Only to a fair degree. One of our section foremen is the son of a former section foreman who worked for us many years ago. Several of our fallers and buckers and rigging men are sons of men who worked for us many years ago.

MAUNDER: But you have had to recruit a great percentage of your labor in recent years from people who have never previously had any contact with lumbering through their families?

MURRAY: That is true, but normally there are many men applying for work in the woods at starting jobs comparable to common labor.

MAUNDER: Were these people, these new people coming into the industry, the sons of people who lived here and had their homes here, or were they new people coming into the area to find jobs?

MURRAY: When you say new people you mean other than the sons of those who have worked in the woods?

MAUNDER: I mean people other than native Washingtonians. I mean people coming from the East.

MURRAY: From abroad, maybe, or from different parts of the United States?

MAUNDER: Yes, or from Canada.

MURRAY: The general increase in population is responsible to a large degree,and men are drifting out to this part of the country from other logging areas that are becoming cut out.

MAUNDER: In other words, as the old frontier community disappeared and the new, more stable towns and cities grew up and the population increased, your new type of lumberman and logger has come out of that new situation?

MURRAY: In the old days we had a definite breed of cat working in the woods. The men you meet in the woods today are, for the most part, like men in any ordinary industry.

MAUNDER: Would you say that the men in the woods today have adopted the mores of the times and the communities in which they live, in which it is more proper to be a married man with dependents and a high school education than it was twenty-five or thirty years ago?

MURRAY: Yes, I would say it has just naturally gone that way because of the increased opportunities.

MAUNDER: I'd like you to discuss, Mr. Murray, the changes in the political complexion both here in the State of Washington and nationally over the fifty years you've been in the game and tell how these changes have affected your business. Go back to 1909 -- what were conditions then?

MURRAY: The conditions in the lumber and logging industry were affected very little by political movements up until the time of the beginning of industrial insurance, unemployment insurance, accident insurance, social security, and that sort of thing.

MAUNDER: What about the Pinchovian forestry movements? What about the conservation movement?

MURRAY: You mean the national political picture? As far as the logging industry was concerned, good conservation practices came in very slowly and were not affected very much by the policital situation. I have a letter from Gifford Pinchot commenting on the conservation practices in our operation. Few present day loggers likely ever heard of Gifford Pinchot.

MAUNDER: The year 1909 takes us back to the times of Teddy Roosevelt and President Taft.

MURRAY: In those days the men putting in logs knew little about such men and their philosophies and probably cared less.

MAUNDER: And national legislation in these days had little or no effect on these people?

MURRAY: That's right.

MAUNDER: What about state legislation?

MURRAY: The situation was about the same. In those days about the only legislation affecting forestry had to do with the sale of state lands and early regulations for fire protection. In land grants by the state it was provided that the land could not be sold outright, which was the means of preventing speculation on these lands. Timber only could be sold, to be logged within a five year period, with the possibility of a two year extension if needed; however, in later years additional extensions have been secured.

MAUNDER: What about taxes?

MURRAY: Taxes on timber and timber land are a tremendous problem. Many studies have been made over the years, such as that by the Fairchilds and the study made by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce about 1920.

MAUNDER: Well, what was your attitude towards the taxes you had to pay in the early days of your operation? How did you feel about them and what did you do?

MURRAY: There wasn't too much you could do about it. If you felt you were being taxed too heavily in a certain area you would meet with the county assessor and, as a general rule, most of the assessors tried to be fair; however, the whole general system of timber taxation is so peculiar that a real estate tax charged every year upon a tree that is only going to be utilized once is unfair. You might say that that tree is growing all the time, but actually a virgin type of stand is not putting on any growth and in many instances is going down-hill. Growth does not cover taxes or interest on your money, although such a situation might be found in special instances of young growth.

MAUNDER: When did you begin to feel that the tax structure was unfair to you as a timber owner, at what point in your operations?

MURRAY: Taxes have been high for a great many years, taking into consideration what I have just said. The increases in many instances have been terrific during the last fifteen to twenty years.

MAUNDER: From the very beginning?

MURRAY: No, but we wanted better roads, better schools, and things that required more money and in many cases in counties where a large portion of the timber had already been cut out so it meant a relatively higher taxation on the timber which was left. During the last fifteen years we have logged about twenty-five per cent state timber and seventy-five per cent of our own timber -- probably about 400 million feet of our own timber. Taxes are now ten times what they were previously. Of course, we have had inflation, not only in taxes but in log prices also.

MAUNDER: What has happened to the value of your lands over that same period of time? How much have they increased?

MURRAY: Up until just a matter of ten or fifteen years ago we had a very nominal value on lands.

MAUNDER: What did you do, Mr. Murray, to alleviate this situation that you felt was wrong? What steps did you take politically?

MURRAY: We've taken no steps politically. We've only dealt with our assessors in the various counties where we've owned timber. That's about as far as we've gotten.

MAUNDER: What I mean to say is, haven't you ever tried to exert some influence through your own representatives or by membership in a political party?

MURRAY: I don't know of any movement on the part of the lumber industry and the logging industry to have any influence on this matter. Legislation was eventually passed encouraging retention of cut-over lands by a nominal land value and a tax of twelve and a half per cent of stumpage value when harvested.

MAUNDER: Mr. Murray, what has been your own political philosophy through the years? What political philosophy have you espoused?

MURRAY: I suppose I'd be rated as one who has espoused the general ideas expressed by the Republican party. Do you want that sort of thing?

MAUNDER: Yes. Were you a Republican as a young man growing up? Did you come from a Republican background?

MURRAY: Yes, I was. I lived in a Republican state, the home of William Howard Taft and Bob Taft.

MAUNDER: Was your father before you an active Republican?

MURRAY: I would say he was reasonably active as a Republican. He was a great admirer of William Howard Taft, but he was not quite so enamored with Teddy Roosevelt after he became the Bull Moose party candidate.

MAUNDER: As a young man coming out here to the Pacific Northwest, what were your political sympathies out here?

MURRAY: Well, they were Republican.

MAUNDER: Were you affiliated with the Republican party?

MURRAY: Not active in any way until a good many years later.

MAUNDER: When did you become actively interested in politics?

MURRAY: That would go back a good many years. I was actively interested but I did not take any direct part. I think the only active part I took in politics was that I have attended a couple of state conventions as a delegate and have raised a little money several times locally, handled the finances once for one of our citizens who ran for the U. S. Senate in 1934. About four or five years ago I was on a local committee raising finances in this city and county, and back in '38 I was on the state finance committee.

MAUNDER: You told me, I think, a little earlier that you were interested in Bob Taft's campaign in Ohio?

MURRAY: Yes, I was.

MAUNDER: Did you raise funds in support of Taft's campaign in Ohio?

MURRAY: Yes, I did in the general Republican campaign here and also down in Arizona.

MAUNDER: To what extent were you successful in that effort?

MURRAY: I don't know whether my efforts were considered very successful, although I always raised some money. I was called upon a few years ago to raise some money for the Taft Memorial.

MAUNDER: I see. To build a memorial to Bob Taft in Washington? And you've been actively engaged in that?

MURRAY: Locally.

MAUNDER: Have you been active in supporting any presidential candidates over the years?

MURRAY: Yes, through the Republican party nationally.

MAUNDER: Would you classify yourself as a member of the Taft wing of the Republican party?

MURRAY: Yes.

MAUNDER: You've had from time to time over the years personal contact with some of the men of both political parties in office, both on the state and national levels. I wonder if you'd mind relating some of these personal contacts and experiences. You told me about an experience with Harold Ickes. I'm sure that's of interest. Would you relate that?

MURRAY: Secretary Ickes of the Interior Department was out here in '38 in connection with opening of the bridge across the Narrows of Puget Sound -- the bridge that later went down. Through an old Democratic friend of his he was induced to make a trip into our logging operation, in view of his interest in forestry. This Democratic acquaintance was Alexander Baillie, one of the partners of the old Balfour-Guthrie Corporation. Secretary Ickes, the President's daughter, Anna, and John Boettiger, who was her husband at the time, and the superintendent of the Rainier National Park spent half a day inspecting our logging operations at Mineral. It is quite a long story.

MAUNDER: That's all right. I think it has relevance to your history.

MURRAY: He was rather taken up with our type of operation as to selective cutting. Perhaps I can dig up the P.-I.[1] to give you some of his impressions.

MAUNDER: What were your impressions of Ickes as an individual?

MURRAY: As an individual I knew him only in connection with his interest in forestry matters, inasmuch as the Interior Department has the administration of a large amount of timber in this region, particularly in the state of Oregon, O and C lands and Indian lands. I felt he was sincerely interested in the proper utilization of timber, although I did not agree with his political philosophy. It was through Ickes that I had a meeting with the President.

MAUNDER: President Roosevelt?

MURRAY: Yes, President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was in connection with a recommendation for Chief Forester of the United States, following the death of Chief Forester Silcox. It so happened that at the request of Secretary Ickes I made an inspection of some O and C lands in Oregon. At a meeting in Washington where I reported to Ickes we found that we saw eye to eye on the recommendation for the appointment of Chief Forester. Several days later while I was in Boston I received a wire from Secretary Ickes asking if I would meet with the President at an appointed time which, of course, I did not refuse. To make a long story short, I might say that it was a most interesting meeting; I was with the President for over half an hour. In anticipation that the President would carry the ball, I prepared an agenda which was laid before him and he referred to it several times. We talked about many things, including his estate at Hyde Park and his forester, whom I knew and had entertained here several years earlier. At the time the President disagreed with my suggestion for Chief Forester -- however, he was finally appointed. That was Lyle Watts.

1. The Portland Intelligencer.

L. T. Murray, Sr. Interview

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