The interview with Francis "Bud" Smith was conducted at his present home in Forest Grove on February 8th and 9th. Using his own words, he was "born a long time ago," September 1, 1912. Indeed, from the full life and experiences he has had , he must feel that he has led several lives.

Loggers have always been thought of as a rough breed. If this is indeed the case, then Mr. Smith personifies this group as one of the most "hardnosed" of them all. Mr. Smith's reminences underscores much of the humor, hard work, and the logger way of life.

The oral historian selected Mr. Smith as an oral history candidate for his storytelling art. Mr. Smith, deeply involved with the logging industry for his entire working career, has battled for better working conditions for his fellow workers. Heavily indebted to the ~~International Woodworkers of America's~~ Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) ideas and efforts, Mr Smith was at the forefront organizing the logging unions here in Washington County during the 1930's and 40's. This is a major reason why he was interviewed. He exemplified the workers efforts for better working conditions, a facet of any industry that is so often ignored.

On a more human level, the conversation with Mr. Smith reflects the close personal ties and friendships he developed during his years in the woods. Last but not the least, Mr. Smith's humorous stories and responses give the listener an opportunity to smile, chuckle, and even cackle. The hour and half tape and 35 pages of transcription are worthwhile to listen to and read, respectively, whether one is a serious researcher or just curious.

Interview with Francis Bud Smith, Interview 1
Date of Interview: 7 February 1978;
Interviewer: Lloyd Meyer
Transcriber: Sandra Botten

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

Meyer: Good morning, Mr. Smith.

Smith: How do you do?

Meyer: Very good.. To start out with, I'd just like to ask a little bit of questions on yourself - like where you were born, and how old you are, and where you grew up.

Smith: Well, I was born a long time ago. 65, September the first.

Meyer: Where were you born?

Smith: Forest Grove, or out here a little village called Greenville.

Meyer: Is that in existance anymore out there?

Smith: No.

Meyer: Just as a sidelight, what happened to it?

Smith: Oh, it was just a farming community. A bunch of houses together there.

Meyer: So you've lived in Forest Grove most of your life then?

Smith: Yes.

Meyer: ~~Now~~ you went to school in Forest Grove, and high school? Okay, I guess we can jump right into the meat of the matter." Now I know you are a logger, ~~and~~ I'm curious as to when you started logging or got into the business?

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Smith: Well, I was in a CC (Conservation Corp) camp for 27 months. This friend of mine got a job at Consolidated Lumber Company, and he took me up there. My first job was (to blow) a whistle for one of the meanest hook ~~timbers~~ tenders in the Pacific Northwest. And he went up a tree along side the railroad track to hang a lead for the whistle wire to

Smith: go through so the locomotive could go down the track. So he sent me back to the donkey to get a lead, and how the hell did I know what a lead was. Oh well, I asked the engineer and he just shook his head and went about his business. So I picked up my nosebag, walking down the track, and the hooker was up a tree and he said "Where's that whistle lead?" I said " You know where it is. Go get it yourself." I kept right on walking. That was my first job.

?nosebag

Meyer: You mentioned you were in a CC camp. When was this and where was this?

Smith: Oh that was, uh, I think it was January 1, 1933. That was at Must , Oregon, a little community on the other side of Vernonia.

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Meyer: And what did you do there?

Smith: Oh, we cleared land, made bridges, and just about everything.

Meyer: So you mentioned your first day on the job you walked off?

Smith: Yes.

Meyer: That was with Consolidated or was that with somebody else?

Smith: Oh a gyppo by the name of . . . oh, I don't know who it was. But the hook tender's name was Roughhouse Dixon, and he was a drunken, bellering, screaming sort of a guy, and I didn't like the way he asked me where that whistle wire was so he could go and go get it himself. He was up the tree about thirty feet and I was down on the ground.

Meyer: So where did you go from there?

Smith: I went down the track about five miles, walking down there, and I met the superintendent of Consolidated Lumber Company, and he put me on setting chokers right there. Setting chokers for about three guys I used to play football with.

Smith: It was old homeweek around there, seeing all those guys.

Meyer: Could you describe? names?

Smith: Oh, I'd say they was Bill Bn Hor , , and there was two or three other guys that went to school the same time I did. And they were all working there. You'd follow them around, they'd tell you what to do and you was alright.

Meyer: You must have been pretty close with them.

Smith: Yes, they were good friends.

Meyer: Could you tell me what choker setting is? What that involves?

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Smith: That's snaking the logs out of wood. The chokers are on a main line and hooked to a haulback, and I skin it back ? & run haulback stops rigging, and choker setters go out and set the chokers and get the hell out of the way.

Meyer: Is that where most people start? Most greenhorns?

Smith: Yes.

Meyer: So that must have been fairly hard work then? Fairly dangerous?

Smith: Oh yes ... both.

Meyer: Did you have any close encounters or close calls?

Smith: Oh, I've had so many. That's where everyone of them gray hairs is from. I've seen guys killed and I almost got it at least a dozen times.

Meyer: Do you remember one in particular that really had you shaking in your boots?

Smith: One day I was fighting a hangup in a steep canyon and I felt the ground wiggling a little bit. I got up from that position I was in fighting the hangup and all of a sudden a big uproot come down that canyon that I was in. It was solid rock and I run up aside of that wall and that root lit right where I was working. And I tried five times afterwards to get back up that rock where I was and I couldn't make 'er. Boy, it was steep!

Smith: Oh, I've got hurt several times pretty bad, but that was the closest to getting wiped out.

Meyer: Could you tell me a little bit about Consolidated, the camp itself and years of operation?

Smith: Well, I don't know a great deal about it. Hell of a lot of timber in there and it had it had to be gotten out quick. And all these big companies pooled their money and built a railroad track into the Burn, and they started logging. There were so many loggers, so many different companies. I know a guy that had seven jobs one day. He'd work an hour and get mad and quit and walk down the road and another truck would come by or something, and he'd hop on it and go to that other side and go to work. There was lots of men - it was during the first part of the Depression. I've seen guys come out there in the morning with their nosebag and set around all day waiting for somebody to walk off and then they'd go get the job.

Meyer: So each job wasn't really very permanent then?

Smith: No. The only people was people, married people, that had their homes within a radius, oh, of forty miles of Consolidated camp. Called them "homeguards", and they'd stay. But otherwise, tramp loggers by the thousands.

Meyer: You stayed up there for quite a while, yourself.

Smith: Oh, for Consolidated for, well, too long. I think it was about three years. But the way they treated people, you know, you'd think they was slaves. Where I learned that first was in the CC camp. I could see the need of a union right there. It was run by Army officers, and they'd come out and you'd have to salute them and say "sir", and that never went over with me anyhow.

Meyer: We mentioned unions. I would like to get into maybe that, but first I would like to ask you a few questions why the unions were needed ~~like in~~ meaning life in the lumber camps themselves. Now yourself, you lived in a camp up there for a while.

Smith: Yes. Oh, for instance the grub. If it wasn't just right, why, the guys refused to eat it, and it wouldn't work. Oh, there was one beef that had to be straightened out right away. So usually the cook got fired and they'd hire a new one and we'd try him. But the camps had to feed real good to keep crew and that's where the old tramp logger come in. If he said the grub was no good, it wasn't any good. So we wouldn't eat it.

Meyer: Did that happen very often?

Smith: Oh, quite often. Yes.

Meyer: Could you describe a typical meal? Maybe a breakfast or a dinner?

Smith: Oh, one time I'll never forget. The guy would usually get the same place for his breakfast, dinner, and supper. And you'd come there and somebody's in your stall, well, there's usually a fight right now. I never did remember how this old ? whosker sp, what? big old Swede, ate at our table. We were all working on the rigging, and kind of clannish people, you know. So this big Swede had soup for supper.

Smith: The bowl weighed about forty pounds and was about that big around and you passed the food. And he'd ladeled out, oh, I'd say about a gallon. Vegetable soup. And He started eating it and, oh, one of the loaders said, "You can put the spoon down now, Ole, you've got us started!" And he got mad and got up and walked away from our table. It was a good ridance. You'd pass the potatoes or the steak or whatever it was; he'd have you hold the platter and he'd help himself and just leave it there, you know.

One day we had round steak, beautiful meal, and this big old worm, he filled his plate with potatoes and then he put about three inches of gravy on top of that. And then he ordered the steaks and we handed him the platter and he just took his fork and speared one and left that guy holding the platter. So he just dropped it. It lit right in his lap. All that gravy and spuds and everything. Oh, I tell you, there's was going to be the damndest fight you ever saw. We run him off.

Meyer: How about sleeping conditions? Were the men piled into one area?

Smith: I think eight men to a bunk house, and they had steel cots with springs on them. And they had a mattress, most of them was filled with straw. And it was pretty good. Pretty good place to sleep until the damn bedbugs got in there so thick and you'd have to went to work on them with diesel oil and cleaned them up. It sounded like it was hailing in there when you turned the lights out. They'd drop off the rafters.

Meyer: What exactly are bedbugs?

Smith: Oh, a little beetle. Sort of an animal, I'd say, about half the size of that paperclip, you know. And, boy, they put the whamee right to you.

Meyer: That must have been quite disturbing during your sleep.

Smith: Oh God, you couldn't sleep. You'd have to turn the lights on and run them back up in the cracks someplace. Try to get back to sleep before they come out again.

Meyer: Was there any other way to get rid of them?

Smith: Well, diesel oil was about the only way we could get rid of them. And we put four cans on your bedposts. Set your bed in that. If they didn't just happen to hit you directly in the face when they come off the rafters, why they'd light on the floor and then they couldn't get up in your bunk. They wouldn't monkey around that diesel oil. And it eventually got rid of all of them.

Meyer: What was it like living with the people you work with all day and all week. Did you form strong friendships or did you get irritated with the people, being around them so much?

Smith: Some people were real irritating. You'd want to fight the minute you seen them. Others were real good friends. You'd get certain people in camp nobody liked. He would be held on an end 'cause nobody would do anything for him. He couldn't help it himself, but that's the way the loggers were. If you was a heel when you got there, you was one when you left.

Meyer: What did you do during your spare time, or did you have much spare time up in the woods?

Smith: We didn't have any spare time at all. Only in the summertime, why, there was quite a few guys liked baseball and we had a baseball team that played some real good ball.

Meyer: You mean the loggers would choose up sides and play between themselves?

Smith: Yeah. Yeah. Or maybe you'd have a team in camp and they'd challenge anybody. Other camps and so forth.

At one camp I stayed in, they hired an ex-convict from state prison. And he got a kid up there with him, and, boy, was he a pitcher. He could really throw a ball. And he done our pitching for us.

Meyer: What was your position? Did you play much?

Smith: Oh, I played. Yeah. Oh, in the infield. But usually it was the hardest part to get a place grubbed out big enough for a ballpark, you know.

Smith: It mainly come down to just playing catch.

Meyer: So would this be on your day off or after work that you would play?

Smith: Be after work. The day off was get the hell out of camp.

Meyer: Where would you go on those days?

Smith: Oh, to the first whore house that you seen.

Meyer: Huh. And what would you have - one day off during the week?

Smith: Saturdays and Sundays.

Meyer: Oh, you would get two then.

Smith: We'd catch the Mulligan Consolidated Camp on Sunday night, oh, about eight o'clock and go up to camp, and three-fourths of the crew would be drunk. Sometimes worse than that.

Meyer: So alcohol was pretty prevalent in the camps then?

Smith: Yep. Seen many a battle on a train going to camp for something that happened maybe five years ago.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1

BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE 2

Smith: We were working for a Gippo called .... what the hell was the name? Well, there was two guys had a Gippo and they were working up near camp. And Burt Pickens got a job tending hook there. And one of the old loggers died and he had a hell of a good lookin' wife. She got a job in the cookhouse. Waitress, or flunkie they called them. Oh, you could walk into camp in about ten minutes. It was only about a mile out there, you know. Every night he'd go down and he'd go into her bunkhouse, and he always put his lunchpail on the runner of the sled they had the bunkhouse on. So I snuck down there one night and spiked his lunchpail to the runner. Well, that night we run out there, got on the speeder, and the speeder come into camp and blowed the whistle. And old Burt would always come running out of that bunkhouse and grab those nosebag on the fly. And this night he grabbed it and he couldn't budge it. And he jerked on it, and the strap broke and the thermos bottle flew out and broke. And

Smith (continuing):

broke the fruit jar and, oh God, just raised hell. I've threatened to tell him several times if he remembered that, but I never had the guts to. That old Burt, he was quite a character.

Meyer: Was he your boss then? Or you worked under him?

Smith: Yeah. At that place. I worked for him two or three times.

Meyer: So is he a pretty good work, then, himself?

Smith: Oh yeah.

Meyer: A pretty good person?

Smith: He was a brainwork, the hook tender. He done all the thinking. You guys do the work. I'll never forget the day the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. Why the next day about half the crew was down signing up for the Marine Corps or something. And it was a lousy day. Raining, blowing. And we built a big fire, and we was standing around that fire and here comes old Burt. And he said "Boys. Boys. Please get

Smith (continuing):

back away from the fire. You're liable to get burned up," he said, "And I'm responsible for you!"

Meyer: Do you ever see ~~any of them~~ him at all?

Smith: Oh yeah, I seen, oh, two or three times during a year. They come out and see me. Stayed for about four hours. We had a ? that would take a week to get over. Just settin' and tellin' about old times.

Meyer: We're talking about the people that you worked with in the camps. Were there foreigners that worked in your camps?

Smith: Oh yeah. There were lots of Swedes, Norwegians, and quite a few Greeks on the section crew, but they stayed to themselves.

Meyer: Did they speak English? Could you communicate with them?

Smith: Oh yeah. You could understand a work or two.

Smith: This big old Greek was sitting on the speeder one morning. The crew was behind a section crew on another speeder. And we come to the forks of the road and there was their trailer and all their tools and stuff. Well, they'd have to get off and lift that trailer off the tracks so we could get by. Then this foreman with the section crew, he said "Alright boys. Get the tools out of the way." And this big Tom, they called him, he looked and he watched, pulled out a pocket watch as big as an alarm clock. And it was about ten minutes before seven o'clock. He says to the foreman, "What time you got, company cocksucker? I got ten minutes yet."

So there was nobody work. Since we wanted to go to work, we got off and walked up the hill to the landing. Yeah, and like I said before we pretty solid in one. The foreman of the camp or somebody canned this old Tom the Greek. And on a Monday morning, they had the business agent out there to see what the squawk was about. And he come out and said the guys voted to put him

Smith (continuing):

back to work. And they went in and told the foreman, and no soap - so we went home. I think we lost three days' work waiting for that to make them pay mind.

Meyer: So the people that worked out there must have been in fairly good shape.

Smith: Oh, yeah. Wonderful shape.

Meyer: Were most of the people young? Young men?

Smith: Yeah.

Meyer: How about the equipment that you used? Was it pretty proficient or how it improved quite a bit since you been out there?

Smith: Yeah. Oh, it's improved alot. But what we had up there was good rigging. Big and husky you had to have because them machines were so powerful you couldn't imagine. The donkeys were fourteen by thirteen Willamette iron works. And they were two speeds; the high and low.

Smith: I've seen time and time again a eighty-foot log choked on in and hit a stump and just slow up enough so it upended the whole log. You couldn't stop it. And , they'd take in quite a circle and hit some of them Hemlocks, and they was just like powder. They just boom and away they'd go. Lot of guys have got hurt by falling windfalls. Mostly Hemlock.

Meyer: How about the actual cutting of the trees? Was it mostly double-edge axes?

Smith: Yeah. Oh, axes and misery whips, or falling saws.

Meyer: That must have been quite back-breaking labor.

Smith: Oh yeah, and they made good money. It was by the bushel, you know, so much a thousand. And there was one set, an old Swede and a Russian. This Russian, I've seen time and again out there, oh, in December naked to the waist falling timber. And you just could see the steam roll off of him. He was tough. They'd fall lots of days a hundred thousand, you know, and that's a lot of timber. In eight hours they'd fall that much.

Meyer: Was there still a lot of virgin timber up in that area then?

Smith: Oh, that was all virgin timber.

Meyer: So how were the trees then? An individual tree?

Smith: Oh, they running from about two feet up to eight, I've seen them. I seen one one day - we hooked onto a log at three o'clock and got it on the landing by ten the next morning that was eighty, I think eighty some inches through. Then the log we had to lift, too. We was logging it uphill. But that thing would dig into the ground and the donkey'd pull away as bang would go a choker and you'd get a new one and put a roll on it and get it out of its bed. Then we got it on the landing and the superintendent come along and culled it. There was a rotten about that big on the butt end of it. I don't know whatever become of that log. It was quite a piece. That tree had four 36 inch logs in it. Where it laid it took us half a day to get out the butt cut.

Meyer: It's hard to imagine those size of trees today being out there. I mean just being able to see them when you go out in the woods today.

Smith: You liked seeing that one picture I had on that logtruck the other day. It had thirty-one thousand feet in it, or something like that. That's a big log.

Meyer: What was the feeling like when you watched a tree fall? A tree of that size? Was there quite an emotional impact behind that?

Smith: Oh, when you first went up there. If you see the first one go down there was. After you was there a day you'd get used to it.

Meyer: Did someone always yell "Timber"?

Smith: Oh, you betcha. You'd better be in the clear, too.

Meyer: So everybody was scrambling as soon as that tree started its descent, I would imagine.

Smith: You betcha.

Meyer: Okay. I would like to change tact here a little bit and talk a little bit about the beginnings of the unions. The loggers' unions. And my understanding is that alot of the original ideas and men who formed the present day unions had their start with the I.W.W. Is that right?

Smith: Right.

Meyer: Do you know a little bit about the Wobblies?

Smith: Oh, very little. I know they took alot of abuse. They got hung for everything that was done illegally. But the Wobblies had the right idea. They got us out of the stickin' bunkhouses and built us some camps to stay in, and some blankets. You used to have to pack your own bedding with you. And they got rid of that. There was quite a few old Wobblies still in the local when I joined.

Meyer: So did you have contact with some of the Wobblies?

Smith: Oh yeah.

Meyer: What was your opinion of them at the time? Were you sympathizing with them?

Smith: Well, up to a degree on, you know. But they didn't give a damn about violence. That was their middle name. But, uh, looking on the other side of it, why the guy had to keep them under control. The worse part of it was the Communist party got ahold of alot of them Wobblies and got them going Communist. And that was no good at all. Fact is, it started the strongest in Canada and they migrated down here.

I seen some good, good rough and tumble fights. One mainly in Portland one time when we had a convention in there. One of the old timber fallers got into it with a Communist, and he god-damn near killed him. He just beat him to a pulp. (INTERRUPTION IN BACKGROUND)

565 start unclear

the International Union come from British Columbia and told us what to do and what he was going to do. And I was there when we run him out of the union hall.

Meyer: So when you joined, when you started logging, was there any union organization then?

Smith: Oh yeah. They was going strong when I joined. It was, uh, A. F. of L. They was just organizing the woodworking industry. And I belonged to them just about a year and then we changed our mind.

Meyer: Why's that? What caused you to be turned off by the AFL?

Smith: Well, we didn't like our leadership. There was too damn many Communist dominated figures in the higher echelon, and we didn't some of their ways of life.

580 unclear?

Meyer: This was the loggers, in general, that didn't like them? Didn't like the AFL?

Smith: Yeah, the sawmills, quite a few of them stayed with them, and are still with them. But not many are loggers.

Meyer: So what did the loggers do then once they quit the AFL? Where'd they go? Or what did they do themselves?

Smith: Stayed in the same hall and just different leadership.

Meyer: Was that the beginnings of the I.W.A.? The International Woodworkers of America?

Can hear no response (608)

Meyer: Now was the I.W.A. part of the C.I.O.? Or where did the C.I.O. come in?

Smith: Yeah. The C.I.O. helped form the I.W.A.

Meyer: Oh, could you tell me a little bit about the I.W.A.? Its organization, how big it was, and general characteristics?

Smith: Well, it got so that everything went C.I.O. The woodworking industry. And we proceded to weed out the Communists. We got them clear the hell out of the country. I don't know where they are now, but we got rid of them.

END OF TAPE 1

Interview with Francis Bud Smith, Interview 2
Date of Interview: 8 February 1978;
Interviewer: Lloyd Meyer
Transcriber: Sandra Botten

Begin Tape 2, Side 1

Meyer: Good morning, once again. I'd like to pick up again where we left off yesterday, and we were talking about the I.W.A. and the Wobblies, and the influence of the Communists and how they turned off the loggers around here in the lumber [141 Business or Industry] . You were talking about it. Now do you have anything else to add or sum up? Or personal opinions on the Communists themselves?

Smith: Yeah. Their ideas didn't jell with ours. They done everything with force. And didn't go along with the majority of the guys. We just told them to get out and shut up.

Meyer: Okay. We were talking about the formation of the I.W.A. and the breaking off from the A.F.L. Why exactly was there that break in the formation of the I.W.A.?

Smith: Well, the leadership of the A.F. of L wasn't doing anything for the membership at all. Absolutely nothing.

Meyer: Was that the national leadership or just the representatives in this area?

Smith: National. The whole works.

Meyer: Was it the woodworkers just felt that they weren't having any representation with the A.F.L.? Was that the sole reason?

Smith: There's a different breed of people in the western region. The A.F. of L. now - younger guys, and they're pretty good people. But we sure told them.

Meyer: So how did things change once the woodworkers formed their own organization?

Smith: Well, we politiced and got the leaders in there we wanted.

LM: So you yourself, were involved. You were a leader of sorts of a busin business agent you were?

BS: Yes.

LM: Could you tell me a little bit about that and your role?

BS: Oh, it came about by ~~just~~ safisfactory work in the camps. Being on a greivance committee, you learn a lot. An opening came up for a business agent, so they elected me.

LM: That was up in Consolidated.

BS: No, that was right here in town. The guy that was business agent got mad and quit. Then, they nominated me to fill out his unexpired term which was only two months. In two months he was running again against me. And that was something. Cost the local union a lot of money. Some hothead got up and said well, "Business Agents will not pack the ballot box. They went ahead and elected a balloting committee of three to pack a little tin box. It had a lock on it. Those three guys spent a week going to all the camps with the ballot. Vote them right on the job. I don't know what wages was in those days. It cost the local a bundle I'll be damn if I didn't get some 90 per cent of the vote, anyhow.

LM: What was the local that you were representative for? What ~~the~~ was the number of your local?

BS: It was the old loc l five was its number then.

LM: How much area did that take in?

BS: All of Forest Grove there and the surrounding area. Halfway down the Wilson River toward Tillamook. Oh, there was about a thousand members.

LM: What were your duties and your responsibilites?

BS: My responsibilitees? To try and keep those hot-headed guys on the job!

LM: That must have been a difficult chore at times.

BS: Yes. And try to settle abuses and keep the ball a rolling. There were some places where they absolutely refused the superintendent of an outfit. Argue for hours that the company ought to change management or else. It was quite an experience.

LM: When you went over to the mills and the camps in favor of the loggers themselves to change management, the unions usually went out?

BS: No, we didn't have to strike very often. We just told them what we wanted. 99% of the time I got it, without any argument.

LM: They relented just because of the fears of a strike. Do you think that's why they actually gave in to your demands?

BS: You bet they was scared of us! We would strike at the snap of a finger.

LM: Must have been a fairly tight union?

BS: It was. It was good. When a guy has that kind of backing you can be a little bit belligerent with the employers, yourself.

LM: Were there any strikes back when you were working with Consolidated and up through the years?

BS: Oh yes. At Consolidated, we didn't know what day we was going to work. We'd go up there and there'd be a beef and the business agent say "They won't stand still" so we turn around and come back home. Lots of times. Pack that nosebag up there and have to eat a cold lunch and then fill up on beer.

LM: Did this ever lead to violence? in any way then the threats of strikes between the employers and the unions?

BS: Oh yes yea. We had several hot-headed business agents. They never got along with the management. That led to several strikes.

LM: Were most of the mills and camps in this xxxxx your local were they under the I.W.A.?

BS: All of them except one. That's still Stimson's out here.

LM Why weren't they?

BS: Chicken-shit.

LM: We talked before about the violence occasionally between Stimson workers and the I.W.A. If you don't mind, could you describe some of the encounters your men had with their men?

BS: Well, one night after a unionx meeting we all got in the cars and went down to the first beer joint down here. The place was full of A.F. of L. scabs. We had a free-for-all. A couple of guys ended up in jail for inciting a riot. One or two got their jaws broke and a few things like that. Nothing serious (laughs).

LM: Why do you think they didn't go x with the I.W.A. ?

BS: I'll never know.

LM; Was it a total management decision? On Stimson Mills part?

BS: Stimson just scared them into it. Most of them. They said work or else. A.F. of L. or go home. They used that tactic to shove that down their throats, clear to their elbows.

LM: You mentioned before that you attended several international conventions. The I.W.A. must have been quite a large organization?

BS: It was up-and-coming and it sfill is. The fact is the business agent we got today is orgainizing a saw mill out here in North Plains. Thirty-seven people is going to take the federal mediation board to hold an election. I think by next Thursday we'll have some more members.

BS: Two of the guys were at the meeting last night. We guarenteed them we'd back them all the way.

LM: When had the conventions, what went on during the conventions?

BS: Well, every two years we had to elect officers. There was a lot of politicing going on. You vote for me and I'll vote for you, you know, pat you on the back. Then, they coordinated the bargaining the district counsils. The I.W.A. formed five districts councils. One in western Canada and one in eastern Canada and one on the Pacific Coast and one in part of the eastern part of the United States. Wisconsin, Michigan, and through there. Then they orgamized the South. Its the biggest district in the region. Then we put out a...seven and a half goes out of your union dues to go into your strike fund. Millions of dollars in that strike fund now. Probably ten million. You got that to fall back on. A guy goes on strike, he get 90 dollars a week or something like that.

It was 60. I don't know wahat it is now. Maybe 75 a week. For the duration of the strike. If you got that kind of meney you why, if you have any trouble you could walk out the door.

LM: When the IWA first formed back in the Thirties did they have that kind of insurance for the workers? What would the loggers do during that time?

BS: Beating up on scabs mostly.

LM: It must have been fairly tough then if you were out for a long time?

BS: Out doing anything you could get your hands on. Picking berries even. We went through some tough old times.

LM: Was there any temptation on the part of some of the workers to go back to work without a strike settlement?

BS: Oh, a few of them did yes. That was the toughest part. Kepping them in line, to do what was right.

LM: Another man that was involved in the IWA in this area was a man by the name of Lyman Wax, You were pretty good freinds with him right? What was his job? Was it similar to yours then?

BS: Yes, he had the same job I did only over in Vernonia. Then, he got a promotion to supervise the Health and Welfare Plan. We called him "Doc" Wax. He had to go around and keep the doctors lined up and the billing and so forth.

LM: So, you feel the union has really come quite a ways since its inception then?

BS: All for the betterment.

LM: Does the management ~~any~~ have any more say or power, or its in the workers hands now, you think?

BS: Well, we're as strong now or stronger thanw we ever were. It's pretty much run be the union. Every once in awhile, like Noblecraft down there where I worked, after I quit they put a big, dumb knothead on us superviser. I quit on a Thursday one week and then they bought the company out. I always do to this day figure they waited until I quit before they took over. Because, oh, they hated my guts. I couldn't have worked five minutes with that new spperintendent. It would have been no holds barred.

LM: How long did you work down at Noblecraft?

LM:

BS: Me? 16 years. I was elected delegate to the district council of 11 men and I was the only one on that that was a rank-and-filer. Worked by the hour. The rest of them were all business agents of various locals.

BM: What is Noblecraft? Is that a cabinet...

BM: Cabinet, strictly cabinet.

LM: Is that where of the loggers go after a few years?

BS: Yes there is quite a few loggers down there.

LM: Tuning back to your own personal experiences out in the woods. You say worked for Consolidated around '44 you said? Around that time?

BS: No, I went to work at Consolidated around 1937. 36 is was, yes 1936. Then I was in the A.F. of L. until August 1, 1937 and then went C.I.O. I'm a charter member. Got the card to prove it.

BS:

LM: So how long did you stay there at Consolidated?

BS: Oh, working for the various gyppos, about ten years altogether.

LM: When you finished up there you just continue logging somewhere else? Or it when you started up at Noblecraft?

BS; Working in that cabinet shop. First I worked a year in a shake mill. Made shakes. When we got through there I went down to [illegible] Noblecraft. Went to work the first of April, 1960. The first year, well I hadn't been there two months and they elected me job seward. Well, that Spring they had nominations for the executive board members of the region. I got nominated and elected to that. I stayed there for 16 years. Every two years they'd have reelections. They reelected me eight times. Once out of the eight times I got as low as the sixth highest. Other times I was first, second, or third.

LM: In our conversations, it really seems like you've made a lot of friends and had a lot of x experiences. This is a bit of a rhetorical question, but if you had it all over again would you stick with logging?

B: Yep. You bet. If I had it to do over again, I'd pick logging and work on the union end of it and safety end of it. So many guys get crippled up, you know. Most of it was just carelessness.