

Don Alanen Oral History Videorecording Transcript

Liza Schade (LS): Alright, this is an oral history interview conducted at Washington County Museum PCC Rock Creek Campus facility located at 17677 Northwest Springville Road, Portland, Oregon. The purpose of this oral history is to create a short video through Allied Video Productions of Salem, Oregon. The video will be used as an interactive educational programming within Washington County Museum's public exhibition space located at 120 East Main, Hillsboro, Oregon within our exhibit called "Timber in the Tualatin Valley. Today's date is April 11, 2017. My name is Liza Schade. I'm the curator of collections and exhibitions here at Washington County Museum and this is an interview with Mr. Donald Alanen about logging in the Pacific Northwest in the Tualatin Valley. And thank you for joining us today and we'll go ahead and get started.

[Discussion related to video production]

LS: Alright Don, so let's start with the names of your parents and tell us about them and your early childhood in Deep River.

Don Alanen (DA): Ok, my early childhood was spent in Deep River, Washington.

LS: Where was that located?

DA: It's just across the river from Astoria. And there's a logging company in there, Deep River Logging Company. My father worked there when I was about to be born. My mother took a little boat called the General Washington to Astoria and then I can start remembering from about the time I was three years old, the logging camp at Deep River. No electricity, no indoor plumbing, and no lights. It was, to me, it was paradise because it was in the wilds. And I remember the old steam locomotives, the Shay locomotives, their clatter hauling logs and that was my ambition at the age of three was to be a locomotive engineer.

LS: What was your father's name?

[Discussion related to video production]

DA: My father was—we called him Finlander. Both of his parents were Finnish. His name was Sulo Matthew Alanen. Matthew was his father's name. And my mother was Olsen. Her name was Frances Geneva Olsen. So both her parents were Swedish. So we had a mix of, I'm half Finnish, half Swedish.

LS: And then just talk to us about early life in the logging camps. What are some of the roles of men versus women?

DA: Ok, the logging camps, they were established about the time that single loggers started getting married. In the real old logging camps, most of the men were bachelors, but when they got married, they had to then develop a camp where they would have sometimes there would be a tent over a wooden frame or then it became a regular building, clapboard and cedar shakes. It was a very basic home, sometimes maybe just one room. And that was for the married families. In the camp they had a cookhouse and most of the loggers, even the married loggers, would eat at the cookhouse earlier.

LS: Talk about that calorie intact.

[Discussion related to video production]

LS: So the cookhouse and the bunkhouses, talk about those too.

DA: Ok, the bunkhouses would be for the single loggers that were not married or maybe they came from Portland and they stayed there at the bunkhouse during the week and then they went back to their home in Portland on the weekend. And then the cookhouse was a place where they could make or break a logging company. If you did not have good food, the loggers would not stay around. The pay could be less, but when in the logging cookhouse, and I was in them from the time I was about six, I can remember the platters of food. I've never seen food like that in my life other than a logging cookhouse. They would have, for breakfast, you would have plates of pork chops, plates of steak, plates of ham, plates of bacon. Then you'd have platters of eggs. You'd have everything. Then when the loggers would get through taking, oh about 909,000 calories, something like that, then the loggers would grab a pork chop and maybe grab a steak and they'd wrap that in paper. They'd put that in their nosebag. Their lunchbox was called a nosebag. And that was something to chew on before they had their lunch.

LS: A snack.

DA: A snack, a logger's snack.

LS: What kind of things did women do in the camp?

DA: The women in the camp, if it was a wilderness area, they were the type that were always around berries in season. There were always berries and sometimes they were near a place where they had fruit trees, some were just growing wild. But they would do mostly preparing meals.

And then they'd have their little gossip groups and things like this. And some were doing writing. But my mother, she left a home and relatives in Portland where she played tennis and she drove through town with her cousin in his Stutz Bearcat and they went to the speakeasies. And she traded that for a logging life of a home that she said you could drop a fork on the floor and it'd go through the cracks. There was hardly anything there. They made them that way. The wives, that's just about all they did was cook, wash clothes, and very, very basic. Some were artists, there were women that painted. And some were writers and wrote history about the logging camps, things like that.

LS: What kind of activities did families and/or the loggers do on the side?

DA: The Deep River Logging Camp was very fortunate because they had the Larsen Family, which Axel Larsen was a timber faller. He played the violin. His wife played the piano. And his daughter played the accordion. So they played for dances. And when I read about the family, they would walk for a while, then they'd go on a speeder—a little train vehicle, and then they'd walk more. And they'd get to their camp and they maybe would have walked four or five miles. They would have in the community hall, they would have their dances. And then usually, the women would get together and have like a pot luck and bring things. And after they were through dancing, sometimes it would be 2 o'clock in the morning when they would get home from the dance. And then, you know, they got to get up the next morning and fall timber all day. That was their entertainment. And I can remember in later years—I never had a babysitter—we'd go to the community dance hall and you'd hear the music and they had a big wood stove in there and you'd see the people and they'd do the polka and the Schottische. And that was their fun.

LS: How often would they have dances, like once a month?

DA: Oh sometimes, Saturday night.

LS: Oh, every week?

DA: Yeah, sometimes every week, yeah.

[Discussion related to video production]

DA: They would have their weekly entertainment every Saturday night and then if there was a birthday in between, they may have some gathering for that. If there was what they call an anniversary, someone's anniversary, they would have something like that. And then that's where I heard the term used "shivaree". After a wedding, then the couple would be shivareed. And that

was, sometimes they would steal the wife and take her someplace, in somebody's camp. And then the husband, they'd steal him and he'd go someplace so he couldn't spend his first night with his bride. So they had a lot of fun things like that. I never knew of anybody having fights. It just never happened. I imagine it happened, but the children didn't see it.

LS: Tell the story about Erickson's Saloon.

DA: Erickson's Saloon, that was a big saloon downtown Portland, Oregon. And the guy that developed the saloon, he had developed one in Astoria called "The Louvre" and then he came to Portland and he was named August Erickson and he was a Finnish kid. He was like 20 years old when he built the saloon in Astoria. He came to Portland. And my step-grandfather was a bouncer at the Erickson's Saloon. And he was a pretty small man. And I asked him, "How could you be a bouncer?" 'Cause bouncers are pretty big. Like the number one bouncer at Erickson's was, I think, Jumbo Kelly, weighed 300 pounds. Jack told me, he said, "Well, you can do pretty much, if you have a carbine in your lap." And he was a bouncer on the mezzanine level. And that was the level where all the ladies of the night had their, let's say, escapade or whatever you want to call it. They couldn't promote any of their wares on the main floor. That was just for gambling. But Erickson's was known for a chorus line and a female orchestra. It was one of the most notorious, or let's say infamous, saloons on the west coast. The bar was two football fields long. And they had free food on the bar as long as you bought a beer. Then you could make a sandwich out of roast ox, cheeses, dured (?), and things like that. And then Benson comes out with his bubblers. He didn't want the men drinking beer, he'd rather have them drink water. So that's the famous Erickson's Saloon.

LS: So most of the loggers would go spend their money on the weekends.

DA: Yes, as to what the loggers would do with their payroll. I believe that was one of the main features of Erickson's Saloon. Erickson performed like a bank and say the loggers that had some foresight to them, single logger, they would go in and they would get their bank roll. At the company, they'd get paid in cash. And then they'd go into Erickson's and they'd give him a roll. And he'd put a rubber band around it with their name. And then they'd come back in after they'd spent their five dollars or what and they'd ask him for some more money and that's how Erickson's became kind of the banker of the loggers, and even sailors used the Erickson's Saloon as a bank.

LS: How did most logging camps, especially when you were a child, like Deep River, how would they get supplies?

DA: Ok, let's say where did the loggers go? Was there a store? Was there somebody that came through? Well, you're at the end of the line on a logging railroad. So what they had down in the community of Gray's River and the community of Deep River, they had a store. And it was called the Appalows Store, general store. Appalows, they had a speeder—and a speeder is a device, it's like sometimes a pump and sometimes they have a little motor on them, but anyway, it's a little car that you can run up the railroad tracks. Well Mrs. Appalow would take baskets. And she'd take baskets of food and sometimes these were preordered over the phone. And then she'd deliver the baskets at the different homes up in the logging camp. And she also was somewhat of a banker. They may give her their money that the loggers got paid, the married loggers. They'd give her the money. She'd take it down to her store and put it in the safe. So that was quite a feature that they had in both those little towns of the Appalows Store. And I remember going in there in my early teens.

LS: Most of the tools and major logging operation supplies, those came in on the railroads?

DA: Most logging camps had their own blacksmith's shop. And during the period of the steam donkeys, steam locomotives, they probably would have a supply of steel and then the blacksmith would use a forge and he may make some particular part. Generally, with this boat, it was like a cargo boat. They hauled passengers, but they hauled cargo on it. Was the General Washington. And that boat could pick up supplies in Astoria. And Astoria would probably get them from Portland. But they would bring them over to Deep River and then they would offload and then the train would take them up into the camps.

LS: So let's switch gears a little bit and start talking about the Tillamook burn and Glenwood.

DA: When we get into forest fires, when we get into when did I leave the Deep River logging camp, I was about three years old. And we moved to a community just outside of Forest Grove called Gales Creek. And that was, I'd call it, a logging, farming hamlet. And to me that was really paradise because I think we had electric lights. We still had an outdoor outhouse.

LS: This is mid-30s.

DA: Yeah, this is 1936. It'd be 1936. And that's when it was three years after the first Tillamook burn. The first Tillamook burn was 1933, that was the big one. And it burned quite a bit. And then in '39, they had another big burn. And that's then when my father started working for Consolidated Timber Company and they were, let's say, a group of about half a dozen gyppo loggers. And they were relogging the Tillamook burn. Some of the timber was still good. It was charred, but they could saw good timber out of it. So that started, and then, in 1945, is the burn that kind of wiped out Consolidated Timber Company. And that was the third Tillamook burn.

And I think the total of those three burns was up in the 600,000 million board feet, or 600,000 acres. Then my father was out of a job and we moved out of there. On the 1945 fire, we had, in our little community of Gales Creek, we had soldiers from Fort Lewis come down and help fight the fire. And that was the first time that I'd ever seen a group of black soldiers or black people. In those days they were called colored people. And my buddies and I would take our bikes and ride up to where they were bivouacked in some farmer's farm. And we'd kind of pal around with these guys. And they had the PX, so we could buy candy and stuff from them. And I think my father asked me to find out if he could buy cigarettes. So he bought Lucky Strike cigarettes which civilians could not buy during the war. So then Sergeant Leroy, that was my favorite guy, Sergeant Leroy. And he kind of took me under his wing. But these were fellas from like Mississippi, Alabama. So some of our mothers were cooking them what they really liked. My mother and my buddies' mothers, they'd cook fried chicken and cornbread. I doubt they made it like their mothers did back in Alabama and Mississippi. But anyway, we had a good relationship. And anyway, my Sergeant Leroy, he said, "Now if the war's over," 'Cause this was right during August of '45 and it was just before the war was over. And they said, "If the war's over and we're still here, you fellas can ride on our trucks and we'll go through Forest Grove and Hillsboro." And they even had one truck with a turret and a 50-caliber machine gun mounted on it. And they said, "We'll even, you know, we've got blanks." They'll fire them. But anyway, the fire came over the hill to Timber, the city of Timber, the little town of Timber. And it was going to burn out Glenwood. So my mother and I, we were up on the west slope just behind Nendelle's restaurant picking raspberries at her cousin's place. We saw the smoke coming out and our eyes were watering in the west slope. And we drove into Hillsboro, we had to have lights on. Couldn't have the windows down because the smoke would just tear up your eyes. Got to Gales Creek, dropped off our berries and picked up my dog and drove up to Timber. And just as you round this one corner, at 4:30 in the afternoon, the sky was black, well kind of purple. But we could see the sun was just a big round, looked like a big pumpkin up there in the sky. And we could see flames right then.

LS: On the hillside?

DA: On the hillside. So, we drove in and it was chaos in the town of Glenwood. My dad was at the truck shop. There were trucks all over. There was Army trucks that would go in there to get repaired. And I saw the truck that Sergeant Leroy drove and he was talking to my dad and I went over there. Leroy said, "Is this your son?" and "Yep." Anyway, we got together and my dad told my mother, "Ok, go on home and you can stay and you can get with Leroy and you got to evacuate the town, the city." And I'd never seen anything like that in my life at 12 years old. We were going in and taking dinner plates off the tables with food still on them for breakfast. And little kids were running around and hollering for their mother and the mother was hollering for the kids. And the mothers were coming out of the house, the little house that they had rented.

She'd have an armful of a doll or photographs or something like that. It was really chaotic. There was deer running around in the community. And dogs running everywhere. And they were hauling all the furniture and stuff, all their possessions. They'd haul them into Gales Creek Community Hall. They were hauling them to Forest Grove and the Armory, Hillsboro, they'd haul them. At 12 years old I was wondering, how were they ever going to find these things when they get back? But that was the end of Consolidated Timber Company and that was when we moved to Sweet Home.

LS: Oh after that.

DA: Yeah, that was like moving to Portland because we had, we bought a home with all lights, bathroom, tub and shower. It was all different. 1,500 people. And twelve sawmills, I think twelve sawmills were within the city limits, something like that.

LS: So what exactly was your dad's job?

DA: Ok, my dad started out, as a 12 year-old, he started out keeping the fires going in the bunkhouse so that the men could play poker. And he said sometimes he made more than the guys playing poker because one guy would have a big winning and he'd just drag the pot and say, "Here kid." 'Cause he kept the fires going and kept stuff, you know, if they wanted something to drink or something like that, you know he was right there. At 14, he started splitting wood for the steam donkeys and the trains, the locomotives. And then 16, he set chokers and stuff like that for my mother's uncle's logging...

LS: Like whistle pump and...

DA: Yeah, he went all through that. Generally, whistle pump was kind of a skill that was reserved for a logger that might have maybe just one leg, kind of a retirement type job. But then young people got in there too. Choker setting was the tough one. Pardon me. (pauses for water)
[Discussion related to video production]

LS: Okay, so we talked about your father's early career. So he started out working in the bunkhouses, then he went to choker setting. And then after that, what was your father's main job as a man logger, as an adult logger?

DA: Ok, my father, because his father was killed, he was doing things to help out his mother and his siblings.

LS: Was his father killed as a logger?

DA: His father was killed as a logger.

LS: What happened there?

DA: Ok, he was bucking a log. And that's, the faller falls the timber and then you saw it into sawmill lengths. And it may be 28 foot, 32 foot, 40 foot. But you saw it into a sawmill length that it can then go through the sawmill. So anyway, his father was bucking a log with a crosscut saw. And it was in a bind.

LS: You mean it got caught?

DA: Yeah, it was like crossed over like that, something like that. And it may have been, and he was, I think some of these guys, they figure they know how that log is going to react when they get it cut. Well sometimes, they don't. And anyway, this was one of the situations where, when he got it cut, it was a pretty good size log and it rolled on him and broke every bone in his body. It just crushed him, you know. And some of these logs are that much in diameter. So that's what happened. And he was, I think he was four. And then from that time on...

LS: Your father was four.

DA: Yeah, my father was four when...

LS: When your grandfather died.

DA: When he died, and he was forty. I'm pretty sure the figure was, my grandmother got what they called a widow's pension. Was \$25 a month, but they had a homestead. They had a farm, that they raised everything. So they were okay. So he went through this period making a few dollars, then he got to the point where he could work as a logger. One of his problems, early childhood, I think 12 years old, something like that. Him and his brother were taking hammers and chopping a piece of concrete just to see how they could knock off. Well a chunk went in his eye and put his eye out. So he had his eye put out when he was 12 years old. So working in the woods, he got to the point where he was setting chokers where a limb hit him and almost put out his other eye. So that's when he thought, "Uh, I got to do something different." That's when he got into being a mechanic. And he had, I had some books that he had, but it was like correspondence courses and stuff like that. And then most people back then, most guys, everybody knew how to work on their car. Well then he got into work on the big heavy trucks and that's what he did the rest of his life. Was work on...

LS: Once the diesel powered...

DA: Yeah, he got into the gas rigs. Then he got into the diesel rigs. And then once in a while he'd go out and work on a cat. I remember one time he, he had diabetes, so he did not want to be out in the woods by himself in case he had a reaction or something. So he'd have me go with him. I'd drop out of school for an afternoon or something like that and I'd go up with my dad up to the woods. We would be out lying under a cat, DA cat, snow coming in sideways blowing, but had to get that cat going. That's what I wanted to be when I got out of high school, I wanted to be a diesel mechanic and a woods mechanic that went up in the brush and worked on yarders and diesel stuff and that kind of thing.

LS: And that's because of all the time you spent with your father.

DA: Right.

LS: In the woods?

DA: Right.

LS: Working.

DA: Right, from the time...

LS: Did he ever pay you for your help when you were a child?

DA: No.

LS: You were just expected.

[Discussion related to video production]

DA: I figured it was a privilege because I knew that his father was killed when he was four. And my father was teaching me how to survive or how to do the things that I could make a living if I wasn't 18 or something like that and help my mother. At 12 years old, he put me on the end of a crosscut saw. And we fell some timber on our property. I didn't do it because this was our work, he wanted to show me what his father did and that he had done. My father fell timber. But he wanted to show me how he went about that and how hard that is. And I thought, at 12 years old, it was just enough for me to fall one tree and I thought, "How'd a guy keep this up for 8 hours 10

hours a day?’ And then he taught me how to shoot stumps. I was blasting stumps when I was like 14 years old.

LS: With TNT?

DA: No, just dynamite, what they call stumping powder. A lot of kids, you know, dad “don’t even touch that”, well my dad had gone through, he’d been a, they called them powder monkeys. They’d do all the blasting. He kind of taught me all these things and I thought, okay that’s good I’m learning. There was times when I would work with a guy to learn his skill. He didn’t have to pay me. I did things like that. Most guys, most of my buddies that had dads that were loggers, that’s what they did. You taught your son to shingle a house, build a house, do the plumbing, do the electricity, all that. You taught it at a very young age. And it’s good things have changed, because you can’t do that nowadays. But yeah, when we moved there to Sweet Home, it was a much larger. And then, I got into the woods. I started out as a truck mechanic. And at 16, because I couldn’t go into the woods until I was 18. And then when I did go in the woods, then I worked with a civil engineer. And we called them logging engineers when they work for a logging company. And we would lay out the roads and then we’d lay out the cutting units, which area to fall timber in. And then, help design the road. And the crew’s timber and all that kind of stuff. So I wasn’t really involved in the dangerous logging end of it. But then, when I went back to school, after the military, I wanted to get the experience logging and setting chokers, and you know, the tough stuff. And so I got a job as a, doing cat logging for the same big company.

LS: By this time it’s either late ‘50s?

DA: This is mid-‘50s. I worked in the woods prior to going into the military. Then in the military for two years. And then worked summers from college. By working in the woods, you made two to three times as much as your fellow students that were working in aircraft factories, but it was dangerous. Very, very, very dangerous. But that prepared me for either continuing in logging and working for a lumber company, but there was very few lumber companies hiring engineers. And most of them, you had to have the experience. And I didn’t have that much experience.

LS: How did your parents feel about your education and becoming an engineer rather than quitting school and going straight into the forest?

DA: Ok, most of my high school buddies because we all felt by the time we were juniors and seniors, we felt we were going to follow in our fathers’ footsteps and be a logger. And many of them did. But, I tried to work for my uncle, who had a logging company, and he said, “No, I’m not going hire you.”

LS: What was your uncle's name?

DA: Gunnar Nelson. And they've got a book written about him. But, he said, "You're going to go to college. You're going to go to college." And anyway, practically every one of his grandkids has gone to college. They worked in the woods. They worked in his actual company. And one was his granddaughter, and she ended up getting a PhD in education and she's retired now as a principal from a high school. She set chokers behind his D7 cat. But he wouldn't hire me. But it was later in life with her. Anyway, so we get to the time when we go into the military. Well, then we got four years of college if we want it. And I got back and I thought, "Well, hmm, I don't know if I want that." Because I'd worked four summers, and it's tough work. I thought, "Boy, it would be nice to just be in an office." So that's my engineering that got me back in an office. But I was offered a job for Morrison-Knudsen International. They heard about me working on building road, blasting and all this. And they offered me a job, \$1,500 a month, to be a blasting superintendent on one of their sites in South America. And I come home just sky high, you know, I thought, "Man, this would be great!" My wife said, "Are you crazy? You're going to work in South America, \$1,500 a month? What'd you go to school for?" And then I talked to two of my people that were my mentors, engineers, civil engineers. They said, "You wouldn't last four years, tops, because you're going into an area where you have maybe 40 guys you would be supervising. One of them may speak English." And he said, "Here, you have six guys on the crew. You all know what the other guy's doing. You know how he thinks." And he said, "You don't have problems. You all speak English." So I turned Morrison-Knudsen down. But I did have a chance some of the big lumbermen that have made this state great. The Swindells, the Powers, the Wheelers, those names, you know. John Powers, his grandfather was Al Powers, who founded the town of Powers, Minnesota, Powers, Oregon. Swindells, I met him when I was 18. And he was the guy that founded the Oregon Community Foundation. And their assets I think the last year was \$1.3 billion. But some of those old loggers, I'm probably one of the very few that's alive that can remember meeting those people. And they were out in the brush with cork boots. I think Bill Swindells Sr. was, he started his logging career setting chokers.

LS: So speaking of careers, how did you see technology change between the time that your father was a logger and you watching him in the woods through your career? Don't forget to repeat, technology changed...

DA: The technology, I'm at the age where I was able to see the evolution of technology in logging. At first, we had the steam yarders and that's the machine that brings in the logs. And then we had the steam locomotives. Well, then they switched over to diesel. It was higher production and safer. And then we had the trucks. Instead of railroad logging, we got into truck logging where the trucks hauled the logs and it's less expensive and they went from gas to diesel. The main, I think one of the main innovations of logging, which really reduced the price of

lumber, was the invention of the chain saw. And that was an Oregon logger, Joe Cox. He invented the chain saw, or the saw chain. And then the great philanthropist John Gray was the one that then bought this and he took the saw chain into what it is today. Because you got rid of the cross cut saw, so your production of fallen timber and cutting up to log size, it just like revolutionized. Much more higher production.

LS: Did they need, because the production grew, did they need more staff, or less?

DA: Actually, they needed more people because in the instance of Roseburg Lumber Company, Roseburg Forest Products, now. But Kenneth Ford, he was the type, he would develop one innovation that would improve this section of the mill. Well then all the sudden, when this is a higher production, down the road or down the line, you're getting a bottleneck. Then he would concentrate on that bottle neck. Well, all the sudden, Kenneth Ford was one of the greatest innovators of plywood manufacturing in the world. I think Roseburg Forest Products is still the largest manufacturing company in the world, privately owned with the Ford family. And the Ford Family Foundation, not to be confused with the Ford car, but the Ford Family Foundation is, I think, the second foundation with the most amount of money in assets. I think it's around \$700 million. They give scholarships to students who are going to pursue like a career in some of their areas. And they have made a pledge to give back then, when they graduate. But the technology is just skyrocketed because when I was a kid, every sawmill had what they called a wigwam burner. And you had this big, it was like a big old stove out where all the slab wood, the saw dust, everything went in that wigwam burner and everything burned up. Well, now, there's practically nothing. And I think Willamette Industries, the one that's the Swindells, the Powers, the Wheelers, those guys, they developed the technology to the point where there's no scrap. And if there is some scrap, it goes to power a generator system that produces power that they sell back to the power companies.

LS: I think Stimson makes that particle board and...

DA: That's another thing they're developing a type of particle board and there's different names they have for it. But, it's beyond plywood. As an example of a technology, Willamette Industries, and it was before they were Willamette Industries, they took the cull timber from a peeler log. And a cull is it may have some fungus in it that they can't use it as a grade-A veneer. It's got little white specks in it. They actually took that and took their money, tested it, and they used that as the inner plys for plywood. And they finally got it OK'd by the plywood association, but they used all their adhesives and their glues and all that. And yeah, they come out with a plywood that was stronger than if it was a grade-A timber. So they've done this with other things. The particle board, you take pieces and then make a board out of it and it's like sheeting on homes, things like that. So a lot of technology they've developed over the years. And there's

one coming out now that, yeah, they can put more of this wood that doesn't have to be big, big logs. They can use small logs to make the pieces. But it will hold up better than if a building is made of steel and some of these other things. So it's big. And I think one of those buildings is being built right here in Oregon. And pulp, the Collins family, which were big timber people, they have a mill. I think it's Boardman, where they can grow pulp and be processing it in just 15-20 years. But now they're coming up with a hybrid tree that they're making like molding. And it's just a fascinating technology that they've gotten into. It's just unbelievable.

LS: So how do you think that the changes in technology today are affecting environmentalism?

DA: It's getting to the point where you don't have to use so much of the old growth. Well, I don't know if they use any old growth anymore. But, you don't have to use the big logs because, with their technology, they're going into smaller logs. And the way they used to do this in a sawmill, and I'm not sure if that's called a ratchet setter, but anyway the guy that sets the saws, when the log comes in on the conveyor and it comes up and it's going through the mill, okay? You got a log this big around. Can you imagine that in your head, if you're the ratchet setter, the sawyer, you had to figure out, "Ok what boards are we going to cut outta there? Are we gonna cut 2x4s, 2x6s, 4x4s, 4x8s, 2x8s, 2x12s? What are we gonna cut outta there? And are we gonna get the right mix?" And it's like making the most amount of cookies out of a piece of dough. How do you do the best of that? Well, that's where they developed the computerized sawmills. And that was developed here in Oregon where when the log comes in, they take a picture of the front of the log and then the back of the log and the computer then goes through and blip. It tells you what is the best combination of 2x4s, 2x6s, 4x and anyway, it tells you the best combination in that, where humanly, it's impossible. And I saw Willamette's system in operation where on that wall was the marketing people. On this wall was the desks of the sawmill people. And these people here, they had the orders for the lumber and they would just tell these people, you know, through the computer, this is what we need. They could go right to the mill and say, "Ok, we need two cart loads of 2x12s. We need four cart loads of 2x6s." And blip, there it is. They don't have the big lumber yards anymore as they can make it so quick. And you can do it on a small log. But it would actually be humanly impossible for the guy setting the saws to take a log this big and say, "What's the best combination in there?" You'd have to be a mathematical genius. So it's things like that have evolved where the environmentalists should be pretty well pleased of the advancement that's been made. And yeah, well so we didn't have the technology back then. And it was, you know, cut the trees, we need the land for produce. And that's mainly what it was. In some places you would cut the trees and just burn them just to have land to grow crops for people.

LS: So I think we're getting ready to wrap up. I think the last question I would ask you is just to give me a couple of your most prominent memories or are there a particular couple of people

throughout your career that really influenced you, that really made an impact on you over your lifetime.

DA: Ok, I will mention my father was my role model. He treated me like a man when I was like 12 years old. He had a discipline that was very different so that takes care of my role model. Ok, now, the next one was my first boss. And actually we lived next door to him. He was a civil engineer, like a semi-pro golfer. And he was the logging manager at Willamette Industries when he retired. Rex Pemberton. He's probably, maybe not too many people now know him or knew of him. But Rex, when he would, he knew that I was studying engineering and when lunch time came, we'd talk about engineering, but it wasn't civil, it was mechanical and stuff like that. So he would ask me different questions and he knew that I was going to try to work for Willamette after I got out of college, but they didn't, I think I paved the way because the following year they hired an engineer, but not me. But anyway, Rex, of all the people that I had as managers, bosses, in Fortune 500, he stood out still the best. He was a graduate civil engineer. He was in the Navy, an officer in the Navy on a destroyer during World War II. And it's something like if you could write a book about him and every time we talked while I worked for him for about 4 years, we didn't talk BS. It was like I was getting either a sermon or a lecture or a seminar from him every time we had lunch. He'd tell me, "You know, you're going to be out there in the world and you're going to be at the hire people. That's easy, you can always hire people. How do you fire them?" And he told me, he said, "You're going to be up against this." And he said that, "I've found that they, some of these guys, they get pretty mean. You know, big logger, you're going to fire him? They'd come after you with a crow bar, you know. Anyway, I always found them a job. They didn't fit in our organization, but I knew where there was an opening." And things like that. And there was one kid in town, everybody liked his father. Everybody liked Skip. He was an epileptic. Where are you going to put an epileptic in the woods? You can't. You can't hire, too much of a liability. Anyway, Rex knew that I was on this one road building team and he knew some of the guys, well it was Willamette. Anyway, Rex said, "We want to hire Skip. We want to show him what it's like to be a logger, but we're going to put him on your crew 'cause you guys are the best." And I was the youngest and I'd worked for Rex earlier. But anyway, he trusted us to guide this kid and show him what it's like and did he want to do that the rest of his life. And we were building road and we were carrying a box of powder. What we did, we had a canyon to go down or what we had instead, the timber fallers fell a tree across so we had a bridge. Well it was a log about this big around. Well with cork boots, you can walk on the log and you're not going to slip. And we told Skip, "Don't you dare try to walk across that log." And we watched him, he took his medication and we told him, "You're going to answer to us. I mean we'll take you out here in the woods and slap you around." Anyway, 'cause we didn't want the responsibility and Rex said, "You guys take care of himself." You know, he trusted us. Anyway, and loggers in the woods all looked the same. You're wearing black jeans, shirt, tin hat. All the

sudden, we see this guy going across the sky bridge. And it's probably up, he probably fell that far. It's probably that far to the ground.

LS: So like 30...

DA: He's got this box of powder up on his shoulder and he had a reaction, seizure. We thought, "Holy crap!" And I was carrying right behind him with another one getting ready to go on the log. And I saw him fall and I thought, "Oh geez!" I'd never seen a guy have a reaction or a seizure. I jumped down, yeah didn't even think about it, but there was a lot of boughs, cedar and fir boughs in there, so we broke our fall. Anyway, you know, not going to break a leg or anything as long as I land right. But anyway, I got there first and he was starting to foam and stuff like this. And I thought, "Oh damn what do we do?" Well anyway then another, an older guy, he was taking steps about ten feet at a time. He come right there and he was right behind me. And anyway, he helped im. He carried him out of there. But that, Rex Pemberton, knew enough about us because he was our general manager then and he knew enough about us that he could trust us that we were going to make sure that kid could work and not have any problem.

LS: Did the kid continue to work for you?

DA: Pardon?

LS: Did the kid continue to work after?

DA: Oh yeah, oh yeah. We got him up there and he gave him a pretty good lecture. And loggers can give you pretty good lecture, I mean, you'd know you had a lecture because they don't smile and they just tell you and then they walk off. But anyway, Rex Pemberton had to be the best supervisor I ever had in my life. And we went on one fishing trip one time. Best fishing trip I ever went on in my life.

LS: On a boat? Or fly fishing?

DA: We went through the toughest canyon in Oregon on the Santiam Pass. Five miles of trout fishing. And I'm not kidding you, we got our limit and then, we're both fly fishermen. And Rex and I, the stream started below a 400 foot bluff and we had been cruising timber up here and we saw this big bluff and we thought, "Where's the stream?" And we thought, "That must be the headwaters of Soda Fork." Anyway, so we figured out a deal where we're going to fish through there sometime. And we figured no white man's ever been through there. And anyway, we did it and we caught our limit and we got about a mile from the end of it, where we're going to meet our partner and we fished, but all of us fished with barbless hook even back then. And you know

we just wanted to see. And there was trout in there like that, you know, native trout. Oh man, that was the best fishing trip I'd had in my life and Rex and I did it. And we were wet from here. We had cork boots on. We're wet clear up to here. And then from sweat, we're wet down to here.

LS: You didn't have waders?

DA: Oh not then, we just had our logging outfit, our cork boots. And sometimes we were in walled canyons like this and log jams. But it was well worth it. I'd do it again with him. But he'd call me on certain things pertaining to logging equipment. You know, they had one big tower. Usually a spar tree is what they used for the guidelines and everything to yard with. Ok, then they got to the point where they used steel towers. Anyway, they had a tower collapse and go over a ridge.

LS: A steel tower?

DA: Steel tower. A 90 foot tower built here in Oregon. Anyway, Rex called me one night and he said, "I need my casting experts." He said, "The guideline ring exploded." And that was the thing all the wire, all the lines go to. It holds the tower up. And I said, "Uh oh." I said, "Have you got the pieces?" "Yeah, we've got the pieces." And I said, "Well, do they look funny or does it look like just a broke piece of wood or something like that?" "No" he said, "There's little spots in there and they're defective." And I said, "When I worked at the foundry, I tried to sell that company an x-ray on that part because it could kill a guy if it breaks." And I said, "Did it hurt anybody?" And he said, "You couldn't believe it." He said, "There was eight guys doing the various things, choker, well, second loading, chasing, different rigging slingers under the tower. Not a one of them got hit by a line." And I said, "Holy crimony! That's unbelievable!"

LS: That line would have just...

DA: Oh, it could have, one line hit and you're dead. Yeah, it'd break your neck. Anyway, I said, "If you have to go to court, make sure that you retain all those cast examples because it showed it was defective. And I'll testify in court that I tried to sell them on x-raying that and they said, 'Nah it didn't need it.'" I said, "They should have had it x-rayed." But anyway, he said, "Ah, we're not going to sue them." He said, "I just want my money back!" The fully rigged there about a million dollars for that piece of equipment. He said, "I just want them to come and get it." Now, he wasn't going to sue them. Well, now, you've got four lawyers already standing in line to sue him.

LS: Ten million dollars later.

DA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But yeah, all of the fellas that I knew in logging and lumbering, it's like there's just a different breed.

LS: Is it similar to the brotherhood in the military?

DA: Yes, yes, yeah. I think.

LS: Talk about that a little bit.

DA: Yes, you're going to watch out for each other. You're going to watch out for each other. And that's the way it is in logging. Because you know if you see a line, a guy doing something, you're gonna say, "Get out of there!" It can kill you. Like what they would do, they would stand over a line and one big hook tender, that's the boss, had it happen to him. If you're around the landing and you see a line, you never stand on it or straddle it because you don't know if something happens they could have tight-lined it. That line could whip. It could go in the air for 70 feet. And anyway, that's what that guy did and it split him. It just split him. It was horrible. I mean, you'd get some gruesome accidents in logging.

LS: Right.

DA: Almost like mining or something like that.

LS: Well I mean, what happened to your grandfather.

DA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then one doctor in Beaverton, the one that Penny worked for. He was a Vernonia Days master of ceremony or Mr. Vernonia, something like that one time in the parade. And then afterwards went over to the park and all talked about Dr. Eby. Anyway, we were talking about logging accidents and he was telling this guy about different accidents that he's seen. Anyway, then the logger said, "Did you ever see that logger up on so-and-so? That got his leg cut off? He got his leg on the rail and the wheel went over and cut his leg off?" And anyway, Eby said, "Well yeah, were you there?" And he said, "Yeah, I was there." And he said, "Well what were you doing?" And he said, "I was over there heaving my guts out!" And then he asked Eby, "What were you doing?" because he didn't know him then. And he said, "Well I went over there and I cut the skin off so the leg could fall off." So that's the old loggers' doctors. And my classmate in high school, her dad was one of the better surgeons. They really know how to operate in Sweet Home. But they see that stuff all the time.

LS: Dangerous jobs.

DA: At Deep River camp, they had a guy, Fred, I can't remember his last name. But anyway, he was working for my great uncles and he got in the bite and, yeah, railroad wheel went right over and severed his leg. What it did, it crushed or sealed the blood vessel, so he didn't bleed to death. And I guess the brakemen or some of the guys on the train come out because it was right in front of my grandmother's house. And she come out there and wanted to know if she could help. And he said, "Mrs. Alanen, you don't want to come out here." She says, "Oh I've seen worse than that." Well she saw her husband, you know. But anyway the company now that's what some of the old loggers did in the old days. They provided him with the lumber and then some of the guys kicked in some money and they, anyway, they built him a little pool hall. A little pool hall and stuff like that so he could have something to make a living out of.

LS: Did they have, first of all, did they have insurance? Second of all, talk about the unions a little bit, when they started.

DA: Yeah.

LS: So, first of all, insurance.

DA: The insurance, they had no insurance. But what would generally happen, and this a guy that I knew that was over in Germany in foundries, no insurance. But when something happens, when somebody in a family, they get maybe somebody has died somebody, anyway, it's a hardship. They go around and they say, "Ok, come on kick in a little bit for Jack" or something like that. That's what they would do. And the company kicks in some and then the others kicked in some. But yeah, there's no welfare, no insurance. It's just a community. The community gets together. And I remember at Gales Creek, a guy that had a real nice produce business. His house burned to the ground. And I remember they had like a house raising. People helped him and everything like that and, yeah, it's the community that gets together. Because, yeah, they didn't have insurance. So, it worked out well and that's what they did in Germany. And then, I think, the guy told me there that they had what they called a guild and the younger guys, because they got paid by piecework, the younger guys could produce more. And if an older guy had more kids and he couldn't produce as much, the young guys would kick in some of theirs. So it turned out real good.

LS: So now how did that change when the unions started?

DA: Well, then, okay, then the unions come in there and the worst one, and I wrote about it in one of my books. And I think, I think they still exist, the IWW, International Woodworkers of the World. And I think they tried to make it International Workers of the World. They were trying to organize everybody that worked. Anyway, they were here in Oregon and they bombed,

firebombed, lumber companies. They firebombed Willamette Valley Lumber Company in Dallas. This is back in 1910/1920. The loggers called them the "I Won't Work Group" because they're just agitators. And they come up in the woods and they just agitated. And then they called them wobblies. There's a lot of history on them guys, but yeah, they were just really agitators.

LS: And your father was not part of the union?

DA: No, then you got the AFL and CIO.

LS: Okay.

DA: And up in Washington, my uncles were AFL. And then down in Oregon, my dad and I were CIO. And we'd always tell them, "We're the good guys." But I had a deal one time where I was working as a mechanic, real nice job. The superintendent of the company laid me off and I thought, "Well, it's in the good season." He laid me off. Good thing that's when I went to work for the engineers. But anyway, my dad said he hired a guy within a few days. Well see, that's, in a union, you can't do that. You're not supposed to do it anyway, but bosses do it. The reason he did, the guy that he hired was his renter and he was out of a job. So, he just thought, "Oh well." I think the guy should have had nerve enough to talk to me to say, "You know, you want to help out this guy. You can probably get any job you want, but he's got a problem." He's got some kids and you know. And I'd say, "Well, heck yeah, I want him to work here. If I can't get a job, something's wrong with me." And anyway, but they called the union and at the union meeting they wanted to call a strike. And I thought, "I'm like 18 and here's the whole place, and this guys in there like 60 years old. You want me to allow you to call a strike so I can get my job back?" And I got up in the union and I said, "If I can't get another job, I've got a problem." I said, "You know, I can get a job wherever I want within reason." And I said, "I don't want these guys to go out of a job." It was like 400 and mostly family men. Well you don't know how long they're gonna, cause Martin, the superintendent, he could go on forever. Anyway, got home, my dad said, "Good work, good work." Anyway, you could go on forever on this kind of stuff.

LS: I think that's about it. I don't have any more questions at this point. So thank you so much.

DA: I appreciate it.

LS: For joining us.

DA: I ramble, I ramble.

LS: You did great. You did great.

[Discussion related to video production]