

**Walter Smith
Narrator**

**John Esse
Interviewer**

**July 2, 1975
Bigfork, Minnesota**

Walter Smith **-WS**
John Esse **-JE**

JE: This is John Esse up at Bigfork, and I am interviewing Walter Smith on July 2, 1975 and Walter is from the Balsam area and has recently moved to the Bigfork area in just the past two years.

Walt can you give us a background were you born over there or did you move up with your dad?

WS: No, I was born in Thomas town, in Wadena County, October the 26th, 1893. I think we lived around there, a lot of things I don't remember. I can't remember back any further than four years old, but I remember the Partridge River that I went swimming in there with my older brothers, and they took me out in deep water, one on each side, now this made a mark on me. I have always been a little bit afraid of water since then.

JE: Yes, uh huh.

WS: That went on and there wasn't very much more that I remember, oh a few instances till I was 6 years old, we used to go to Staples to do gut trading, we were down there with my dad once, went down with the horses, I sat on the most free seat on the wagon and there was an old fellow on the sidewalk, he had long gray whiskers, and dad got out and talked to him, and when he came back he said did you notice that old man I was talking to. I said yes I did, with long white whiskers like grandpa. Well he said, I want you to always to remember, that was the Cole Younger, and he just got out of prison. See I think he had 25 or 30 years that they put him in for, and he had just got out. He was selling tombstones. Getting by.

JE: How did you get up to the Balsam territory?

WS: Well we went from Staples, we went up around Pine River and Backus and dad was hunting for a homestead, and he threwed us all into a wagon and we had a tent and went to Pine River and then off North East toward Grand Rapids. We got up as far as Big Rice Lake, right below Remer, well there is where he got home sick and he turned around and went back, and we went back to Pine River and he stopped there, he was a great tie maker. Them jack pine ties, that was the big money.

JE: That was his specialty?

WS: Ya, then he made ties there for a while and then we moved up to Backus for the winter, and he found a homestead down there that he could file on, which he did. Then we stayed there, and there used to be some people that come up there from Iowa, some land people. They got a hold of dad some way, and of course he could locate him on any piece of land it they wanted to see him in the country, and after a couple of years of that they moved up into Itasca County. They got a big holding up here that was the Longsberry Simmons Land Company. They were from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Well they got him to come up to Wabana, and that was the spring of 1904 and put up some building for him, they had the Arrowhead Point across the lake, if you know Wabana Lake.

JE: Yes, very briefly.

WS: He put up the first buildings over there, and we stayed there until the fall of 1905, and dad seen something in this country that he wanted more than anything else, and that was a stopping ranch on the old main road, you know, from Grand Rapids up. There were still logging up in township 6024. They were doing heavy logging up there yet, and everything came up from Grand Rapids, up the old tote roads which was somewhere around 60 miles from Grand Rapids up to the headquarter camp: The logging outfit there was the Stillwater outfit Besides Joe Dunning was in west of Long Lake. Long Lake, that was where all the logs were landed, and Joe Dunning was over at Eagle Lake.

JE: Did they pick those logs up then by a train was there a train there?

WS: No, they drove them down the river from there. See that Long Lake tributary to Prairie River, and they would get them down into Prairie River and from there into the Mississippi.

JE: Oh, Yes.

WS: Because it was Dunning logged for a big outfit in Minneapolis with a saw mill that was Bovey and DeLaittre. And he logged all the way from Coleraine up this, all the way through... Sutton and Maki, they logged for I thing for C. A. Smith, and they had a big mill in Minneapolis.

JE: Did they drive those logs down the Mississippi to Minneapolis at that time?

WS: Yes, well you see they drove them all these tributaries had logs coming into the Mississippi River. Then there was a company there that did all the driving, called the Boone Co. As soon as they got the logs into the Mississippi well the Boone Company took them then. They'd go down to Minneapolis and there they sorted them each log had a mark on it, a stamp on the end, and then there was a bark mark in the bark cut in with an ax. They had sorting gaps here, and they run back up here floating booms and they sturdied them up there and they sorted them out and shoved them down into whichever mill they was going to.

JE: Just like cutting out cattle at the end of the cattle drive.

WS: Well, yes or something like that, switching on different tracks for the railroad, because they turn them off on these different lanes. Also there was a man there, a scaler and he had a big set of calibers, and he would just step on the log shove these calibers down on each side then he could read the rule on it. They were scaled. . .

JE: Okay now, if we look back, so your dad wanted a stopping off place on these tote roads that would come from Grand Rapids to the main camps.

WS: Ya, he wanted to get a hold of one of those stopping ranches, and he finally located one up E thirty two miles from Grand Rapids, and that was the old Cap Hastie ranch. It used to be, Hastie and MacCalister was a logging outfit, and they had camped first down at Balsam Brook, right by the dam, and then old Cap got that old homestead up there, and he was from the Civil War, and he put in this stopping ranch. Well right there the road forked; there was some of it, down round the r east end of Long Lake. See that Long Lake just cut off everything there, you couldn't get across it, you had to go around one way or the other, which was miles. You could go down to the Long Lake Dam and cross there, and then you take another road right back up this way, and you had a heavy team of horses and if you leave or place in the morning by noon you would be up here just about 5 miles from where you stayed overnight.

JE: You mean north?

WS: Ya, that is the way the road turned there.

JE: Your place then was on the south portion of the lake.

WS: No, it wasn't on the lake, it was 3 miles below near Balsam Brook. Then there is a road turn left up there west northwest it went to Eagle Lake and you could get over here to Bigfork on that road there. I have a picture here someplace of the old road I took this winter where it ran through.

JE: Well, did your dad get that stopping over place then?

WS: Oh, Yes he got that and then he built this big house, I have those pictures here...

JE: Yes, you showed them to me, or I saw the same picture down in the historical society, that is the picture of the two story log house that was built out of tamarack logs, with the stone pillars out in front.

WS: Ya, I built those pillars afterwards. They just had a couple of posts sitting out there, and they began to get rotten. So I got a hold of some 3" pipe and I set a leg under each corner there and then stoned it up. They are still standing. I took a picture of them not too long ago, I don't know, I sent the film in through here and the whole shipment of film got lost, and nobody got their pictures. Well from the old stopping ranch why when we was up at the old ranch, the last year we was there that is where he got the idea of building this rode through to Bovey, and they

had the first meeting there, it was at the old Cap Hastie ranch, where he called the settlers in. They was all for it. Then we was building house and had to get the logs out, in the summer time and skid them out with 4 horses, because they were long logs, some of them were 40 feet long. Then they let the contract for tearing out the right away near Bovey and then to the grading. Well dad he was kind of fooling around with the logging business and he had a lot of horses so he got most of the grading. He graded all the roads from our place there on Balsam Brook down to where it crossed Prairie River.

JE: That's quite a ways?

WS: Ya.

JE: What year did you come up here then, up to Balsam?

WS: Up to Balsam? We came up the fall of 1905, from Wabana.

JE: From Wabana, okay.

WS: Dad got his heart's desire here, a stopping ranch.

JE: That would make you about 12 or 13 years old.

WS: Ya, I was about 12 years old when we come up here, as I remember correctly.

JE: Well what was that country like was there quite a bit of homesteading going on?

WS: Oh yea, There were quite a lot of them, homesteading you know down in around lower Balsam, then east of that. The Finnish people came in, it was a regular settlement, and there was quite a few pieces here and there. Of course the country had been logged off and then burned, and all that level country south of Long Lake and if you get up by the big stump there you could see for a half a mile all around you. It was just chuck full of deer.

JE: I suppose a lot of brush growing up and blueberries.

WS: Well it was coming a little in, but it didn't bother ya any. You could stand up there and see a long ways.

JE: It was all stumps, and burned?

WS: Ya, just stumps and burned, and they wasn't satisfied you know burning once; they had to burn it every year. Well the first settlers came in and they figured well that is the way to clearing country, just burn it and they used to have fires and it didn't do so much damage then, because they burned the meadows in the spring and the fires didn't burn to long. Later on when they quit burning and grass grew up and died, well then we got a fire started and it burned.

JE: A lot of fuel for the fire to keep going?

WS: Ya, well we...

JE: What kind of, did your father have that stopping of place and that inn, which came there?

WS: Well the first year, the first winter see that was started in the spring and we got it in shape to live in by fall and as I told you before there was still logging up here and one night, that was just the latter part of deer season, well the day before there come a pretty heavy snow storm and of course they all those camps out in the country they headed for C.V.'s place. A lot of them had to get a team to haul them to Grand Rapids. There were 84 people stopped there that night, in one night.

JE: Who is C. V.?

WS: That was my dad.

JE: That was your dad. C. V. Smith.

WS: Ya, Charles V. Smith.

JE: Okay.

WS: Everybody knew him by C. V.

JE: Well did you have, cooking, liquor or?

WS: No liquor, it was just supper, bed and breakfast, for 75¢.

JE: Okay.

WS: Well then he had a big bunk house out there that held 40 men, that same night there was Sutton Maki were bringing in 40 men that were coming up from Grand Rapids. They stopped there, well they took over the bunk house, but they all had to be fed, supper and breakfast.

JE: Isn't Maki Finnish?

WS: Maki?

JE: Ya.

WS: No, he is Irish I think.

JE: So they were just beginning their logging operations and stopped over on the way up.

WS: Ya, they were just finishing up, up in there. Some of that stuff they hauled down with 4

horses and trailers like the double sleighs like I made down here. They all got oh, 12 or 14 miles to get it down to long lake.

JE: Well those double sleighs; those are the ones you have in the old 50 club in Bigfork here.

WS: Yes, it would haul about 10,000 on each sleigh with 4 horses, of course they had that water tank, they were the guys that made it possible for them to haul those big loads. Another thing that took 4 horses on a block and line to get one of those outfits started in the morning after it sit there loaded all night.

JE: I suppose it froze up a little bit?

WS: It froze down, because the sleighs create little bit of warmth enough so it will just thaw a little in the ruts. When they froze down, why then they would have to get out with a big wooden maul & pound the runners until they got loose, then they would have 4 other horses on the side here and they would put a chain on here and hook it up to the horses, usually they used a block and line.

JE: How many gallons of water would those tanks hold?

WS: Oh, usually figure a hundred or hundred and fifty barrels, and multiply that by 32 gallons to the barrel, and you would get some idea.

JE: Yes, that is quite a bit of weight.

WS: Yes, it was they were heavy.

JE: I notice that on these water tanks that they also have the hook up on both ends, and just put the pole up, I would imagine that hauling one way?

WS: No, that always stuck straight out.

JE: Oh, it did, they just let it drag.

WS: Yes, of course if you will notice there is spring folds on there, and it never got down and dragged. It stays up there all the time.

JE: I see.

WS: That is for two reasons, one reason is that the leaders out there, this is held up by the pole team, the neck yoke, and then the leaders on, and that would make an awful strain on that pole team to hold that tongue up and then the other horses pulling.

JE: It would be quite a bit of weight.

WS: So they put this spring pole up there, and then there's only pull team had to do was steer the

sleigh.

JE: Now on building those ice roads, how long would it actually take to build an ice road?

WS: Well as soon as they could get started in the fall, they usually cleaned the logging road out, the main road rubbed it out and as soon as it froze enough they would put on the rut cutting, that would cut a rut for each runner about 8 inches wide. Eight or ten inches wide, right in the ground.

JE: Okay.

WS: Then when they got a little snow on that and freeze it a little bit so they get over with the tank, and get a little ice started there well then they kept right on till oh, it would be along towards Christmas before they really got down to hauling. But they were tanking every minute that there was any freezing weather, and that is the reason they worked nights so much for one reason. They just keep building ice in there. While one of those long roads if they had been well built, would have that much ice in it.

JE: You mean about 2 feet?

WS: Yes.

JE: Now this rut cutter would originally cut that groove out of the road. Then they kept on icing it but then the rut cutter would have to cut the grooves in that new ice road to, wouldn't it?

WS: Yes, they had to run in there and cut the ice now and then. It had to be made so that it would cut ice to.

JE: Now, I notice that, well then the loggers up in the people cutting the logs out in the woods they would then haul those logs up to the main logging road and then once the ice road was built up, then they could actually do the hauling.

WS: Of course they built the road, they had figured up, they built the road, the main road through the timber and then they would have spurs coming in, just like it was a railroad coming from both sides. But they would take the sleighs out there and rode them, and a lot of times it was just snow they didn't ice then. But they would put enough horses on to get it out to the main road and they called that yarding out.

JE: Okay.

WS: They would yard out, oh; they would have a wide place there where they would yard the sleighs out.

JE: Did they ever use oxen at all, or did you ever use oxen?

WS: Yes, they were Sutton and Maki, they brought up 3 or 4 car loads of oxen.

JE: Where in the world would they get all those oxen from?

WS: I don't know. They got them out west someplace, but they were beautiful animals.

JE: They were.

WS: Of course my dad couldn't live until he got some of those oxen. He got two yokes and they were nice size, they would go around 1800 or 1900 a piece.

JE: Pretty good size animal.

WS: Oh boy, they could just skid the pants off a good team of horses.

JE: Is that right? They were a little slower but I suppose...

WS: They were slower yes, but then I drove oxen in the woods along side of a pretty snappy team & we would come to a big tree, he would start in on the top logs and work down and he would get that, you see there would be the butt cut, and then the second cut, and you might get that second cut, but that butt cut, nope we'll have to double them up on that. I would get my old bulls around there and hitch on to it and I would take it out.

JE: Now how long was a cut, about 20 feet?

WS: No, they were cut all the way from 12 to 20 feet sometimes they would go 22 feet. It had to be a straight piece of timber to make it 22 foot.

JE: So it would depend upon the straightness of the log itself. But that butt end would be a pretty big solid chunk of wood.

WS: Yes usually 16 feet, because that was standard length.

JE: So these bulls could really handle the heavy stuff?

WS: Oh, yes, ya and we get 4 of them together. One time I drove 6, I had six down on a dray, we was gathering up logs in the spring and just scattering stuff, and then I had six. I had one yoke of bulls, little bulls, and then there were four other big steers. The bulls didn't get away with anything.

JE: Well how, when you talk about loading some of these big logs, how did you get them up on top of the dray?

WS: If you got time to shut that off I'll show you all the pictures of that stuff.

JE: Okay.

WS: There were logs in the west that went four to the thousand, now that is good timber, nice big yellow pine.

JE: That is western pine?

WS: Yes, western yellow pine, and these guys had the contract for this stuff that we moved by four logs to the thousand. That went to an outfit in Spokane.

JE: Now on the logging aspect, how big were these camps that were around here?

WS: Oh, they ran all the way from fifty, eighty, and one hundred and twenty five men.

JE: For a hundred and twenty five man camp, how long do you think and how wide would the bunk house be?

WS: Oh, well it could be figured out, but I wouldn't attempt to do it right now, but you could estimate how big your bunks, your sleeping, that is what you would gage it by.

JE: At two men to a bunk.

WS: Two men to a bunk and two tiers high, and I have slept in bunk houses three bunks high, where they were built in this way, what we call muzzle loaders.

JE: Muzzle loaders, ya. The regular ones, what would they use most, the muzzle loaders or the breach loaders?

WS: The breach loader.

JE: The breach loader, yes.

WS: That is where the guy in bed is along the wall this way.

JE: Yes, he would get in from the sides instead of from the end. Well then you know, when you are talking about bunks, where would we think of mattresses?

WS: We didn't think of them there, we brought some poles in and some hay, and that was it.

JE: How did the fella up on top there did he lay right on top of the poles?

WS: No he put a piece of tarpaper under there so the hay wouldn't fall through, but that was it.

JE: Well did the company supply the blanket?

WS: Oh yes, they supplied everything. Some of the bigger companies I guess they did a little more supplying than the smaller guy. The smaller guy he was what they called a gypo, he would take sub-contracts, and that is where the gypo come from.

JE: Well, when you got up in the morning, what time did they usually roust you out of the sack?

WS: Oh, course the teamsters they had to get up around four or four thirty, and get their horses tend to fed and harnesses and ready to go and that was the main thing to get them out. The sawyers and swampers they would get out just about break of day.

JE: You mean they would get out in the woods at that time or get up at that time?

WS: They could walk out there would be a road and a trail and they could walk out, get out there when it was, it would be light enough to go to work. Of course the winters, the days are a lot shorter. They would work until they could see the first star in the evening.

JE: Well, I suppose the food though was pretty good in these camps though?

WS: Some of them, some of them it was very good. In that book there, they named some of the old lumberjack cooks.

JE: This the one we are looking at here, this early loggers of Minnesota.

WS: If you look that over to where their naming the cooks, you will see one in particular, and he cooks all winter Ed Thomas, and he was a real cook, and he could make anything. I drove the, happened to be on the last team and I would get in late lots of time, and I apologized to him one time for being too late, and he said it is never too late around here, and if there was one man out like a teamster or anything, there was a cookie even if he didn't show up until 9:00, and there was a cookie waiting right there to feed him when he got in. That was old Ed Thomas' management.

JE: What kind of things did you have for meals?

WS: Just about everything you could imagine in heavy grub.

JE: Well were they, or where did they get their beef from?

WS: Well I don't know, they would bring in fresh beef, and pigs by a carcass and he had a place where he would cut them up, and he made everything out of it, even to head cheese, oh we had some beautiful things. Pies, cakes and cookies and the finest pies in the world.

JE: Is that right, all you can eat too?

WS: All you can eat If you wanted pie, help yours elf.

JE: Was there a lot of conversation at the table?

WS: No, not with those old timers. I seen Ed one time, there was one of the guy that owned the outfit, and there was a banker that come up to visit him one time, and they were sitting there eating and this banker of course he didn't know the rules and regulations and he went to talk and old Ed come along there, HEY! No talking at the table, eat your dinner and get out of here so we can get our work done, and the other guy said, dam you, you know better than that. That was the man he was working for.

JE: Well, what kind of set up was it in the chow house; did each man have his own place?

WS: Usually, that was one thing with old Ed, you take some of those young fellas, I remember on especially, he had his dad's horses up there, and he would just barely get up for breakfast, and he would come in late, and old Ed hollered at him about the second morning, HEY YOUNG FELLA, IF YOU EXPECT TO KEEP A PLACE AT THIS TABLE, YOU GET AROUND WHEN WE CALL FOR THE MEAL.

JE: Well, did they have one of those big bull horns; did you have a bull cook to straighten up?

WS: Yes, we had a bull cook, and he done that and then in the big places he was called a shanty boss, and he seen to everything, and kept clear around there as much as he could, and seen that every man had blankets. If you needed any blankets, you hunted up the shanty boss. But the bull cook he usually cut the wood, and he took care of the kitchen more.

JE: Well getting the water out there, did they haul the fresh water in?

WS: If they had to, but if they had a well, they would try driving a well first, and if they got any water any decent at all, they would use that, but if they couldn't they would dig a well alongside a swamp some place, or a crick, but they always managed to have water. Some places they had to haul it in barrels, they would have horses and they would go down and get three or four barrels of water at a time. The horses would be hooked up to a swing dinkle.

JE: What is a swing dinkle?

WS: Oh, it is a two runner sleigh, and you'll find a picture of it in there, and they used that same thing to haul lunch out to the men in the woods.

JE: Do they have on that swing dinkle a box where or something like a hot box where they could put their food in there and keep it hot.

WS: Yes, they had just that, and everything was piping hot when it got out there, and there was a cookie there to serve it too. Two if necessary.

JE: So you had a hot meal out in the woods all the time.

WS: Oh, yes and good meals too.

JE: Well did you make some kind of seating arrangements or what?

No, usually they would jerk in a log or 2, they could sit down on that, because the cold weather and after a man got done eating he didn't want to stand around too much, so he would go back to work. He would keep on working.

JE: Can you remember any incidents about the chow house or what do you want to call it, other than the great cooking and Ed Thomas that you have fond memories of, any particular thing that you can recall?

WS: Oh, no nothing, only in the cook shack there was law and order. Now I have been in a camp where they were women cooks, and somehow or other they kept law and order there. Usually there would be a, oh, one of the cooks maybe the second cook or something, but they had law and order.

JE: Usually it was men cooks though, is that right?

WS: Ya, ya, until late years now I was surprised when I went west, there was usually women cooks, but not all of the time, because I have eaten in camps there. Once for the Ohio Match, and they had all men cooks, and that was big enough so that they had on the side they had a bakery, one cook did nothing else but bake, and he baked all the bread, cookies and pie and everything.

JE: Well they use two big stoves close together or were they apart?

WS: Ya as a rule they used the stoves close together.

JE: They would fry the flap-jacks or pancakes right on the stove?

WS: Yes. They had French top, and they would just put them right on top. Where they didn't have them, they would have big pancake griddles almost as big as this.

JE: This table is about three feet by about...

WS: Oh, they would probably be this long and maybe that wide; you would get two nice pancakes side by side about room for about eight of them.

JE: How big a pancake are you talking about?

WS: Oh, about that big around.

JE: About an eighth inch pancake then?

WS: Ya, they weren't too thick because they didn't cook good if they were too thick. I've done a little cooking in my life too, I got into a place, well this was in the Army, and I cooked meat and

we had eight of those big hotel ranges, there was two of them sitting right here in the little alley way, two more on the other side, two there and two up here, and it was, they had a convalescence camp, where after they came from their base hospital and I went in there just to pass away time, and I knew a little about cooking. I wasn't there more than ten days until I was head meat cook and we were feeding 2,800 men.

JE: Oh, that is a lot.

WS: They would have meat twice a day. We had three butcher working in there and they worked all the time, and I said to one of them, how many quarters do you cut up here for dinner. He had one of these 32 gallon CI cans, and he said you have 7 hind quarters there of beef.

JE: Seven!

WS: The front quarters they would cut up into what we call beef stew. I have never seen them do that in the woods here on a scale like that.

JE: There must be quite a bit of meat that comes in if your feeding about 125 people a day, they must go through a few cans of syrup.

WS: Oh ya, well everything used to come in barrels, like barrels of syrup, and barrels of vinegar and barrels of sauerkraut, and all of that stuff come in barrels, wooden barrels. Pork, that came in wooden barrels that were salt pork.

JE: What did the fellows out in the woods do for drinking?

WS: Well, usually there would be a crick or lake or something around there, but if they wanted water they just took it with them.

JE: Well let's say that we are going out into the woods, and we are working out in the woods, who is doing what kind of jobs, are they doing it all of the time, in other is the specialization there?

WS: Well, yes they were guys that done only nothing but saw, saw logs, sawyers they called them and they were under another man called the under cutter. He cut the notch in the front of the trees here you know like this, and he would chop that in, and while they were sawing it down he would notch another one. He was the timber faller too, he could look up there and see what direction that tree had to fall, and also judge the wind and the limbs on the side of the tree, it might be leaning north her or a little bit this way, or all heavy limbs over here, so they would cut it over here and she would fall that way.

JE: What kind of saws did these men use?

WS: What kind of saws?

JE: Yes.

WS: Usually a six foot saw.

JE: Did they have kerosene along to put on there or what?

WS: Oh yes, you would have to put the kerosene on to keep the pitch off. In this country and out west they would use water.

JE: So then the swamper would get a hold of a tree and he would cut the limbs off, what did he use, an ax or what?

WS: An ax. It was all ax. You never had any saws for sawing limbs off. If there was a limb this big around, he just tore into it with his ax and chopped it off.

JE: That is a pretty go size that would be about a ten, twelve inch diameter limb.

WS: Ya.

JE: Did they knock some of that bark off that tree to skid her out or?

WS: As a rule no they didn't, sometimes they were too big, but if they had to they would call it crossing a log. They would get on to that with axes and they would knock the bark off, maybe half of it. The half they wanted to ride down, and then it could slip much easier.

JE: Well did they put that log up on the, any kind of a vehicle or you know sled or anything to haul it out to the road?

WS: On a long haul they had a little jigger they called a go-devil and for those big logs they could just get one in with the log up, and they were good, because they come together like this in a V shape, and then there was a bunk across there.

JE: Now how did they get that log up on top of that bunk?

WS: Oh, there was always cant hooks around to load them with, and if they couldn't they could put this chain on and pull them on with a horse.

JE: Now didn't they take the logs from, when the swamper was through and take them out to where?

WS: They would take them out to the road and they had what they called a skid way, it was just a couple of logs and they cut out of anything, long and slim, and a lot of the time they would use popple. They would cut the tree down it would be 10 or 12 inches at the butt and then they would cut them up to 5 or 6 inches at the top, but they were long skids. Well in early skidding or they started early in the fall they would do that and they would put in a rather long one if there was a lot of timber they would put in a long skid way. They would fill that all up with logs and they

second team would come along and just like these guys loading with horses and a loading chain, they would deck these up. They would deck them up, one on top of the other, and there would be a nice big pile there of logs.

JE: Then in the winter time when the ice road was made, they would come in there and take those out of there?

WS: Ya, as soon as they had a load on the skid way they would load them out. Of course were loaders too, knowing they, that was supposed to be the best man in the crew, those guys that were loading.

JE: You mean the top loader?

WS: The top and the sender upper, he was the man, most anybody could work on top if he could drive a swamp hook in, but the man on the bottom sending up the logs, the sender upper.

JE: He would almost have to gage how thick one, the butt end would be in relation to the top end so that log would go up straight.

WS: Ya, well those old fellas could do that, they could judge a log, now I have seen, especially in the west, those big logs I told you about with bark on them, well if they hit the skids you couldn't cut one with anything. Whatever it did, if it started up crooked it kept right on going crooked. No man could ever drag one.

JE: Too big.

WS: They worked out a system and they were so good at it that they could put the chain on that thing and when it hit the skids it would go right up there and it would be just about even when she landed on top.

JE: Well getting back to balsam, was it pretty much Cut over when you got there?

WS: Oh yes, that was practically all logged off, and there were little dump of trees here and there, and that is where my dad started in logging he would go and get, well he would go down to the Remer Land Company, and he wanted to buy some trees he found there, stumpage and I don't know he would get it for little or nothing. They told him well we don't figure we got any timber. Well if you think there is any timber on this whole township for so much as give you a permit to cut any of our land in this township. And it wouldn't cost him very much. One year he found quite a lot of stuff. See the money panic started in 1907 the first part of the winter, they had a money panic, and he had a contract made for his logs before this panic hit, and it was \$16 a thousand, delivered in Prairie River, and he sold them to this Sutton and Maki up outfit, and that year wages were awful cheap it was down, he came out of it about \$4,000 to the good and it was the first and the only money in his life.

JE: Well \$4,000 was quite a bit I imagine for that time?

WS: Oh yes, at that time. Well he needed it because that was the year after we built that big house and he still owed a lot of bills on that.

JE: I notice that you have been making this scale I don't want to call it a lodge now, what did you call the log cabin your making here?

WS: The log cabin, you mean the name?

JE: Ya, what was the name, could you tell us the history of that?

WS: Yes. I think all of the history as far as I know. There was a man by the name of B.S. King Big King anyway. He went over to this Slawson Lake and it was hard to get in there, you had to go up the Rice River get down it some way to get into this Slawson Lake, and there were no roads, and there was fish in there. Oh boy, dad would just have wonderful luck, and there was a nice big hill up there, and he told the guide that was with him, Bill Edwards I think his name was, he lived out on what turned out to be the scenic, and he said to Bill, right on that hill is where I am going to have my fishing club or hunting club right up on that hill. So when he went back to the cities he got busy right away to find out who owned that land and that belonged to the Bovey and DeLaittre Lumber Company, and they had 400 acres in there, and they sent their man up right away to look at it. Well their man was a DeLaitter, his name was Elvin DeLaittre and I knew him well. He was on speaking terms with every section corner between Grand Rapids and Aitkin. He knew the woods, because he was up river man for that lumber company, and that was a pretty fair size lumber company at one time, the Bovey and DeLaittre. That is where the town of Bovey come from. They were logging in there. But old King he got to figuring out, he was an insurance man, how he was going to get the money so he would sell a share, he would find guys that he knew. One thousand dollars apiece, and we will get ten thousand dollars and that should build that club house and then they give it to an architect, his name was John Paul Jackson in Minneapolis who draw up the plans and they sent that up to Edwards and he got a couple of men to go into the woods then and cut the logs.

That is before the snow went off, early in the spring. At that time between Slawson Lake and East Lake there was a beautiful stand of pine in there, it had never had an ax into it, and they just went in there and they picked the finest, old Ole Evenson says that was the finest set of logs I have ever seen in my life, and they rough peeled them right there in the woods with an ax, and they had to keep track of how many of such a length, and they would cut the logs and I had worked for Bill in the winter. Let's see, I got married in the meantime, and I had worked for him, and in fact I was working in his camp when I was married at Christmas and Chat was right down here at B.L. Brook. So you see I did get to Bigfork.

JE: On occasion.

WS: Ya. Well my wife came up, her and my sister and for some reason or other and Mrs. Edwards got to talking and she thought it would be all right to get married right know, so Mrs. Edwards, she was the one who propositioned my wife. So we made up our mind right quickly that we would get married, and that was at Christmas time. We were married the 29th of

December, and I had to get to town and get a marriage license and a ring, and then I got back up and it was the 28 of December and well Bill Edwards, no, I had a Model T pickup truck, and we went up to Bigfork to find a preacher.

JE: What year was this?

WS: Well this was about 1921, the fall of 1921, so we come up here and not a preacher in town, they had all gone out for Christmas or New Years, and they hadn't got back yet. Well I went off through here, somebody said there is a preacher who lives up on this road they now call it the teen road, so I had to go up there about 6 miles to see if he could do the job, and he come out, well I don't think so, I couldn't do that, I am just here for just 6 months, and I am not ordained. Well we went to turn around in the old pickup and it busted a pinion and I got it stuck in the snow drift and there it was and oh boy it was cold, and we called the only man in Bigfork we knew, and his name was Rube Briarson, and he lived where the old King road went out is where he lived. So we called him and we got back there quite a lot after dark and we had to give it up for that day. Oh he found places for us to sleep, and he had a pretty big family. The next morning Bill said do you still want to get married, and I said yes I am going to get married. He said, well it will have to be the Justice of the Peace, I know one down here. We called him and he wasn't home. The next one was over at Wirt, Ross Wally and we called him. He was busy logging, and he told Bill, I can't get away I'm busy logging. Well Bill said you will get paid for it. How much do you want? Well \$20 dollars. I said tell him to come. We got married. Well then to get back to this Washkish Club, see I had my wife and after they had the logs cut and they steadied them in and put them into the lake and then they floated them down to where we took them out, and Edwards come down and got me to go up there and he said, we got to build 5 miles of road to get into that place. Well the County Commissioner he paid me foreman's wages for putting that road in there, Elvin Delate, been in there, and when he came out he just broke off the twigs here and there, and I followed those, that was the only way I could get in, I had never been in there before.

JE: How could a County Commissioner have a road built in for one guy who is going to build a club house back in there?

WS: Oh my gosh you could be surprised just as easy as you could by 5 gallons of moon-shine from some guy and pay for it with a county warrant. Any way we got the road in there and, then this--

JE: Well where did your wife stay then?

WS: Well she was down at my folks place, but the sooner we got the road in there, I said you can help clean and there is an old cabin over there we want to fix up, and I said you can fix that up and she can cook for the crew there, while they are clearing off the grounds there for the club house. So which we did, I fixed it up, she done the cooking. This Elvin Delate he, they wanted a man to take charge of building this club house, I know just the man you want. He is the best man with an ax I have ever seen, and he could make anything, an old Frenchman, Canadian Frenchman, he couldn't read or write his own name. He could sure make anything that was made out of wood. He could make sleighs and boats, and anything you wanted old Fred could make it.

JE: What was his last name?

WS: Beijault.

JE: Okay.

WS: He worked for my dad before I knew him, and I knew his capabilities. Well I had a little training along this blue print line, so I could read one, but old Fred it was just a bunch of pictures to him. Oh, that never works here he would say. But he did get the size off of it, somebody told him the size off of it, he couldn't read. They got the basin from here, and they put in the foundation, and old Fred he got ready to put down the first log. He was going to lay round log right on the cement, I said Fred you should hew that first log so it will have a flat side, that has got to carry all the weight for the rest of the weight for this building. Well I got my broad ax out and I hewed that 40 foot log, then he and another old fellow that they hired they started to cut corners for like these round corners I have got here.

JE: Well did you hew all of your logs then?

WS: No, just the two to start out with that laid on the foundation, they carry the weight. Then the next one went across the end. Well that is the next one and they, old Fred got it up there, he got a stick and put some marks on it and told the other guy, he was using the edge, now he said you cut it out to that mark I made there. Well they cut it out and it didn't fit, so they cut out a little more, and it didn't fit, and they had to cut out some more, when they got done there was very little of the log left, they just about cut it in two. I said Fred; I said you ruined that log now you have got it cut too much. I said, what do you mark it with, well he said I use a stick. Well I had the tools to mark it with, I had a compass with a lead pencil for one leg, I said here, use this compass there. Ah I don't use that, I just use sticks. Well I said it won't work Fred. So I marked the corner for him and the log was long enough so we could pull it over and make another cut.

JE: If it was 40 foot long, that must have been quite a good size log.

WS: Well we went on with that, we got started but he told me, old Fred told me, he give me that much lead way, he wouldn't let me look at the blue prints I just had to sneak a look at them and tied them down then. He said that never works here, but we got up, we was putting up logs and we got up quite a ways, and there were 7 foot doors in the blue prints, it called for 7 foot doors. When they got up he said, that's high enough, and we measured up there for a door, and he didn't come up for a seven foot door, I said Fred, the doors are 7 feet high, that is the door. Now you got your jams and the door frame to go in there and you got to figure that out. Well he cut into the top log half way that was your stop log. He cut in half way to get the 7 foot door in. Well we went to work on the ends, and we had them all logged up and cut down and, well it called for a roof like this one here.

JE: Well that was the lodge part then?

WS: Ya, that was the lodge or the club house. So we come to cut the rafters, 20 foot rafters on too. He come to cut the rafters and he didn't know a thing about it, he took his square and wide

board, and put it on there and marked it this way, and that way, and he turned the square over and made another mark, oh it made a roof something like this, and then for over the porches he come out this way, and I stopped him, or Edwards stopped him and he went to Minneapolis and went to see the secretary, well what does our club house look like. Bill said, I don't know what a club house is supposed to look like but I know...

JE: When the word came back from Minneapolis then you had to tear that roof off again?

WS: Ya, well that is the secretary I forgot what his name was, but he said, can you build that things according to the blue prints, and I said yes, after I tear it down so far, and go in the woods and get more timber. Well he said go to it. So I done just that thing. Well I knew right there, he had the rafters on and everything, rafters sitting up there like that, but we got organized and got the logs in and the building up. Well that put us behind as I said before but we finally got that club house up, this one hears. Then I went to work on the care takers right at the end of the club house, the east end of the club house. It was about 22 by 32 if I remember correctly.

JE: How big was the lodge?

WS: It was 26 by 36, this one here is 32 by 40.

JE: That is the replica of the lodge that you made. Well did you add the bunk house then too?

WS: Ya, but I hadn't got that far, and I told Bill you had better get some more help in here, get another man that can lay logs, and he went over and got Ole Evenson, which he should have done a long time ago before, because Ole is a good man. Undisputable. So they finally got him in there and Bill wanted to give him a man or two, no, he didn't want any, just help get the logs up and then he would do all the work. Well Ole done a beautiful job. First building he put up, it was a kind of a combination garage, and half of that was into a little place where chauffeurs could stay, one thing or another. he built that and then he built the bunk house, but I ran into a difficulty there and which I hadn't have gotten into, but there was a little liquor come on the job, and those days I liked to drink the liquor with it too much. Then I got ashamed of myself.

JE: You went and made a fool out of yourself.

WS: That was the end of my work on the Washkish club.

JE: What was the location of that again, that was on what lake?

WS: Down there on Slawson Lake, there is a resort in there called the Washkish Resort. Washkish means deer in Chippewa. There was a man used to be in there, Dave Allen, he had it once, oh he used to have a notorious deer camp there. Of course there were a lot of fish in there too.

JE: What do you mean by a notorious deer camp?

WS: Well they killed a lot of deer. They got lots of deer out of his place.

JE: These original owners then sold it too?

WS: Ya, well that thing it went along for 4 or 5 years and that 10,000 dollars they got first didn't go very far, they had to shell more stocks and take in more members and Elvin Delate told me it had cost them over \$30,000.

JE: Ya, that is quite a bit of money in 1921.

WS: It was 22 when we worked on that, 1922 and 1923. Well they, an old fellow he's Hacket Diamond hardware man in Minneapolis, and I got acquainted with him, he was the president of the outfit. Him and his wife were taking a tour, a steamship trip, and he said we went clear down around the tip of Good Hope, South Africa, and I got a wireless that announced that someone wanted to buy the Washkish Club to start a fox farm. Well, she started to crumble, break up then, and they offered \$18,000 for the club layout and the 400 acres of land. Well he said, I just answered them, if there is anybody crazy enough to have to have 400 acres of land to build a fox farm on, sell it to him. They did. Well then they started remodeling the place and they built a big yard in there an acre of ground for a fox yard, because they were going in for these high priced Prince Edward Island stock, and they were going to raise just breeding stock. And the way one of the head guys told me, it's just going to be breeding stock, so after about 3 years we will start selling at such and such a price, and he said it won't be long and this place is going to turn over a million dollars.

JE: Did it turn over the million dollars?

WS: Well, what happened, about the second year the kid had sold some stock that fall, and all once the women quit wearing long furs, then the market dropped, and it kept dropping. Well it got down where one of those nice silver gray foxes weren't worth \$30. Well they just dropped into their cars and went back to the cities. This Dave Allen was working there for them, he was feeding the foxes, and they turned it over to him, take her they said, make out of it what you can. He did, he ran the fox farm, he had a few choice orders, and he would sell fox now and then.

JE: You mentioned that the place started breaking up; did the logs start to break up?

WS: No, the club.

JE: Oh, the club.

WS: The members started withdrawing.

JE: Now all those logs were debarked?

WS: Yes they were rough peeled in the woods with an ax, and then they were draw shaved peeled after we got them on the skids up there before we put them up.

JE: What do you mean by draw?

WS: Drawing up, drawn. Take off all the colored inside bark and everything. Everything was shaved.

JE: I used, when I was a boy, I used to use one of those blades for debarking, taking the bark off of the cedar posts.

WS: Yes, this was done with the same thing, only this stuff was dry, and you had to take a little wood with it.

JE: So it is best to do it really as soon as possible on it?

WS: Well you see there was a certain time in the year when the bark was slick, but this was cut to early.

JE: What time of the year was that?

WS: Oh it would be starting maybe in the middle of May, 1st of May when the bark starts to slit, and that is when the growth starts, and the chlorophyll gets in between the bark and the wood, and then it will slit, that is the new ring that is growing. Then it is soft and it will slit. If you can't peel them then, you've got to shave them.

JE: That is tough work?

WS: Oh yes, my oldest brother-in-law up here at the Falls, he put up a big building in the winter, and they just rough built it with an ax and put up all that rough stuff. I don't know how he figures on cleaning that rough logs up. They have got so much of the old bark left on them, and oh, it is going to be a terrific job, unless he's got some kind of a machine that can get in there and scrape those logs.

JE: Ya. Did Ole Evenson stay there then and finish up?

WS: Ya, he worked there a couple of years I think on those buildings finishing them off. Oh, they finished them an awful lot different than what the first plans called for, and sealed them up, and it was really a nice job. I never got back there until the fox farm came in, and then they got me to help them put in these fox bins, and there was a lot of concrete to lay, and I was doing some of that, and carpenter work and whatever I could find, so I went and worked for them.

JE: So that place eventually burned down then?

WS: Ya, in this bunk house up there they had a bathroom and a water heater run by kerosene, and this caretakers wife she went in there one afternoon. She went in there to take a bath and some way she turned it on too much, and it ran over and ran on the floor and the fire, and the wind was from the northwest and right back there and took the fire right down through all of

those buildings. They were all built out of Norway logs, full of pitch and boy it made a terrific fire.

JE: If you were going to build a camp, would you pick Norway or white?

WS: Oh, for logs?

JE: Yes.

WS: Well Norway would be the best bet, because the white pine tapers to fast.

JE: I see, Norway you get a nice stick.

WS: Ya, Norway you would get a pretty good log. Norway or balsam and there is some spruce that makes nice buildings. I've got one down by mine, the one I built, oh quite a few years ago. Down in Balsam Township made out of spruce, they had taken care of its seasoned yet you know, drying out and they got there some guy they had the dope on it and he filled all these season checks and then he painted it a kind of a yellow color and it looked just like a fresh peeled log, and you still go by there and it looks good.

JE: Walter, tell us a little bit about the home that your father had when you were younger.

WS: I knew the whole thing was the one we moved to in the fall of 1905 that was the old Cap Hasty Stopping Ranch...

JE: It was a camp?

WS: It was a camp, it was the Hasty, McCalister logging camp to start with. That came in oh along about the time they changed from oxen to horses, because there was everything there to take care of, even the barn, the ox barn, and a place outside where they shod the oxen. You would have a hard time finding someone to build stansion and put the oxen into it, because I know how it was made.

JE: They have it so they can raise the back leg with pulleys?

WS: Well ya, they raised the whole ox up.

JE: Oh, they would raise the whole ox up?

WS: Ya, by taking him right off of his feet. They will kick. I seen an ox kick a dog one time he hit him in the head and killed him dead.

JE: That was a big animal?

WS: Ya.

JE: How big of a camp was that?

WS: Well that was a pretty good sized camp; I imagine that was for around 75 or 80 men. But I remember how all the buildings were, and I am going to just make a sketch of it as to the place they sit and the size, I will have to figure that out.

JE: Okay.

WS: There were two bunk houses there a newer one I think that was built for the road traffic, but it was a better place than the old one.

JE: Did that have the side loaders or the breach loaders or the muzzle loaders?

WS: No, they were side.

JE: Okay.

WS: But that one was big enough for 40 men.

JE: About how big was that or about how long?

WS: Well, the bunks had to be at least six foot four, because there were a lot of six foot lumberjacks.

JE: Then you would have to have a space in the middle. How many stoves would be in there?

WS: There was just one in there.

JE: Just one stove. Was that a stove bunked on top of another stove or was it just one single big stove?

WS: No, only one. They used to have a lot of dances and dad was a great caller for square dancing, and that old bewhiskered gentlemen you've seen, McDougald, he played the fiddle.

JE: That house was built ah, when did you say that house?

WS: In 1907.

JE: That finally burned down in 1958?

WS: Yes, something like that. We went out prowling around through the woods yesterday hunting up lakes. I found a couple over west here that I want to get into.

JE: Tell me about this McCalister Camp.

WS: Oh, that is the only one of the real old camps that I have in mind, and I wouldn't have that in mind only that it was the stopping place when dad bought it out, and Hasty he was an old man, they were both from Maine. Old Cap Hasty he was in the Civil War, infantry Captain. And McCalister, I don't know where he picked him up, but anyway they worked together. It was Hasty and McCalister.

JE: Who were they logging for?

WS: Well I wouldn't know I wouldn't be surprised if it was C. A. Smith or Bovey and DeLaittre or some of those old timers.

JE: That Bovey and DeLaittre have pretty much control of all that territory, that timber over there around Bovey?

WS: Well yes, they owned, see that Bovey that's where that name came from, their camps were right in there. Old Joe Dunning logged that off. Of course he had logged further south there for Bovey and DeLaittre. He was an old Civil War veteran. That's the man that what I got all the information about logging sleighs. He was the master sleigh builder.

JE: Could you make a sleigh today? Could you tell someone how to make a sleigh?

WS: No, I couldn't tell. I could build one. You couldn't get anybody to do it now a days.

JE: Take too much time?

WS: Well he hasn't got it up here, in your head. Unless you could get a blue print some place.

JE: What do you want to do, build a big one?

WS: Well we are going to have to build some sleighs up there because we want to have; we want to carry about I four or six horses I would imagine.

JE: Oh you're going to have horses there?

WS: Oh ya, and we are going to load logs and unload logs.

Make a show out of it. Well you've got to have sleighs then. Well when you get ready to build them, maybe I can draw you up a plan, and get down and get somebody started on it, whoever is going to build it.

JE: Now if a guy could take a, now these are all handmade those sleighs weren't they?

WS: Oh yes.

JE: They didn't come along with a chain saw.

WS: Oh no.

JE: Or come along with a band saw.

WS: They hewed everything, there wasn't any sawed stuff, and everything was hewed.

JE: So how big of a log would they take for something like that?

WS: Oh, it would take to get a bunk to hold a big load of logs you would have to have something would square at least 16 inches. That takes a pretty good tree.

JE: Then you are going to have that front swing up on your runners too, aren't you?

WS: Ya, well that will come in the runners. It takes about; well the big sleighs were big enough to hitch a tractor onto. They were five inches thick, and it takes a 5 x 14 square timber to make that runner. I have seen some made out of 4 x 12's smaller lighter sleigh, but that don't give you very much to make your turn in, because you have got to drop down part way on the end of that to get your tompkin pin hole through.

JE: Now your curve up in the front now that is all one piece of wood isn't it?

WS: Ya, it is all one piece of wood.

JE: In other words that curve up in the front is not added.

WS: There weren't any splices in those runners, because they have took the brunt of everything.

JE: What kind of wood was used?

WS: White oak. Red oak, that's too brashy.

JE: Where is white oak, do we have enough white oak up in here yet?

WS: Well the best place to see about that right now would be the Cohasset Mill. And if you want anything like that, why you would have to place your order there and through the winter there might be some coin in. Then they could saw you out some stuff for you. But what they used to do, now these, where we seen those sleighs in that picture, he had, 14 inch runners the year before when he got his first steam hauler, and that is what he used for hauling with horses used '4 inch runners.

JE: That is not heavy enough though.

WS: Why man that steam hauler just tore them all to pieces. So as soon as the drive was down Prairie River, there was lots of white oak in there, he put a crew down in there, and this old man I showed you the picture of there, Paddy Miles, he was the boss there and they hewed out runners.

Now they would cut down a big tree, square it up, and then he had his pattern there made out of a board, and laid that on and marked it and then they cut out that whole runner. And there would be 2 and sometimes 3 runners hitched together, all in one bar they call it. Well they got them up to camp they would put it on a horse up there and go at it with a whip saw and split them by hand, that white oak. How would you like that?

JE: I don't know. I have never worked with that white oak too much.

WS: No, if I was going to do that, I would just say let's get a little saw and...

JE: Ya.

WS: Well I they hewed out enough runners there to make 112 sets of sleighs complete. The next year he got 4 more steam haulers.

JE: Well then he was carrying off pretty much lumber, pretty much timber.

WS: Well yes, see it was a long range deal when it started C. A. Smith was backing him and there was lots of timber back in there, but some of those were a 22 mile haul, and that is almost too long a haul for horses. But he could make it with those haulers all right He had 5 steam haulers and these sleighs and he told me himself, Lyon Sutton, I made a trip to Stillwater to see him, oh just about a year or so before he died. He was 91 then.

JE: Old man Sutton?

WS: Sutton, ya, and he told me the layout of the whole thing, he said I would have been all right if we didn't have to go in debt for about \$100,000 to build that outfit and get those haulers and get ready to log. C.A. Smith was supposed to back him and get this other timber for him up in there. But in the mean time there was this Al Powers use to log, and he landed in Crooked Lakes He was out in the west and he rounded up a big layout in around Coos Bay, lots of timber, and of course he had to have a little money to swing that, and he got it from C.A. Smith.

JE: C. A. Smith was supposed to back Sutton.

WS: Well he just kind of let Sutton drop, because that thing out there was millions of feet where Sutton had been in the thousands insight there just seemed to be no end to it, so he just let Sutton drop.

JE: Where was this land?

WS: Which?

JE: This timber you are talking about now?

WS: In Washington?

JE: Yes, so when they were through here, they went out there.

WS: Ya, well it was in around Coos Bay, Oregon, it was on River. See if could run them down. They had a big mill, I had been through there since and there is a little town out there where they had their operations and the name of it was Powers. I didn't stop in to see him.

JE: At the same time, getting back to Bovey, now this camp you are talking about 1907.

WS: Oh, Sutton's?

JE: Ya, the camp that you were talking about at the beginning, were this out in the Oregon country or was this the camp that was here?

WS: Sutton was operating over on Wolf Lake, d you know where that is, up the Prairie River the Prairie River ran right through it. That is where he had his headquarters camp, and that is where these pictures were taken of those sleighs. Then he run back in there east and northeast, there was lots of timber back in there, virgin timber, and C.A. Smith never got it for him. Since then it has been logged out. Some fellows come in there with a mill, and they logged off a bunch and then moved the mill.

JE: That would be in about north eastern Itasca County then.

WS: Ya, it was right close to the St. Louis County line. Then there was a railroad come in there too, I think the Swan River, they had a rail road in there.

JE: Well they were dumping logs into Swan River too, weren't they?

WS: Ya, they hauled down to get the logs to their mill, and they couldn't do it by water, and what Sutton was taken would go down the Mississippi River. He would get them into Prairie River and then into the Mississippi.

JE: Well Swan goes into the Mississippi too doesn't it?

WS: Ya.

JE: Those landings spots right at Warba.

WS: Don't tell me too much about that land in there because it brings back bad memories.

JE: Why is that?

WS: I worked on that drive, the last big drive for the Diamond Match Company.

JE: What year was that in?

WS: Oh, let's see that must have been 15 it was awful hard times then, and I was up in Bemidji,

there was a notice came out on the bill board at the employment office, River Drivers wanted down on the Swan River. So I got me a ticket, and I high tailed it right down there, I know I stayed four days, but that was one of those old fashioned outfits and it was work from daylight to dawn, and they had no accommodations, we slept in an old barn there, and worked like horses. They built those role away right across the river, and some of them were 10 or 12 feet high above the water, and that stuff all had to be sacked through by hand to get a hole worked through so the water would come. After you got down to the water well then when you would loosen up a log it would float away. Up further----

JE: You mean they had them stacked so high on the river there that the water wasn't really taking them down at all.

WS: No. They were built right from the bottom, they done that in the winter when the water was down, and they were built right from the ground up.

JE: Oh, then they make a dam a ways up to get that slowed down.

WS: I know they had a dam down below there, and there was one above right where it leaves Swan Lake by Nashwauk.

JE: They must not have had enough water.

WS: Well they didn't have enough water to break those role a ways, because the river bottom it would make a new channel around before it went over those logs, you just had to dig a hole through them. Why they didn't put in some horses there and lines is more that I could ever figure out, instead of doing that by hand. They finally did one up the river a ways they finally got a team of horses in there. Ran a long line and hooked on to a log and slide it out and go back and get another one. They would beat a hole down through that then.

JE: Poor planning.

WS: Ya.

JE: So they were logging, I imagine a lot of the logs that were taken out of Bovey area in 1907 must have went to the mining.

WS: Well 1907 the logging around Bovey was all done. He had logged that off way early you see you could put them in Trout Lake and drive them down into Swan River and then to the Mississippi. They were done logging there I would say before the turn of the century. Of course he kept right on. There is a lake out north of the Diamond Mine called Dunning Lake, so he had a camp in there. Joe Dunning as I told you before was the logger, and then he kept right on hauling their timber up through Eagle Lake, and that was his last stand. That would be right west of Long Lake, and he hauled into the upper end of Long Lake.

JE: Now how did he get a hold of all that land I wonder?

WS: Well it belonged to Bovey and DeLaitre they were big operators.

JE: But did they buy the land?

WS: Oh yes, they would buy from homesteaders.

JE: That's what I mean, the homesteaders around there, were they legitimate homesteaders or?

WS: Well they could take a homestead, and the way they operated that thing, you go and take a homestead and prove up on it, they will pay you so much a month. Then you turn your timber over to us. A lot of those old guys you know was slipped in from Wisconsin or Michigan, the Sheriff was after them and they would come up in here to hide and they would take this homestead, and it was just what they wanted. Just made to order for them. I got that from old Mr. Buchanan another old logger, he was on to all the tricks. He said half the people took homesteads up here and it was dodgers, dodging the law. I read a story not too long ago, it's in the Last of the Giants, there was sky pilots who preached to the lumber camps, the lumberjacks, and this sky pilot was going up a logging road one day and he seen a nice load of logs coming, and he got his camera out and it was just going to pass him, the teamster was standing on the row, and he says, hey I want to take your picture, and boy he throwed the lines down and took right off through the woods, nobody was going to take a picture of him. Every sheriff in the rogues galley in the country had to get his picture taken.

JE: I was noticing, I was going over figures of the number of homesteads, and it was rather amazing that in the State of Minnesota that after the Civil War there were more homesteads, four times many more homesteads up here, that there were in the beautiful southern agricultural section of the State of Minnesota. What was going on of course was exactly the same thing that you are talking about.

WS: They were just stealing the timber, and when they would go in there to log they would cut down all the witness trees, and ruin all the corners there was.

JE: What do you call witness trees?

WS: Whatever you set a section corner there, it is the stake, the corner is going to be right here exactly, and then the stake that you put in, wooden stakes going to rot, so you take a tree over here, and you blaze it down and with a scribe you scribe in what section it is. It is the same way over here; a section corner will have 4 witness trees.

JE: These were put in by government agents?

WS: Ya, government surveyors. I knew one of them, he was on that first survey it wasn't too far from here, it was over by Thistledew Lake, and his name was Lewis, and I have heard say that he laid out the first town stake for Grand Rapids. He was an old surveyor and an old prospector, Doctor and he had everything.

JE: So he, when those surveyors went out now, they had a crew of about what, 3 or 4 guys?

WS: Ya.

JE: And they would use chains wouldn't they?

WS: Chains, ya.

JE: To measure so many rods?

WS: I don't know, I think my brothers got it yet, but old Joe Dunning you know, he done his own cruising, and he had one of those chains, and he give it to my dad and when I busted up housekeeping I didn't want to lug it around so dad give it to me and I give it to my brother, and I told him I said when you get done with it I said tune it over to the Historical Society with Joes name on it. It's a short two poll chain, and usually they used a four pole.

JE: What do you mean by a two pole, you would have poles on each end?

WS: Rods. Everything was measured in rods, 320 rods to the mile, and instead of rods they called it poles.

JE: I see.

WS: And I think that where that came from, was when George Washington was surveying that they had a long pole a rod long, and I think it just passed down from there. I seen some pictures where they had a long pole, it was somebody's idea, it could be authentic at that.

JE: It could be, it could very well be.

WS: There was chains and they were made in England, and for fine measuring they would, well it was everything that fit into the rod, see that is 16 ½ feet and all their measurements, well there are so many links to the rod, and a link is 7 & 92/100dreth of an of an inch.

JE: So they were pretty exact measurement?

WS: Oh yes, it finally after they grew up and got Transets and things to run lines with, they discontinued that link and chain deal and they used a steel tape that was set off in tenths of a foot. It was more accurate but I have worked on surveying quite a lot.

JE: Well that pole and chain business had really laid out most of the territory around here?

WS: Ya, well you earn a section line down here, and your measuring, start right from here, and if she is off a mile across that section it figures right where the next one come will come up this way.

JE: North and South ya.

WS: Ya set two hubs in there and you put a shingle nail on top of each one, and then when he comes up with this line here he'll just about hit it. He puts a string a piece of twine from this nail over to there and where this line here crosses that one that is where the corner is. They are just that accurate, right to a hundredth of an inch. A good Transet man he will do that, because he don't go by the needle at all, that is surveying is done without a compass. They take the compass to give them a start, but of course the compass you know the minerals and other things it will throw it off. And right up in this country up here when they cross the Vermillion Iron Range, that compass would just run around in circles. The only thing they could do then is run a picket line. That was back up in this country here in 1914 and it comes east to Effie.

JE: What did that country look like back up in there that was pretty well logged off?

WS: Well the pine had been logged off by then.

JE: Do you have any kind of a story that you would like to tell us or something that you remember from the old days?

WS: When their loading with skids and the chain around here, and the swamp hook is set on this log up here or maybe that little one over there, and if that log would turn just the least bit that swamp hook would come out and this log would come back there pretty fast, and another thing and if this guy wasn't on to his sending them up, the is what he calls it here, the sender upper and he is supposed to send the logs up even, but if they come up there one into the head of the other the chain will slip or the log will slip and it well swing around and one end will come back and sit on the ground here, and it looks like a cannon. Well when that happens, well she gunned on me they call that the gun.

JE: You got your top loader loading on the load and you have got your sender upper and sometimes there is two, one on each end, his job was to get that logs up there at least so it goes up straight on the two poles that go on to the to load?

WS: It is supposed to break over even, now they might be crooked down below, but he straightens that up with his cant hook. See he can hold the one end like this and slide aheador we can take the hold that he's got and he can push this up.

It would be pretty hard you know because your ends are not even and you have different weights and then of course you have got your chains, and I would imagine your horses on the other side. So he has got to work that log so it comes up straight to the top loader. So if say this guy is kind of inexperienced if this sender upper is a little inexperienced he is going to have this log come whipping around on him.

It is going to gun on him there, well according to this story that is just what this guy was doing, he was new, and he didn't understand the signals for the different holds to give it and there would be a sag or something would go wrong.

JE: When was a sag?

WS: I think that came from Saginaw, Michigan and I think that was cut there. There was another one they called the St. Croix, but I didn't know much about that. This other one, they usually threw a sag in the end of it and helped it up. At least this guy he got hurt on one of those deals and they took him to the hospital and he got pretty well smashed up. Finally they got him patched up, and the nurse said, now how, just how did this happen. Well he said, I was sending a school mom and she was a little heavy on the butt, and she got up to break over the top, and she gunned on me and come back and broke the two ribs and one of my pops. Oh my, she said, it is a wonder it didn't kill you. Yes it is, it is a wonder it didn't gunny sack me.

JE: Now if he is sending that log up and it is heavy in the butt, the base end of it, and if they, what was the other term there, you send it to the top loader that would be the man on the top.

WS: Well here, I left out part of that, it was going kind of crooked on him and the boss told him to throw a sag into her, and instead of that I threw a St. Croix into her and the son-of-a-bitch gun came back.

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