Landscapes of Solidarity:

Timber Workers and the Making of Place in the Pacific Northwest, 1900-1964

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Abstract

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This dissertation is an environmental history of Northwest timber workers. Looking at rural logging communities in Washington, Oregon, northern California, Idaho, and British Columbia between 1900 and 1964, it examines how timber-working communities interacted with the physical environment through work, subsistence, and recreation and explores how nature shaped working-class culture, community, and the politics of one union, the International Woodworkers of America (IWA). This study identifies an ethic of place as a critical part of working-class experience in the Northwest woods. Timber-working communities developed their identities through their relationship with the forest, and while they believed in the work they did, as well as in the lumber industry's important economic place in the rural Northwest, they also believed that changes to the landscape brought about by industrial logging needed to be carefully considered and at times constrained. In the postwar period, timber workers belonging to the IWA began putting political pressure on the lumber industry to try to force their employers to follow more responsible harvesting guidelines and later supported forest preservation and attempts to expand Northwestern wilderness areas.

This study contributes to recent efforts to combine labor and environmental history. It highlights the central role that nature and visions of the landscape play in working-class culture and politics and demonstrates that place is an important category of analysis in working-class history. By examining work, recreation, and subsistence practices, it highlights the multiple ways working-class people engaged with nature. And, by documenting the IWA's role in forest policy debates it highlights the central role that working people and unions have played in the history of environmentalism.

To
Mom, Dad, and Amanda

and to
Jess

There are no medium-sized trees in the deep forest. There are only the towering ones, whose canopy spreads across the sky. Below, in the gloom, there's light for nothing but mosses and ferns. But when a giant falls, leaving a little space…then there's a race—between the trees on either side, who want to spread out, and the seedlings below, who race to grow up. Sometimes, you can make your own space.

—Terry Pratchett

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Towards the end of the 1967 film *Cool Hand Luke*, a story about prisoners on a chain gang in the rural south, Luke (played by Paul Newman) is called over by one of the guards as the inmates return from a hard day's work in stifling heat and humidity. The rebellious and defiant Luke has escaped from the prison several times and now the guards are determined to break his spirit and make sure he never runs again. As Luke shuffles up, the guard marks out a large square in the dirt of the prison yard and throws a shovel down on the ground.

"That ditch is Boss Kean's ditch," he says to Luke. "And I told him that dirt in it's your dirt. What's your dirt doin' in his ditch?"

"I don't know, Boss," Luke replies.

"You better get in there and get it out, boy," says the guard.

Luke gets to digging. Just when he's dug out most of the ditch, another guard comes by. "Luke, watcha' think you're doin'?"

"Just getting my dirt out of Boss Kean's ditch, Boss," an exhausted Luke replies.

"Well, damned if you're going to put your dirt in my yard," says the guard.

Luke starts filling in the ditch he'd just dug. This process is repeated several times. Luke digs out the ditch, is told to fill it back in, only to be told to dig it back out again. Luke eventually breaks, but for most of the ordeal he remains obstinate and defiant as ever. A large reason why he's able to keep up the good fight is because his fellow inmates are there to cheer him on. They sit on the porch of the prison bunkhouse and sing to take his mind off the work and urge him to keep going when he no longer has the will to continue.

I thought of this scene often as I was working on this dissertation. When revising chapters for the third or fourth time, or meticulously working on large sections of other chapters, only to decide to take them out of the final draft, I felt a lot like Luke, trapped in a Sisyphean struggle. Like Luke, though, I benefited greatly from a chorus of voices cheering me on, encouraging me, and offering support. I would've collapsed into that ditch long ago had it not been for them.

Jim Gregory was this project's primary advisor. At times, I thought of him as one of those prison guards, going so far as to imagine him with mirrored sunglasses and shotgun, standing over me and laughing maniacally as I worked beyond exhaustion. But now that this project is wrapping up and I've had some time to think it over, I no longer believe Jim was one of the guards. Rather, he was one of the loudest voices in the chorus of people cheering me on. Jim believed in my intellectual abilities even when I didn't, and made me feel like I had something important to say. Jim is a keen reader, and incredibly sharp historian, and a remarkably astute advisor. He's tough when he has to be tough and

comforting when he needs to be comforting. He encouraged me to think about the big picture, tie chapters together, and not get too lost in my stories. When I felt that a chapter was "good enough," Jim pushed me to keep working until it was actually "good." He's incredibly busy and has stretched himself extremely thin, but he was never too busy to meet with me. Most of what's good about this dissertation is the result of Jim's generosity, guidance, and insight.

Linda Nash and Margaret O'Mara were also clearly audible among the chorus of people cheering me on. Linda first introduced me to environmental history, the concept of place, and encouraged me to develop my thinking about workers and nature. She has a way of making complex concepts and theories easy to understand and offered remarkably helpful comments on earlier drafts that not only saved me from crucial errors but pushed me down novel paths I never would've taken on my own. Margaret encouraged me to develop my thinking about the dynamics of community, draw out the transnational dimensions of this study a bit more, and offered brilliant comments throughout the writing process. Mark Jenkins only read the final draft of this project, but offered invaluable insights during the defense that gave me a lot to think about as this project moves forward in the future. Mark is also an incredibly talented playwright and, more than once, when suffering from writer's block, I turned to his plays for some creative inspiration.

Several other professors in the University of Washington's History Department have been incredibly helpful throughout the course of graduate school. John Findlay and Bill Rorabaugh worked with me on seminar papers that became, in one form or another, part of this dissertation. Both are careful and considerate readers with an encyclopedic knowledge of Pacific Northwest history and I'm thankful to have worked with them. Glennys Young encouraged me to think about the similarities between American and Soviet workers, and though I eventually scuttled a portion of this dissertation comparing company towns in the Northwest timber industry to the Gulag system, I'm glad she encouraged me to look beyond America's borders as a way to think more creatively about labor history. Many years ago, in my first year of graduate school, I happened to glance at former University of Washington graduate student Andrew Mason Prouty's excellent book about safety in the Northwest logging industry and saw Richard Johnson's name mentioned in the acknowledgements. At the time, I wondered why a historian of colonial Atlantic America would be thanked in a book about twentieth century loggers on the Pacific Coast. I soon learned that Richard is a fount of information about all things history and an amazing teacher with an incredibly sharp wit. I want to join Prouty in what I hope will become a tradition among UW graduate students writing about Pacific Coast logging in thanking Richard for making graduate school a rewarding experience.

I'm also extremely thankful to those scholars outside the University of Washington who took an interest in my work. I met Ileen DeVault when she was in Seattle doing her own research on families in

the Northwest timber industry and she's been a great person to talk with and bounce ideas off of. I likewise owe my thanks to Gunther Peck, Susan Johnson, Chad Montrie, and David Arnold, all of whom offered insightful responses to conference presentations.

I owe a special thanks to Julie Greene. Many, many years ago, while an undergraduate at the University of Colorado, I wandered into Julie's office, knowing I wanted to write an undergraduate thesis, but not too sure what I wanted to write about. Julie pointed to an old IWW poster she had hanging on the wall and told me to look into the history of the Wobblies—I might find them interesting. The result was an undergraduate study about the IWW in the Pacific Northwest logging industry. And though I eventually moved past the Wobblies—they only appear in passing in the pages that follow—this dissertation, in many ways, started more than a decade ago there in Julie's office. It was Julie who first encouraged me to go to graduate school and has remained interested in my progress and research in the years since. Though, in my more harrowing moments, I cursed her for pushing me in this direction, I'm ultimately glad she did.

The staffs and archivists at the University of Washington Special Collections, the University of Oregon Special Collections, the University of British Columbia Special Collections, the Washington State Historical Society, Oregon State Historical Society, British Columbian Provincial Archives, and New York University's Tamiment Library went above and beyond the call of duty in tracking down old boxes, suggesting sources, and making me feel at home as I travelled beyond the confines of Seattle for research. On more than one occasion, Bruce Tabb at the University of Oregon informed me that the library's computer system listed a requested file as missing, only to emerge hours later, dirty and dusty from rooting around in the archive's basement, with the requested file in hand. Wendy Fride Olson at the Courtenay and District Museum took an interest in my research, welcomed me to Vancouver Island's rain-soaked northern coast, and gave me some good-natured ribbing about my American accent.

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Without question, the loudest voices cheering me on as I dug ditches, filled them in, and then re-dug them were my fellow inmates: the friends I made in graduate school. During a research trip in Eugene, Oregon I promised Devon McCurdy that I'd give him his own paragraph in my acknowledgements. I want it known that this promise was made under extreme duress. The whole trip was weird from the get go. I was crashing on the floor of a slum of an apartment with a cat named Colonel Mustard and a pot-dealing roommate who liberally imbibed all manner of controlled substances. This meant that at the end of an eight or nine hour day in the archives, the only social contact I had was with the stoners who showed up at three in the morning looking to score a dime bag, a roommate under the influence of the strange hallucinogenic effects of psilocybin mushrooms, and Colonel Mustard. And there was Devon, of course, which would've been fine, except for the fact that he's prone to monologues about the most erudite and boring of topics, like timber stumpage prices, the Bonneville Power Administration's transmission policies, or the uninspiring politics of some obscure bureaucrat. I had to adhere to a fairly intensive alcohol regiment myself, just to keep my mind limber enough to deal with it all. It was on one of our nightly sojourns to Voodoo Doughnuts when I promised Devon his own paragraph. I believe my words were something to the effect of, "I'll give you an entire paragraph in my acknowledgements if you'll shut up and I never have to hear anything about Portland urban growth boundaries ever again." In all fairness, Devon did read and comment on a portion of this dissertation, so I suppose I owe him some measure of thanks for that. I carelessly left a rather rough draft of a chapter on my desk in our shared office and Devon interpreted this as an open invitation to read and then offer, completely unsolicited mind you, advice and his own take on Northwest forest history. I could go on about Devon, his oddities, his extreme frugality, his questionable investment advice and even more questionable get-rich-quick schemes, but I want to stay on his good side. After finishing his dissertation, Devon decided to go to law school and I suspect, one day, in the not too distant future, I'll be in need of legal services. Devon's already one hell of a historian, one hell of a good friend, and I know he'll be one hell of a good lawyer.

The Fearsome Fivesome (which has expanded well beyond its original five members) drank beer and laughed with me throughout the course of this project. Tim Wright is a good friend with an infectious passion for teaching and makes the best mojitos I've ever tasted. Wendi Lindquist has put up with more teasing and sibling-like harassment than anyone has a right to, but has always remained cheerful, bright, and good natured. Johan Hurting taught me how to curse in Swedish and freely shared his pickled herring. Becca Michener s rolling eyes and wry wit kept Devon and I in check as we launched into debates about the proper definition of social class. Brian Schefke is a paragon of intelligence, style, and taste and his only moral failing is that he's a Detroit Redwings fan. Mary Ann Henderson offered (often unsolicited) long treatises on Marxism, pointed out my bourgeois tendencies, and is the only person

who, I would grudgingly admit, is my equal when it comes to cooking. Ryan Archibald has an impeccable understanding of complicated theory and the physical forces that need to be applied to efficiently tip a trash can.

As a labor historian, I spend a great deal of time reading about unions and workers, but I think I learned more about the labor movement, organizing, and what it takes to run a democratic union from the amazing activists and leaders of the United Auto Workers Local 4121. David Parsons, Jessica Pikul, Dylan Meyer, Jean Dinh, and Phil Harding all have an amazing understanding of strategy, politics, and unparalleled work ethics and they've done a great deal to expanded the power of academic student employees at the University of Washington (though, each one of them, I'm certain, would refuse to take credit for our local's successes and instead credit the rank-and-file). Often, when writing about the large strikes in the timber industry in the 1930, I thought of them, imagining they would've been right at home on a Depression-era picket line.

Jack and Linda Cronce are the warmest and most generous people I know and have welcomed me into their family as if I was their own son. They always showed an immense interest in my research, encouraged me, and shared their own stories of growing up in the rural Northwest and working at the Bremerton shipyards.

I owe a special and heartfelt thanks to Samantha Jane Cronce and Abigail Louise Cronce, both of whom comforted me after the hardest days of writing. What they've meant to me is best captured by the words of poet Charles Bukowski: "Having a bunch of cats around is good. If you're feeling bad, you just look at the cats, and you feel better."

Though I don't tell them enough (and indeed they might die from shock reading it here) I'm extremely grateful to have the loving, caring family I do and I wouldn't have finished graduate school without their support. My parents, Ron and Joanne Beda, sent money and emotional support north towards Seattle and reassured me in only the way that parents can. They're both teachers and they unquestionably inspired in me a love of learning and reading. My mom has always been cheerful, optimistic, and incredibly nurturing and I'd like to promise that now that I'm finally finished with this dissertation I'll return her calls in a more timely fashion, but who are we kidding? This dissertation is, in part, about how hunting and fishing shaped timber workers' view of nature and I think this argument occurred to me, in part, out of my own love of the outdoors. It was my dad who first inspired this love, taking me hunting and fishing on my grandfather's farm in northern Illinois from the time I could walk. No matter how many books I read throughout graduate school, or how smart I felt, my sister, Amanda, had a way of keeping my ego in check. Her sardonic sense of humor and sharp wit kept me from getting too full of myself. She's a great sister and, starting sometime this winter, she's going to be a great mom

and I feel she's completely up to the task of counteracting the morally ambiguous life lessons and advice that Uncle Steve is going to offer young William.

The person who I have to thank the most, though, who lived every minute of this project with me, is Jessica Cronce. Jess read every chapter of this dissertation at least twice and was a careful and considerate editor with an impeccable eye for detail and storytelling. She also endured, quite well, my grandiose posturing and all too frequent complaints that her editorial suggestions were subverting my artistic vision. The demographic data that's a part of this study is there largely because Jess is a Jedi Knight when it comes to statistics. She patiently coached me through SPSS and only occasionally pointed out that I likely would struggle to pass her introductory-level stats class. She's put up with me turning the kitchen into a superfund site when I cook, piles upon piles of laundry, and never once batted an eye when, at the end of four or five weeks of fifteen-hour days spent writing in the library, I'd take off for a two or three week fishing trip. She's been good natured when I've discovered some new hobby or interest that threatens to take over our apartment, though she drew the line at me building a still in the basement. She comforted me when I needed comforting, kicked my ass when it needed kicking, laughed with me when I needed to laugh. She has style, elegance, grace, and class but has said she's willing (though I've never tested her on this) to leave a flaming bag of dog shit on the door of anyone who upsets me. She made me feel smart when I felt stupid, made me feel like an eloquent writer when I struggled to find my voice, and never has she held the fact that she got her PhD from Yale over my head. She's the smartest and most beautiful person I know and this dissertation, and my life, is all the better because she's been a part of it.

INTRODUCTION

ENVIRONMENTALISM, FROM THE GUYS DOWN BELOW

The Nimpkish River logging camp stood in the lowlands of Vancouver Island's far northern coast, just beyond an empty tide flat that disappeared into the ocean mists of Green Inlet, at the edge of a sylvan valley buttressed by craggy peaks that, most days, were hidden beneath iron grey clouds. It was a lonesome part of the country that most on mainland British Columbia simply knew as "out there." Roderick Haig-Brown came here in 1926, in part, looking for work. The seventeen-year old had arrived from England a few months earlier and tried his hand at commercial fishing in Puget Sound, then a sawmill, before heading northward towards the Island. Haig-Brown had also been pulled here by stories of the forest, read in sporting magazines brought by British Columbian soldiers stationed near his Sussex County home during World War I. They told of frenzied rivers, slick granite canyons, wide-leafed ferns growing from buckled red clumps of earth, chlorophyll-colored gowns of moss and lichen, and trees propelled to astonishing heights by constant rains. The landscape sounded rather more like fantasy than reality and it's easy to imagine an adolescent Haig-Brown looking at the manicured forests that lined the English countryside and dreaming of a life in the Northwest wilderness. Perhaps he'd even read the best-selling travel journal of Theodore Winthrop, a New England Yankee who'd travelled nearby these parts in the mid-nineteenth century. Humans would never conquer the Northwest's "ungentle woodland," Winthrop said. "With an axe, a man of muscle might succeed in smiting off a flake or a chip" wrote Winthrop, looking up at the large Douglas firs, "but his slight fibres seemed naught to battle, with any chance of victory, with the time-hardened sinews of these Goliaths."[1]

Had Haig-Brown found his way here a few years ago he might've found the forest described by the magazines or been able to stand beneath one of Winthrop's Goliaths. But greed had blazed a clear cut across the landscape in the two decades preceding his arrival, funneling the forest's natural wealth away to distant markets in Vancouver, San Francisco, Chicago, and even as far away as Hong Kong. Stepping into the woods for the first time, Haig-Brown described a forest that was less natural and more industrial. "Logging machines clattered on the sides of sloughs," he later remembered, "cables slapped at the brush and tore away the trees that had been cut down." Those cables were connected to engines called donkeys, "brutally powerful steam monsters," in Haig-Brown's words, which destroyed nearly as many trees as they successfully pulled off the forest floor. All the broken trees and logging waste was collected in large

[1] Theodore Winthrop, *The Canoe and the Saddle, or Klalam and Klickatat*, John H. Williams, ed. (originally published by Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1863, reprint by Tacoma, Wash.: Fanklin-Ward Company, 1916), 68. Roderick Haig-Brown biography based on Roderick Haig-Brown, *Writings and Reflections*, ed. Valerie Haig-Brown (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982); 9, 13-27; Anthony Robertson, *Above Tide: Reflections on Roderick Haig-Brown* (Vancouver, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1984); Glen A. Love, introduction to Roderick Haig-Brown, *Timber* (Corallis: Oregon State University Press, originally published 1942, reprinted 1992).

heaps called slash piles that were set on fire in the fall, sending billowing columns of smoke skyward that were so thick they reportedly blocked out the sun in Victoria, two hundred miles to the south. The logging camp where workers and their families lived was equally melancholy, little more than a single muddy road, lined by an aimless congregation of single-room homes, thrown together from scrap lumber and tar paper. Recalling his first impressions of the Nimpkish River Valley, Haig-Brown, normally verbose, said he could only summon a few words, "it is a sad thing to see."[2]

The truth of a place, though, is never revealed in first glances. Haig-Brown might not have found the forest he was expecting, but in time he'd come to appreciate this landscape, in a way that only workers could. Haig-Brown was hired on as a chaser, a difficult job that involved intercepting chockers being flung through the forest along the steam-powered mainline and attaching them to fallen timbers so that they could be hauled back to the railway deck. Haig-Brown would later write that, in one sense, the work made him part of the destruction of the forest he'd derided, though, in another, it taught him to be a "keen and accurate observer of nature." Haig-Brown quickly learned to tell the difference between various tree species and, after a time, was able to estimate the age of a tree by running his fingers along the striations in the bark. He noticed that the clear cuts, which initially seemed lifeless, filled in with sorrel and blackberry thickets and rabbits and grouse. The camp started to look different as well. Women kept small gardens behind their company homes and carefully cultivated vegetables. In the evenings, families would gather around a bonfire and pass around jug whiskey that loggers had made in stills hidden in the forest. Haig-Brown learned two important things in Nimpkish River, things that would shape his life in the years to come. The first was fly fishing. In the evenings, after work, he'd follow some of the camp's men down to the banks of the Nimpkish River and fling hooks wrapped in fur and feathers at the giant Chinook salmon that nosed their way up the river as they headed for their natal spawning grounds. The second was a respect for the land and an understanding that the best way to know the forest was to work in the forest. He would later write, "the drama of environment is not really that at all, but the drama of man in relation to his environment."[3]

In 1931, the Nimpkish River Camp closed, probably as a result of the Depression, and unable to find work elsewhere, Haig-Brown returned to England, though he remained nostalgic for the Northwest. Describing England after his return, he wrote, "the rivers were tame and tiny; there were no mountains, not even a rock bluff; there were no mauve and purple twilights with trolling lines cutting the rippled water. The people were set in their ways and places, unchanging, and I, though native-born, was a stranger." A year later, Haig-Brown scrapped up enough money to return to the Northwest. He worked again in the woods for a short time and then had the good fortunate to meet and marry Ann Elmore, a

[2] Haig-Brown, *Writings and Reflections*, 20, 114.
[3] *Ibid*., 22, 219.

debutante from a wealthy Seattle family. Flush with old money, the couple settled into a cottage on the banks of Vancouver Island's Campbell River, a few miles south of the Nimpkish River Valley. Haig-Brown found that a life of leisure agreed with him almost as much as work in the woods had, and he now spent the majority of his days fishing. More to pass the time in the off season, Haig-Brown began writing, mostly about fish and fishing, and selling articles to sportsmen's magazines. By the time of his death in 1976, he'd published more than twenty-eight books about Northwestern angling, many of which are still widely read today, including *The Western Angler* (1939), *Return to the River* (1941), *A River Never Sleeps* (1946), and *Fisherman's Spring* (1951).[4]

In 1939, after the publication of his fourth book, Haig-Brown wrote to his publisher and said he'd grown tired of "factual and semi-didactic writing about wildlife" and wanted to try his hand at "good solid fiction about human beings." He suggested a novel based on his experiences in Nimpkish River. Part of the reason that Haig-Brown wanted to write about timber workers was he felt loggers had been romanticized to the point of absurdity and the time had come for a more earnest representation. "My friends," he said, speaking of loggers he knew, "beg me to tell the truth, all the truth, not as poets and writers and film directors see it but as they themselves see it—the daily truth of hard work and danger, of great trees falling and great machines thundering, of molly hogans and buckle guys and long-splice." Haig-Brown also felt that a novel about loggers would allow him to talk more openly about his politics. Around the time Haig-Brown was leaving the Nimpkish River Valley, the Communist Party was staring to organize Vancouver Island's logging camps. A few years later, in 1934, they shut down the entire Island's logging industry in what, at that time, was the biggest strike in the British Columbian timber industry's history. By the late-1930s, right when Haig-Brown was contemplating his first novel, the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) was fighting for union recognition in the Northwest woods. Haig-Brown believed that a good proletarian novel about work in the woods might lend something to their struggle. Once, when an interviewer asked him about his politics, Haig-Brown responded by saying, "My conservative friends call me a good scarlet radical," adding, "I am pro-labour and would jump to the bright side of the barricades as soon as they were erected."[5]

More than either of these reasons, Haig-Brown believed that a book about loggers would allow him to articulate his conservation philosophy in a way that books about fish, read by fisherman, didn't. By the late-1930s, Haig-Brown had become a leading voice of conservation in the Northwest. Not only had he sold more than 300,000 copies of his books, but British Columbians tuned into his weekly radio segment on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and listened to him talk about the need to protect rivers, salmon, and forests from, as he once put it, "the industrial juggernaut." Haig-Brown, though, had

[4] *Ibid*., 15-6.
[5] *Ibid*., 94, 60, 95.

grown increasingly weary that because of his association with fly fishing, which was seen as a middle-class hobby, his views on conservation were being interpreted as middle-class politics. He saw his conservationism as an extension of the working-class culture of the Nimpkish River logging camp. The middle-class fly fishermen buying his books were starting to argue that British Columbia's rivers and streams needed to be protected from loggers and rural people who didn't share their respect for the land. For Haig-Brown, putting nature out of reach of humans wasn't a sign of deference but arrogance. Humans needed to use the land, just a bit more wisely. As he would write later in life, "conservation is a dynamic, not a static conception. It does not mean simply hanging on to things, like a miser to his gold. It means putting them to use." He continued, "it means accepting moral and practical restraints that limit immediate self-interest; it means finding a measure of wisdom and understanding of natural things." The loggers in Nimpkish River, Haig-Brown seemed to think, had found that measure of wisdom.[6]

The result was *Timber*, published in 1942. The book opens on an accident that leads to a logger's death. For the remainder of the novel, the story's protagonists, Johnny Holt and Alec "Slim" Crawford, debate the accident and how future tragedies might be avoided. Slim, the more rational and considerate of the pair, is the voice of labor radicalism and believes the accidents will only continue until the men get a strong union. "It's just a racket," he says, "and you guys fall for it. You keep falling for it and making money for the companies. If you're hellish good you get by and make wages for yourself. If you're not you try to keep up and get killed trying, or else get fired because you can't make it." The naturally skilled Johnny, whom Haig Brown describes as "catty" — with Johnny the work was "so goddamned easy he doesn't know he's doing it" — resists unionization. "We'd have a bunch of foreign bastards telling us what to do," he says. Although the two men disagree on the merits of a union, they find common ground in their admiration for the forests and in their frequent hunting and fishing trips. When a river the men fish is filled in by landslide caused by a logged-over hill, Johnny starts to see that the same destructive forces that killed the logger in the beginning of the story are the same destructive forces ruining the forests that he reveres. Johnny comes around to Slim's view on unionization, not just because it will prevent accidents, but also because it will give workers a chance to protect the forest. "There's too many people trying to make a living off too few trees," he says, "one day it will catch up with us and then nobody will be making a decent wage." Conservation will "have to come from the guys down below," he says, "the owners will never do it."[7]

Haig-Brown's earlier books had earned immediate accolades, but *Timber's* critical reception was somewhat more tepid. Newspapers in Vancouver and Victoria didn't publicize the novel's release, as

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[6] Roderick Haig-Brown, *The Living Land: An Account of the Natural Resources of British Columbia* (New York: William Morrow, 1961), 21. For a more thorough discussion of Haig-Brown's conservation philosophy, see Arn Keeling, "'A Dynamic, Not a Static Concption': The Conservation Thought of Roderick Haig-Brown, *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 2 (May, 2002): 239-68.

[7] Haig-Brown, *Timber*, 16, 22, 340.

they'd done for the author's earlier works, and the few critics who penned a review suggested that the novel's conservationism had been clouded by Haig-Brown's proletarian aspirations. Stewart Holbrook, a Portland-area journalist who'd made a career celebrating the masculine virtues of work in the Northwest timber industry said he liked the book but added that loggers cut down trees, they don't revere them. Writing in *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Lewis F. Buchanan agreed, suggesting that Haig-Brown had imposed his middle-class way of thinking on his working-class subjects. Johnny and Slim "hardly emerge as individuals," Buchanan wrote, "nor is the reader stirred to any great sympathy for them." He also warned readers to "expect a considerable number of technical logging terms," and warned that "the excessive swearing throughout the novel becomes a bit wearisome." In an ironic turn, *Timber's* reception was the victim of the environmental class politics that Haig-Brown was arguing against. The respect Johnny and Slim expressed for nature sounded a lot like environmentalists who, in the 1940s, were starting to argue more vehemently against logging. Reviewers believed that Haig-Brown had stitched those characters from the cloth of the middle-class. No one realized that Johnny and Slim had been stitched from a different fabric, the men and women Haig-Brown had known in Nimpkish River.[8]

The problems Haig-Brown faced in writing *Timber* mirror larger and more recent problems with environmentalism and the way we think about work and nature. In the years since *Timber's* release, the lines of class politics shaping the environmental movement have become more stringently drawn and we've come to accept the claims of middle-class environmentalists that those who work in nature can't also respect it. This dissertation argues otherwise. The story I tell covers the period from 1900 to 1964 and is about timber workers and the forests of the Northwest, defined here as northern California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia. I examine how timber workers formed a relationship to the forest through work and life in company towns, how they came to respect the forest, and how, in later years, they used their major union, the IWA, to protect those forests. Like Haig-Brown's goal in *Timber*, my goal here is to erode the boundaries that modern environmentalism has erected between workers and nature. What I argue is something, I think, Haig-Brown would've agreed with and the people of the Nimpkish River logging camp likely knew well, that working-class life in the Northwest woods created a connection to the landscape and that those who worked the forests were also the trees' best advocates.

I start with Haig-Brown because his story speaks to the central argument of this dissertation. Workers like Haig-Brown and the people in Nimpkish River lived in industrialized landscapes, shaped by capital and profit motives, but they had their own ways of seeing the forest, ways that shaped their communities and attitudes towards conservation. What they had was their own understanding of place.

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[8] Stewart Holbrook, "Stewart Holbrook Reviews *'Timber,'*" *Chicago News*, March 25, 1942, 12; Lewis E. Buchanan, review of *Timber* by Roderick Haig-Brown, *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (October, 1942): 448.

Place refers to the stories and values people attach to physical landscapes. There's a physical world that exists independent of human thought and experience, but what ultimately gives that physical space meaning and moors it in history is place. Which is to say, place relates to the physical world, what scholars often simply call "space," but analytically differs from it at the same time. "Space is transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning," writes cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan; place is an "organized world of meaning."[9] Spaces can be located on maps (though mapmaking is certainly an important sort of place making); places are a bit more intangible, demarcated by perception, culture, social relationships, and politics. Historian Matthew Klingle argues that the role of nature and environment in history is illegible without attention to place. "To cast the human mind into matter and create places is to make geographic ideas real and allow human experiences to carry their full weight," he writes, "place is an inescapable product of change over time. Place *is* history."[10] Following Klingle, this dissertation argues that place is working-class history as well, and that a focus on place helps make the role of nature and environment legible in timber workers' experience. The story I tell describes how timber workers transformed the industrialized forests of the Northwest into homes and communities, and how their labor and conservation politics were in turn shaped by their belief that nature entwined their communities.[11]

This dissertation charts timber workers' evolving understanding and relationship to place by focusing on the multiple ways loggers, sawmill workers, and their communities interacted with the environment. I explore how immigration and migration patterns shaped the demographics of timber working communities, and how those immigrants and migrants brought with them land-use traditions that shaped timber-worker culture. I look at how workers related to nature through their labor and how they interpreted their role in shaping and changing the environment. And I look at life in logging company towns, where workers and their families developed a relationship to nature through recreation and subsistence practices and an appreciation of forest aesthetics. Ultimately, what I find is that timber

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[9] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 136, 179.

[10] Matthew Klingle, *The Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 4. Emphasis in original.

[11] In addition to Tuan and Klingle, the works that have shaped my thinking about place are: Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007); Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995); Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, tans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991); Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989); Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1984). Additionally, William G. Robbins has used place to frame his two-part environmental history of Oregon. This study is very much indebted to his work. See Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997) and *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story, 1940-2000* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004). The concept of an "ethic of place" comes from Klingle, *Emerald City*, 6; Charles F. Wilkinson, *The Eagle Bird: Mapping a New West* (New York: Pantheon, 1992), 137-8.

working communities developed an "ethic of place," by which I mean an ethical obligation to protect and preserve nature. At first glance, this may seem like a somewhat strange position. Logging after all, by its very nature, appears anathema to preservation. But I don't think the Northwest's twentieth century loggers were hypocrites or held contradictory attitudes about nature. To the contrary, they understood that the forests have multiple uses and a pragmatic understanding of humans' place in the natural world. Forests are, in part, industrial commodities that provide lumber for homes, the wood for shipping crates, the pulp for newsprint, and the raw materials for literally millions more consumer goods. Logging is a necessity of modern life. At the same time, the forests have an intangible cultural value. The Northwest's woods are magical places. The ethic of place expressed by timber workers in the twentieth century attempted to balance these two visions of the forest. Timber workers became attached to the forests, even as they changed them through their labor. Consequently, they argued that the environmental effects of logging needed to be carefully considered and, at times, constrained. They believed a working-forest had to exist alongside wilderness.

This ethic of place that emerged in timber working communities in the early decades of the twentieth century shaped the labor movement in the Northwest woods in the 1930s through the 1960s, and the politics of one union in particular, the IWA. Founded mostly by Communists in 1937 as an affiliate of the radical Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), at its peak the IWA was the largest union in the Northwest woods and the largest union on the Pacific Coast. The IWA was also noteworthy because it was truly a transnational union. Several CIO unions claimed to be "international" in scope, but were in reality American unions that maintained a handful of Canadian locals. The IWA was different. Much of the impetus that led to the IWA's founding came from British Columbian woodworkers—the union's first leaders were British Columbian communists, and the union maintained strong district councils on both sides of the 49th parallel. Part of the story I tell in is about how timber workers managed this trans-border relationship. Yet, the most important thing about the IWA was how it expressed timber workers' ethic of place and belief in a multi-use forest. Throughout its history, but especially in the 1940s and 1950s, the union asked conservation-minded politicians to pass legislation forcing employers to adopt more stringent harvesting guidelines that would conserve forests in the future and ultimately ensure their communities' economic livelihoods. And, at the same time, they said other parts of the forest had to be entirely off limits to cutting and pushed for preservation measures and special protections for wilderness areas. IWA members were part conservationists and part preservationists, a view that I refer to as working-class environmentalism.

At the risk of overgeneralizing, labor history is quite attentive to issues of class but less so when it comes to issues of place. Ultimately, what focusing on the role of the environment in timber worker culture and politics shows is that place is just as important a category of analysis as class in understanding

the history of workers and unions. That being said, it's worth pointing out that timber workers may be somewhat of a unique case study. Their work put them into direct contact with the physical environment and most lived in remote company towns where the lines demarcating the human and natural worlds blurred if they existed at all. While other twentieth century industrial workers had similar experiences—miners, fisherman, and oil workers, to name just a few—many more had fundamentally different experiences. No doubt, factory workers in cities didn't relate to nature the same way as timber workers. Still, even if timber workers are somewhat unique, I think my study should encourage future labor historians to look at the world that surrounded their subjects, to jobsites and homes, to the places they worked and lived and ask how they interpreted the meaning and significance of those places, and how those meanings shaped their worldviews and politics.

By focusing on place, this dissertation offers new ways of conceptualizing the role that nature has played in Northwestern timber workers' history. Early environmental histories of Northwestern timber workers focused on issues of safety and sanitation in the woods and camps. More recently, scholars have examined how new technologies, the evolution of managerial controls, and the emergence of scientific forestry hastened the pace of forest denudation and constrained labor radicalism. Richard A. Rajala's study of technological and managerial change in the Pacific Coast rain forest, for instance, argues that steam-powered logging equipment, lumbermen's reliance on a class of professionally-trained logging engineers, and New Deal regulatory regimes subordinated both workers and nature to the imperatives of accumulation. While Rajala expresses some sympathy for workers and unions, he describes few opportunities for workers to challenge the industrial regime. There's much to agree with in Rajala's work, and my study here is especially indebted to his analysis of technological change and the corporatization of forestry science. Ultimately, though, I find that collapsing the story of workers and nature into a story of capitalist accumulation discounts the way workers understood their relationship to the forest and overlooks the ways that the environment could enable labor radicalism. Arguing against Rajala's study, this dissertation shows that workers' skill and knowledge of the forest lent itself to a culture of independence and solidarity that supported industrial unionism.[12]

This analysis of work, nature, and labor radicalism brushes closely against the arguments made by Thomas G. Andrews in his history of the Colorado Coal Field Wars. Andrews roots the working-class

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[12] Richard A. Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest: Production, Science, and Regulation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998). For studies that argue in Rajala's vein, see Gordon Hak, *Capital and Labour in the British Columbia Forest Industry, 1934-74* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007); Ken Drushka, *Stumped: The Forest Industry in Transition* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985) and *Working in the Woods: A History of Logging on the West Coast* (Vancouver: Harbour Publishing, 1992). For studies that focus more on safety and sanitary conditions, see Erik Loomis, "The Battle for the Body: Work and Environment in the Pacific Northwest Lumber Industry, 1800-1940" (PhD Dissertation, University of New Mexico, 2008); Andrew Mason Prouty, *More Deadly Than War: Pacific Coast Loging, 1827-1981* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985).

radicalism that gripped southern Colorado throughout the Progressive Era in underground interactions between mines and nature. Because the mines were dynamic environments and mining was so dangerous, workers developed and relied upon a culture of teamwork, spread through an occupational ladder, to protect one another. When mine owners started demanding that the colliers work faster to supply coal to meet the country's growing energy demands, this culture of teamwork evolved into a culture of opposition and working-class solidarity that eventually led to the famed Ludlow strike and massacre of 1914. Like Andrews, I find that the Northwest woods were dangerous and dynamic environments, that the work lent itself to a culture of craft pride and solidarity, and that timber workers' knowledge of the environment helped them retain control of the production process, even as it became more mechanized and they were forced to work faster. I, too, argue that understanding working-class radicalism depends on understanding interactions between workers and nature.[13]

I build off of Andrews' study, though, by moving beyond work and also considering how timber workers' subsistence and recreational activities shaped their understanding of nature, unions, and political alignments. Lawrence Lipin's history of urban-rural conflict in Progressive Era Oregon and Chad Montrie's survey of working-class environmental history provide starting points for this discussion. Lipin argues that throughout the 1910s, Portland's working-class adopted a consumerist view of nature. Thanks to rising rates of affluence and car ownership, they started taking to nearby woods and streams for hunting and fishing trips and, in the 1920s, started to argue more openly for expanded wilderness and protected game preserves. Montrie carries this argument forward to the postwar years. In his chapter on Detroit's United Auto Workers (UAW) locals, Montrie finds that rising rates of affluence, cheap cars, and the increased leisure time workers had as a result of strong UAW contracts gave autoworkers more opportunities to hunt and fish. In the 1950s and 1960s, UAW members started using their union's resources, political connections, and an emerging alliance with student radicals to establish game preserves and expand wilderness areas in rural Michigan.[14]

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[13] Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008). Andrews' study builds of several works that have explored how workers' radicalism and understanding of nature grows out of increasing awareness of occupational health and hazard. I, too, am indebted to these works. See Alan Derickson, *Black Lung: Anatomy of a Public Health Disaster* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Christopher C. Sellers, *Hazards of the Job: From Industrial Disease to Environmental Health Science* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); David Rosner and Gerald Markowiz, *Deadly Dust: Silicosis and the Politics of Occupational Disease in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[14] Lawrence M. Lipin, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007). Chad Montrie, *Making a Living: Work and Environment in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 91-112. For other studies that explore how recreation and subsistence shaped working-class views of nature, see Lissa K. Wadewitz, *The Nature of Borders: Salmon, Boundaries, and Bandits on the Salish Sea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012); Kathryn Morse, *The Nature of Gold: An Environmental History of the Klondike Gold Rush* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003); Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of Washington Press, 2003); Benjamin Herber Johnson, "Conservation, Subsistence, and Class at the Birth of Superior National Forest," *Environmental History* 4 (January, 1999): 80-99.

For many years, scholars suggested that workers only entered the arena of environmental politics when resource policies affected employment or when industrial pollution threatened the health of working-class communities. Lipin and Montrie's work is important because it shows that workers' environmental politics also reflected cultural and aesthetic concerns. While I agree with both authors that we have to think about how working-class environmental politics also pivoted around access to recreation, I part with them in two ways. First, by making car ownership central to their stories, both authors suggest that affluence must precede environmentalism. Indeed, Lipin argues that Oregon's poorer, rural workers never adopted their urban counterparts' consumerist view of nature. I find the opposite. Sometimes, impoverished workers who looked to the forest for subsistence could end up valuing nature for aesthetic and cultural reasons. Second, both authors suggest that what we commonly think of as middle-class environmentalism—that is, a focus on wilderness and wildlife protection—has its roots in working-class environmental politics. I agree that a concern for fish, game, trees, and nature's beauty didn't start with middle-class urbanites and can instead be traced back to workers and unions. But I hesitate to define this as a nascent form of middle-class environmentalism and instead prefer the term working-class environmentalism. Timber workers advocated both conservation and preservation and, unlike some middle-class environmentalists, they believed you could continue to work in the forest while at the same time fighting to protect it.[15]

This dissertation is not just a story about workers. It's also a story about families, communities, and the places workers and their families called home. One of this study's most important contributions is to move communal and familial relationships to the center of Northwestern timber workers' social history. Few historians who've examined working-class life in the Northwest woods acknowledge families and communities prior to World War II. The standard narrative is that throughout the early twentieth century, timber workers were itinerants and migratory workers who crisscrossed the region in search of work, unmoored from homes and families, and only when cars became affordable in the 1940s, allowing workers to travel to and from work, did timber workers finally settle down into more stable lives. I find otherwise and show that stable communities were an important part of timber workers' experiences going back to the early 1900s. Why do historians tend to believe that Northwestern timber

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[15] For the literature that understands working-class environmental politics mostly as a response to job losses or health and safety hazards, see Linda Nash's chapter on farmworkers and pesticides in *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Robert Gordon, "'Shell No!: OCAW and the Labor-Environmental Alliance," *Environmental History* 3 (October, 1998): 460-87; Scott Dewey, "Working for the Environment: Organized Labor and the Origins of Environmentalism in the United States, 1948-1970," *Environmental History* 3 (January, 1998): 45-63; Andrew Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Jim Schwab, *Deeper Shades of Green: The Rise of Blue-Collar and Minority Environmentalism in America* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1994).

workers were mostly itinerants? As Frank Tobias Higbie points out in his history of Midwestern migratory workers, scholars studying rural resource extraction industries have exaggerated itinerancy because they rely too much on the records of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the reports of Progressive Era sociologists, both of which emphasized wandering, unmarried workers for political reasons. The IWW was a radical union whose members said that married workers had been pacified by domesticity. They imagined the single, itinerant worker as the ideal revolutionary subject—a worker who didn't have to worry about supporting a family and, consequently, had no reservations about risking his job by associating with a radical union. For Progressive Era sociologists, single men wandering the countryside in search of work confirmed their belief that industrialization and capitalism were socially disruptive processes that alienated people from traditional communities. The IWW and Progressive Era sociologists ignored married workers in industries like Northwest timber because they didn't fit into their critiques of capitalism.[16]

Seeing around these political expediencies, especially in a history of the Northwestern timber workers, can, however, be difficult. Few workers kept journals or diaries, memoirs are clouded by the fog of memory and romanticism, and even employers sometimes fell victim to IWW rhetoric and said that their workers were mostly itinerants (even if their employment records said otherwise). William G. Robbins' community study of the lumber town of Coos Bay, Oregon is one of the few studies to acknowledge the prevalence of married workers and families in the Northwest woods. Robbins relies on oral histories to support his argument, and when possible I too use oral history collections. But to paint a broader, regional picture and move beyond single communities, I rely on demographic research tools, in particular, the Integrated Public-Use Microdata Samples (IPUMS). The IPUMS are a database of computer-readable samples (between 1% and 5%) of the manuscript census that allow users to disaggregate specific populations and study them in detail. Though the IPUMS isn't without its own methodological issues and problems, this source allows me to tell a holistic story about immigration and migration patterns, marriage rates and kinship networks, and to chart demographic changes over time.[17]

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[16] Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004). For histories of work in the northwest woods that overemphasize itinerancy, see Thomas R. Cox, *The Lumbermen's Frontier: Three Centuries of Land Use, Society, and Change in America's Forests* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2010); Loomis, "The Battle for the Body;" Prouty, *More Deadly Than War!;* Robert E. Ficken, *The Forested Land: A History of Lumbering in Western Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987); Carlos A. Schwantes, "The Concept of the Wageworkers' Frontier: A Framework for Future Research," *Western Historical Quarterly* 18 (January, 1987): 39-55; Vernon H. Jensen, *Lumber and Labor* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1945).

[17] William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998). For years, the IPUMS was only used by sociologists and demographers. Recently, historians, particularly historians of immigration and migration, have stated using the IPUMS to question common assumptions about the size and shape of migrations, family dynamics, and kinship networks. My study here is indebted to these works. See Ileen DeVault, "Family Wages: The Roles of Wives and Mothers in US Working-Class Survival Strategies, 1880-1930," *Labor History* 54 (2013): 1-20; J. Trent Alexander, "Defining the Diaspora: Appalachians in the Great Migration," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 37 (2006): 219-47; James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts*.

At the same time this dissertation moves communities to the center of timber workers' social history it attempts to better understand the places where they lived by looking closely at company town life. The literature on company towns in resource extraction industries is divided into two camps. The first (and older) sees company towns as a particularly paternalistic expression of welfare capitalism and argues that company-owned homes, company schools, and company stores successfully created a culture of dependency that stymied labor activism. The second (and more recent) argues that company town paternalism has been exaggerated. In his study of the southern timber industry, for instance, William P. Jones argues that African-American timber workers preferred living in company towns because it offered steady employment. He also finds that workers expressed a fondness for company town life, mostly because employer-sponsored social activities created tight communities bound together by strong relationships and common interests. While I follow Jones in arguing that paternalism shouldn't define our understanding of company towns and that we need to look more carefully at how workers interpreted and reimagined these spaces, my study further suggests that we should also consider how nature played a role in shaping the way workers experienced company town life. In Northwestern company towns, the environment constrained paternalism and at the same time fostered community. Lumbermen running company towns had to keep their operations mobile to "chase the cut," and therefore didn't invest in extravagant town sites or expensive welfare programs. Thus, workers turned to the forests to get what the bosses didn't provide, and in doing so, found a measure of independence, a common interest and a respect for nature that bound their communities. While the mobility of the Northwestern lumber company town system makes it unique in some regards, I'm nevertheless confident that some of the broader patterns I describe would apply to histories of workers in many other resource extraction industries, particularly those that tended to live in rural and remote areas.[18]

This dissertation is also a story about the way workers experienced and responded to industrial capitalism in the Northwest. It offers a new perspective on radicalism in the region by moving the IWA to the center of the Northwest's labor history. Despite being the largest union in the Northwest woods and, by the end of World War II, the largest union on the Pacific Coast, the IWA is under studied. This is partly because it's been overshadowed by the Progressive Era IWW. Scholars and folklorists alike have

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[18] William P. Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005). New histories of company towns, that, like Jones, argue paternalism has been exaggerated and community overlooked, are Neil White, *Company Towns: Corporate Order and Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Chris Post, "Modifying sense of place in a federal company town: Sunflower Village, Kansas, 1942 to 1959," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 25 (June, 2008): 137-59; Elizabeth Jameson, *All That Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community n Cripple Creek* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1998). A study that's been particularly useful is Linda Carlson, *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003). For studies that emphasize paternalism and company-control in company towns, see Hardy Green, *The Company Town: The Industrial Edens and Satanic Mills that Shaped the American Economy* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); James B. Allen, *The Company Town in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1966).

told and retold the IWW's history because it's filled with romance that's hard to resist. The story of the Wobblies, as IWW members were more commonly known, is filled with gun battles and manhunts, vigilantes and massacres, working-class heroes and soapbox revolutionaries. Labor historians have a particular affinity for the IWW because its history seems to suggest—or, perhaps more accurately, labor historians like to believe it suggests—that even though the contemporary labor movement looks to be moribund, the American working-class still has a revolutionary past. As Robert L. Tyler writes in one of the few studies to take a critical view of the Wobblies in the Northwest woods, most historians who look into the IWW's history "ask us to believe that the days of the Wobblies and the 'lumber trust' were simpler days, bosses really bossed and workers were really virile Americans, not yet the aspiring Dagwoods nor redundant 'other Americans' of today. The antagonists confronted each other honestly, like sheriff and gunman on the street in front of the saloon, without such latter day confusions and obstructions as the Department of Labor, the National Labor Relations Board, the Taft-Hartley Act, and all the rest."[19]

Historians have made the IWW's history the archetypical story of labor-management discord in the Northwest. Likewise, several journalists and a few authors writing synthetic histories of the region have tried to draw connections between Wobbly irreverence and the hard-edged attitude loggers took towards environmentalists during debates over spotted owl habitat and wilderness expansion in the 1980s and 1990s. This is a tenuous connection at best. Once you get past the romance of their story, it's hard to find much evidence that the Wobblies had a lasting impact on the development of Northwest capitalism or working-class culture in the woods. IWW strikes were often much smaller and far less effective than their newspapers claimed. The Wobblies leading the call for better wages and working-conditions were rarely rank-and-file activists but rather professional radicals who'd spent little-to-any time in the woods; despite their claims to the contrary, Wobblies were often outside agitators. Moreover, as Erik Loomis has shown in a recent dissertation, rare was the timber worker drawn to the IWW's revolutionary anarcho-syndicalism. Instead, workers who took out a red IWW membership card were more concerned with the

[19] Robert L. Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods: the I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest* (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1967), 1. The two classic histories of the I.W.W. are Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the IWW* (New York: Quadangle/The New York Times Books, 1969); Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States,* volume 4, *The Industrial Workers of the World* (New York: International Publishers, 1965). Histories of the Wobblies were particularly popular in the 1960s, when historians thought the IWW may provide some insights into the student radicalism of the day. Though, judging by several recent dissertations, the IWW still seems to pull at the heartstrings of labor historians. See Aaron A. Goings, "Red Harbor: Class, Violence, and Community in Grays Harbor, Washington," (PhD Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 2011); Loomis, "The Battle for the Body;" Peter Harwood Morse, Jr., "Wobby Identities: Race, Gender, and Radical Industrial Unionists in the United States, 1900-1920," (PhD Dissertation, SUNY-Binghamton, 2006).

bread-and-butter issues of wages, hours, and working conditions and were just as willing to join more conservative company unions that offered the same things.[20]

Another reason why the IWA has been more-or-less ignored in larger histories of the Northwest is that the few historians who've looked into the union's history have focused narrowly on questions of Communism. Like many unions born of Depression-era radicalism, the IWA had an important, though contentious relationship with Communists. It was founded largely through the efforts of American and British Columbian Party members. In 1940, its first president and figurehead, a British Columbian named Harold Pritchett, was denied an entry visa to the U.S. on the grounds that he was a communist, and this set off a struggle for control of the union, the meaning of which historians still don't agree on. The first scholar to take up the debate was Vernon Jensen, who argued that the IWA's rank-and-file willingly chose anti-communist leaders and ousted the union's communists through democratic means. Jerry Lembcke and William Tattam disagree, and in their political history of the IWA they find that the anti-communist leadership's ascendency was the result of anti-democratic coercion, meddling from the CIO's national offices, collaboration with employers and the union's rivals in the American Federation of Labor, and Cold War communist repression. While this dissertation relies, to some extent, on Lembcke and Tattam's early history of the union, I find that the battle between communists and anti-communists isn't central to understanding the union's history, or at least not as central as they make it out to be. I place communist and anti-communist factionalism in the background and instead focus on the union's environmental politics, its organizing campaigns, and contractual campaigns in order to tell a larger story about the development of capitalism in the Northwest.[21]

Most histories of capitalism in the Northwest woods focus on the growth and impact of a "culture of capitalism" that normalized resource exploitation. Robert Bunting's history of the Pacific Coastal forests finds the origins of this culture in the late-eighteenth century fur trade and his study describes the culture's evolution through settler colonialism to the inception of industrial capitalism. William G. Robbins' two part environmental history of Oregon—as well as his other works—focuses on the role of extra-regional capital in shaping the economic development of the Northwest and explores how the region's environment was subordinated to the capital demands of outside investors. More recently,

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[20] Loomis, "The Battle for the Body." For journalists and synthetic histories that make the Wobblies' history the archetypical history of labor-management discord in the Northwest, and try and link the IWW to more recent land-use conflicts, see William Dietrich, *The Final Forest: Big Trees, Forks, and the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992, revised 2010), 100; Timothy Egan, *The Good Rain: Across Time and Terrain in the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Vintige Books, 1990), 168-9; Carlos A. Schwantes, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986, revised 1996), 326-62.

[21] Jenson, *Lumber and Labor*. Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam, *One Union in Wood: A Political History of the International Woodworkers of America* (Vancouver: Harbor Publishing, 1984). Other works that argue in Lembcke and Tattam's vein are Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada: The Life and Times of an Industrial Union* (Vancouver: IWA Canada, 2000); Parnaby, "'What's Law Got To Do With It?:' The IWA and the Politics of State Power in British Columbia, 1935-1939," *Labour/Le Travail*44 (Fall 1999): 9-45; Stephen Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy: The IWA in Canada, 1937-1957 (PhD Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1989).

Thomas R. Cox's history of America's forests identifies and examines the creation of a particular lumbermen's persona that helped lumber companies, speculators, and investors rationalize widespread and destructive harvesting. While Bunting, Robbins, and Cox write with some sympathy towards workers and the labor moment, they ultimately identify very few opportunities for workers to challenge this culture of capitalism.[22]

Historians writing in other contexts have questioned the utility of this "culture of capitalism" for some time, showing how nature restrained or shaped capital's command of the landscape. Very little of the literature on Northwest's forest, though, reflects this more recent historiography. In one sense, then, my study here attempts to bring some of this literature to bear on the history of capitalism in the Northwest woods by showing how the environment shaped the evolution of technology and managerial controls in the production process, as well as constrained paternalism in company towns. Additionally, I make workers a part of this story by showing how they contested this "culture of capitalism" through environmental politics. In particular, I examine how the IWA attempted to create a new culture of land-use and resource allocation that gave rural working-people more control of forest resources. The New Deal's land ethic is an important part of this story. As several recent histories have shown, much of the New Deal was predicated on giving rural people more access to and control of rural resources. The history of the New Deal resource policy in the Northwest woods is a bit more complicated. New Dealers identified trees as industrial commodities, not rural resources, and therefore subjected them to industrial recovery programs, not rural redevelopment programs. In the postwar era, IWA members put pressure on the state to try and bring New Deal-style conservation to the Northwest woods, thereby giving working-class communities greater control to manage the forests in ways consistent with their ethic of place. Even though the IWA failed, the story I tell nevertheless presents a more complicated history of capitalism and resource use than most histories of the forest recognize.[23]

This dissertation is divided into two parts. Part 1, "Place," examines histories of demographic change, work, company town life, subsistence and recreational practices, and community formation in the Northwest woods from roughly the turn-of-the-century until 1929. This part of the study argues that workers and their families reimagined job sites, company towns, and the industrialized forests as working-class places and saw their communities as an extension of their relationship to the natural world.

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[22] Robert Bunting, *The Pacific Raincoast: Environment and Culture in an American Eden, 1778-1900* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997); Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, *Landscapes of Conflict*, *Hard Times in Paradise*, and *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994); Cox, *The Lumbermen's Frontier*.

[23] My thoughts on New Deal conservationism are framed, in part, by Sarah T. Phillips, *This Land, This Nation: Conservation, Rural America, and the New Deal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Neil M. Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Chapter 1 begins by first looking at the way the manpower demands of corporate logging operations reshaped the Northwest's demography, then explores more closely immigrant, migrant, and kinship networks. This chapter argues that timber workers' understanding of place reflected demographic change. Immigrants brought traditions of labor radicalism, Midwestern workers brought union experience, farmers brought an agrarian respect for the land, and families encouraged workers to see the forests and company towns as homes and communities. Chapter 2 looks at industrialization and work. Here, I argue that although Northwestern lumber had become one of the most mechanized industries in North America by the 1920s, production still relied on workers' individual skill and environmental knowledge, which in turn encouraged workers to develop a culture of craft pride, sense of independence, and belief that they, not their employers, owned the woods. Chapter 3 turns to life in company towns. Here, I argue that the economic and environmental imperatives of lumber production put restraints on welfare capitalism in the Northwest woods. Instead of looking to their employers to meet their day-to-day needs, workers and their families looked to nature and increasingly articulated an ethic of place that sought to prevent continued forest exploitation.

Part 2, "Power," covers timber workers' history from the start of the Depression to the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964 and argues that an ethic of place shaped timber workers' unions, in particular the IWA. Chapter 4 starts this part of the story by looking at early unionization efforts, focusing on how rank-and-file organizers and homegrown radicals built the early union movement by relying on and mobilizing company town communities. Chapter 5 is a history of the IWA's contractual campaigns and major strikes, from 1937 until 1946. It focuses on how the union looked to curb industrial flight by maintaining a trans-border union and negotiating region-wide master agreements. Chapter 6 looks more closely at the IWA's working-class environmentalism from the 1940s until 1964. Here, I show that IWA members argued for a multi-use forest that reflected their ethic of place. They said their jobs and economic livelihoods depended on sustainable forestry policies and, at the same time, argued for increased wilderness expansion as a way to preserve working-class outdoor recreational opportunities. The union worked with New Deal conservationists and middle-class wilderness advocates, though most of their efforts failed. In order to make wilderness expansion easier, the IWA lent its voice to calls for the Wilderness Act in the late-1950s. The Act eventually passed, but it had consequences for the environmental movement. Afterwards, middle-class environmentalists turned more stringently towards wilderness expansion and away from the IWA's vision of a multi-use forest. Many politicians followed suit. Timber workers continue to articulate some form of working-class environmentalism to this day, though it's easily drowned out by much louder middle-class environmentalists and a political system that's more responsive to the timber industry and affluent wilderness advocates.

Many of the arguments in this dissertation occurred to me not as I suffered under the weight of archival materials or stared at my computer screen, desperately waiting for inspiration, but on the Northwest's steelhead rivers. Like many of the timber workers that appear in the pages that follow, I much prefer a day of fishing to a day of working, though reading about the long hours in the woods, the grueling conditions, and the danger has made me thankful that when I have to work, it's not in the lumber industry. The faculty members supervising this dissertation might point out, even if they were kind enough to never do so, that had I spent a few less days fishing and a few more days writing, I would've finished long ago. Still, I've met several timber workers on the river and I always make it a point to try and learn a little something about logging, if for no other reason than it allows me to pass off fishing as "research." A retired feller who smoked Pall Malls once explained to me the comparative advantages and disadvantages of different chocker configurations, but most of the men I've talked to steer the conversation back to more important topics, like is the bite on and are the fish holding in the deep channels or softer currents, closer to shore. If these men weren't wearing hats adorned with the logos of chainsaw manufacturers, or didn't carry themselves with the characteristic pride and obstinacy of loggers, it'd be easy to mistake them for middle-class environmentalists. Most speak about the rivers with respect, deride the way logging has damaged spawning habitat, and look down on out-of-state tourists who don't understand catch-and-release. Once, I met a logger who asked me if I'd heard about a local lumber company that'd put in a bid on a timber tract that was, in his opinion, too close to a spawning tributary to be safely logged, though academic decorum prevents me from relating his exact words. His shirt had sawdust imbedded in it and he brushed some of it off as we both complained about the season's lackluster fish returns. That's an interesting juxtaposition, I thought to myself at the time, and I turned to the archives, trying to trace this way of thinking back in time. The result is this dissertation. What I think conversations like that show, and this study tries to articulate, is that timber workers see many things when they look at the forest. It's a working landscape that supports their communities and way of life and it's a place, worth protecting for more intangible cultural reasons.

PART 1

PLACE

Irma Lee Emmerson lived in logging camps for most of her life, mostly in the timber around Coos Bay, Oregon. She'd been born on a farm sometime around the turn-of-the-century and in her early twenties started working in the camps as a flunky, the name given to cookhouse waitresses. In 1964, she published a memoir recounting her experiences. Emmerson's story is partly about what day-to-day life was like in the Northwest woods. She describes work, isolation, and the animals that wandered into camp. She describes the colorful characters she met, like "Meatball," the camp cook, a logger named "Moonshine Jim," and "Old Fox," the camp's superintendent. She also tells of the challenges of working in the cookhouse and serving breakfast to hundreds of hungry loggers. Every morning, she wrote, "the men descended in hordes on the breakfast table and in the kitchen we cleared our decks for action—toast being kept warm, hashbrowns lifted onto platters, coffee made for both breakfast table and thermos jugs...within two minutes I was coming apart at the seams." More than anything else, though, Emmerson's memoir is about how she found a community in the Northwest woods and how she came to see those isolated logging camps as her own. The people in camp, she wrote, became her "family," each one "hell-bent on helping you at great inconvenience to themselves." Emmerson's memoir is particularly interesting because it defines community not just in terms of human relationships but also in terms of the townspeople's relationship to the forest, or how, as she put it, the "dark green of Douglas firs covering the hill" closed "protectively around us." Emmerson may have lived in an industrialized forest and in camps controlled by employers and foremen, but what she saw when she looked at the town and the trees was home.[1]

The first part of this dissertation explores how the Northwest's forest became home to people like Emmerson and how, like her, they defined their community, in large part, through their relationship to nature. In particular, the chapters that follow focus on the way timber workers and their communities understood and defined place. Demographic change (the subject of Chapter 1) is a large part of this story. People may transform space into place when they enter a landscape and start ascribing meaning to the physical world, but what they initially see and the values the ultimately attach to those spaces are often determined by the cultures and identities they bring with them. Timber workers brought many things with them when they came to the Northwest. Like Emmerson, many came from farms. They brought traditions of land-use and an agrarian respect for nature. Others came from the Midwest and had previously worked in the logging industry. They brought experience in industrial labor and working-class cultures of craft pride and independence. Others still came from Europe and Scandinavia and they

[1] Irma Lee Emmerson, *The Woods Were Full of Men* (New York: David McKay Company, 1963), 41, 1, 18.

brought radical traditions and politics. As Emmerson's story also shows, women were a large part of this story. Some came with their husbands as they made the overland journey to the Northwest. Others, like Emmerson, came to find work. By 1920, more than 60% of timber workers in the Northwest were either married or part of an immediate kinship network. Workers therefore came to see Northwestern logging towns as communal spaces, where their families and children lived.

Work (the subject of Chapter 2) also helped timber-working communities see the forests as their own. The lumbermen who started coming to the Northwest around 1900 tried to turn the forests into a perfectly ordered, industrial landscape. They adopted new machines and logging technologies meant to make harvesting more reliable and more profitable, and they came to rely on a new class of engineers and forestry scientists they tasked with organizing and overseeing production. Try as they might, though, the lumbermen found nature in the Northwest woods difficult to control. Hillsides gave out, machines broke, and logging engineers often failed to grasp the vagaries of the landscape. Workers' skill and localized knowledge of nature therefore remained central to logging, even if the lumbermen had hoped to devalue and discourage it through machines and managers. Loggers came to see that the landscape only worked because they did, and began to articulate a culture of craft pride and independence. The lumbermen said they owned the forests. Workers looked at their labor and mastery over the production process and said otherwise.

Finally, company town life (the subject of Chapter 3) played a major role in shaping a working-class ethic of place. Lumbermen built company towns partly to contain labor activism. They hoped that by making workers dependent on their employers through company homes, company schools, and welfare programs, workers wouldn't turn to unions. Nature and the economic imperatives of early twentieth-century lumber production, however, put boundaries on paternalism. Employers had to keep their towns mobile and light on amenities in order to "chase the cut" deeper into the forest. Most lumber company towns, in fact, weren't towns at all, but houses set on railroad cars, which were moved as production demanded. Employers therefore didn't invest in lavish amenities. Instead, workers and their families looked to nature to get what their bosses wouldn't provide. They kept gardens behind their homes, hunted game in the woods, and foraged on the blackberries that grew in clear cuts. They also looked to the forests for recreation, took hikes, went skiing, and many, like Roderick Haig-Brown, went fishing. Looking at these towns from the perspective of modern life, we might be inclined to think of these places as melancholy, isolated, and lonesome. Early twentieth-century timber-working communities, though, probably felt more like Emmerson. At the end of her story, summarizing her life in

the woods, talking about friends she'd made, and how she felt connected to the forest, she wrote, "I felt really secure for the first time in my life."[2]

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[2] *Ibid*., 242.

CHAPTER 1

"I HEARD THE TIMBER OUT IN OREGON CALLING ME"

MIGRATION, IMMIGRATION, AND COMMUNITY

Roscoe Murrow sat in the passenger car of a train, surrounded by tramps who rolled their own cigarettes and wiped loose tobacco from their fingers on stained Levis. He caught his first glimpse of the Cascades around the time the train crossed the Skagit River. Their serrated peaks made his native Blue Ridge Mountains look like little more than molehills, and the fir-scented air rushing into the car felt foreign as it hit his face, which until that moment had only known the stagnate air of the Piedmont. Under different circumstances, the experience might've stirred feelings of awe or reverence. But his view of the landscape was clouded by the sadness of leaving home. Murrow had been born on a small farm in Polecat Creek, North Carolina and would've likely spent his dying day there, tilling the land, but like so many Southerners fleeing Dixie in the early twentieth century, he was a victim of circumstances far beyond his control. In 1909 corn and wheat markets began to fall. By 1913, the soil had become so denuded that a year of 14-hour days had earned him an annual income of less than $700. After that last harvest, Murrow auctioned off his mule team, sold his plow, and bought a ticket for a train that would deliver him from Southern economic stagnation to the small logging town of Blanchard in Washington State's Skagit County.[1]

At first glance, Blanchard did not look like much. Two-room frame houses lined a muddy main street, leading to a small general store and Methodist church. It hardly looked like a place where a man could reverse his fortunes. But looks can be deceiving and despite its inauspicious appearance, Blanchard was a boom town. The Samish Bay Logging Company, which owned Blanchard and the timber on the surrounding hillside, was in a rush to liquidate its landholdings. Unlike the Piedmont, where economic opportunities were growing increasingly scarce, a man like Murrow, who stood six feet tall, weighed more than 200 pounds, and who'd been made strong by a lifetime of work on the farm, would have no trouble finding a job in the physically demanding Northwest woods. He hired on as a log loader, stacking the huge timbers that'd been cut from the nearby hillside onto railroad cars destined for the mills in nearby Sedro-Woolley. The work was hard and dangerous, and his days no shorter than they'd been back on the farm. But at least now he could count on a steady, albeit small, paycheck.[2]

In many ways, Murrow's story makes him an archetypical Pacific Northwest timber worker. Historians familiar with the region's social history tell us that the industry's workforce was composed of young immigrants or, like Murrow, overland migrants who'd come to the region looking for work. They

[1] A.M. Sperber, *Murrow: His Life and Times* (New York: Freundlich Books, 1986), 10-14; Joseph E. Persico, *Edward R. Murrow: An American Original* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988), 15-25.

[2] Sperber, *Murrow*, 15-23; Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 15-30.

found that work in an industry notorious for wild market swings and long periods of unemployment. As newcomers to the region, however, they had no connection to community support networks that might've shielded them from the sharp contours of the regional economy, and they consequently bounced from job site to job site as part of what a sociologist called a "migratory labor horde."[3] Life on the road also meant that few of these workers had the opportunity to marry and start a family, and absent normative gender roles they, according to one famous study, lived "debauched, intemperate and dishonest" lives of "vice and misery."[4]

But looking beyond the fact that Murrow was a newcomer to the region, there is very little about his life that conforms to this accepted historical wisdom. He was not young when he began working in the woods but rather in his late-thirties, and he worked in logging camps well into his sixties. He wasn't footloose but was instead employed by just two companies after moving out West: the Samish Bay Logging Company in Blanchard and a Blodel-Donnovan logging camp on the Olympic Peninsula. A devout Quaker, he was anything but debauched, dishonest, and intemperate. And, perhaps most interestingly, Murrow was married, and sitting beside him on that train carrying him from Polecat Creek to Blanchard was his wife and three children. Ethel and Roscoe Murrow were married in 1900. Their first son was born less than a year later but died before his first birthday. The couple had three more boys. The last, Egbert Roscoe, was born in 1908, six years before the family moved to Washington.[5]

The idea that timber workers made up a large migrant workforce is so pervasive that the young, single, itinerant logger has become, alongside salmon, rain, and the Douglas fir forests, part of the Northwest's cultural and historical iconography. We might therefore be inclined to think that Murrow was somehow unique. But the only thing remarkable about his story is just how unremarkable it was. Blanchard was peopled by immigrants and migrants just like him. Two other men in town had come from the South. Several had come from the Midwest. Three houses away from the Murrows lived G. Zaronockos, a Greek immigrant who'd arrived in America in 1914. C.E. Wright, who'd been born in the

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[3] John Herbert Geoghegan, "The Migratory Worker in Seattle: A Study in Social Disorganization and Exploitation," (MA thesis, University of Washington), 9.

[4] Vernon H. Jensen, *Lumber and Labor* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1945), 24. Also see Ralph W. Hidy, Frank Ernest Hill, and Allan Nevins, *Timber and Men: The Weyerhaeuser Story* (New York: Macmillian, 1963); Robert L. Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods: The IWW in the Pacific Northwest* (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1967); Norman H. Clark, *Mill Town: A Social History of Everett, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972); Robert E. Ficken, *The Forested Land: A History of Lumbering in Western Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987); Carlos A. Schwantes, "The Concept of the Wageworkers' Frontier: A Framework for Future Research," *Western Historical Quarterly* 18, no.1, (January, 1987): 39-55; Robert Bunting, *The Pacific Raincoast: Environment and Culture in an American Eden, 1778-1900* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997); Richard A. Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest: Production, Science, and Regulation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999); William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999); William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon, 1850-1986* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988); Erik Loomis, "The Battle for the Body: Work and Environment in the Pacific Northwest Lumber Industry, 1800-1940," (PhD Dissertation, University of New Mexico, 2008); Thomas R. Cox, *The Lumberman's Frontier: Three Centuries of Land Use, Society, and Change in America's Forests* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2010).

[5] Sperber, *Murrow*, 15-23; Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 15-30.

Canadian Maritimes, lived next door. Sergio Yulando, an Italian immigrant who'd come to America in 1901, lived down the street. Next to him lived Lars Knot, a Norwegian immigrant. Each one of these men, despite coming from a far off place and having no ostensible link to a community, was married. In fact, the 1920 census shows that of the 67 men living in Blanchard and employed in lumber, 39 (58%) were married. These demographic patterns held true across Northern Washington. In Skagit County, which in the 1920s had more timber workers than any other county in Washington, roughly 65% of timber workers had been born outside the Northwest. Forty-nine percent of the county's timber workers were married. [6]

What these statistics begin to show is that, contrary to our historical expectations, mass migration and immigration to a volatile industry did not create a class of rootless workers. Long periods of unemployment, poor wages, and dangerous working conditions were certainly problems with which timber workers had to contend. But instead of turning to the road, workers turned to stable communities as a way to navigate the uncertain economic landscape. These communities not only helped newcomers adapt and survive, but also served as important social and cultural spaces where immigrant traditions of labor radicalism found a foothold. Throughout the decades, these traditions would grow, evolve, and ultimately shape working-class politics in the industry and region. This makes demography central to the history of Northwestern woods radicalism.

Family proved an important part of many workers' experiences, as well, and a great deal of their history revolved around ideas of familial commitment and responsibility, something we see in returning to Murrow's story. The wages paid out by the Samish Bay Logging Company were better than what he'd made on the farm back in North Carolina, but still not nearly enough to support a wife and three children. In the late-1920s, Dewy, the oldest Murrow boy, joined his father in the woods and gave his wages over to his parents. In the early 1930s, the Murrows moved to the Olympic Peninsula. Lacey, the family's middle son, joined Roscoe and Dewy in the woods, and the family was only able to weather the early Depression thanks to the wages of the three Murrow men. When Egbert Roscoe, the family's youngest boy, turned 16 he joined the same crew as Roscoe, Dewy, and Lacey. While the two elder Murrow boys had dropped out of school to work in the woods full time, Egbert Roscoe continued to attend classes in the winter and fall. Each payday he put aside a portion of his wages and he eventually used his savings to pay his way through Washington State University. After graduation he changed his name to Edward, abbreviating his middle name with the initial "R.," and eventually got a job at the CBS newsdesk. Edward R. Murrow became one of the most important journalists of the twentieth century. His reporting

[6] Department of Commerce—Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population*, Blanchard Precinct, Skagit County, Washington, enumerated January 2, 1920; Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database], Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010, 1920 sample.

reflected the progressivism and working-class pride of a boy whose formative years had been spent surrounded by hardened timber workers in the Northwestern woods.[7]

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: THE POLITICS OF FAMILY IN THE NORTHWEST WOODS

The story of Blanchard and the Murrow family not only forces us to reconsider common assumptions about early twentieth century Northwestern timber workers, but also shows how demographic research tools can be used to recreate and ultimately rethink the character of social landscapes. The list of immigrants living in Blanchard were culled from digitized manuscript census forms, while statistics about marriage rates in Skagit County were calculated using data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples (IPUMS).

A large part of the reason families like the Murrows have been invisible in the history of the Northwest timber industry is that scholars have overlooked demographic sources and instead listened to Progressive Era Sociologists and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) rhetoric which, for political purposes, placed the single, itinerant logger in the foreground. For Progressives, rootless single men symbolized all that was wrong with industrializing America and served as potent symbols of how capitalism was destroying communities. Wobblies, on the other hand, constructed the young single man as the ideal revolutionary subject, a worker who'd not been pacified by marriage and had no wife or family preventing him from engaging in radical labor activism. While a fair number of single, wandering workers did indeed live and work in the Northwest timber industry, many were family men who, because they served no larger political purpose, have remained hidden in plain sight.[8]

Demographic research methods allow us to see around Progressive Era politics. The following analysis relies mostly on the IPUMS. This database of computer-readable samples (between 1% and 5%) of the manuscript census, allows users to disaggregate specific populations and study them in detail. Unlike the published census tables, which are really only useful when examining aggregated data from large segments of the U.S. population, IPUMS makes it possible to study specific immigrant groups, workers, or geographic regions in fine detail. One of the most important features of IPUMS is that demographic variables have been standardized across administrations of the census. Every decennial census employed different methodologies, asked different questions, and recorded responses using different codes. With uniform variables, however, it is possible to more accurately track demographic patterns over time. While IPUMS makes it possible to study specific groups or smaller regions, recently

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[7] Sperber, *Murrow*, 15-23; Persico, *Edward R. Murrow*, 15-30.

[8] For a discussion of how Progressive Era politics have shaped larger views of itinerant workers, see Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003). For an example of works that take IWW rhetoric at face value, see Tyler, *Rebles of the Woods*, Loomis, "The Battle for the Body."

digitized manuscript census forms available on websites like *ancestry.com* make it possible to closely examine single enumeration districts, towns, neighborhoods, families, or even individuals in detail. Together, IPUMS and the digitized census function like the dials on a photographer's camera, making it possible to zoom in and out and fine tune the contrast in order to take a series of pictures that provide a rich study of social life.[9]

Census data is not without methodological problems. Enumerators made mistakes, missed households and sometimes, in the case of remote rural towns, neglected entire communities. The result is that the census is a notoriously unstable source for counting susceptible groups, and some researchers have estimated that some censuses have missed up to 10% of poor and minority populations. Another problem is the elasticity of the timber industry's seasonal workforce. It was not uncommon for men to work a logging camp in the spring and summer and return to farms for the fall harvest. Enumerators likely missed many of these migrants and they're likely undercounted in most returns. Because the IPUMS relies on samples of census data, there is necessarily some degree of error and the statistics presented below should be considered estimates rather than a precise count. Finally, census data have a limitation unique to this study: because of strict laws governing access to Canadian census records, the British Columbian manuscript forms are not available to the public and, likewise, IPUMS samples for early twentieth century Canada have not yet been created. These are limitations. But IPUMS and other sources of census data are still the most reliable tools for understanding historical demography.[10]

"The Lumber Industry is the Wheel Which Sets All Other Wheels in Motion"

In 1888, the Pacific Northwestern lumber industry was in its infancy, cutting less than 10% of the nation's timber and paling in size to the relatively well-capitalized Midwestern lumber industry. But a few sharp-eyed observers could see change on the horizon. Timber cruisers, representing investors and speculators, had begun making their first valuations of Washington and Oregon timberland. Rumors of how the new steam powered machinery would transform cutting began to circulate. Predictions about the economic, social, and cultural effect all this would have on the region abounded. A pamphlet published by the Oregon Immigration Board predicted that the growth of the lumber industry would transform the

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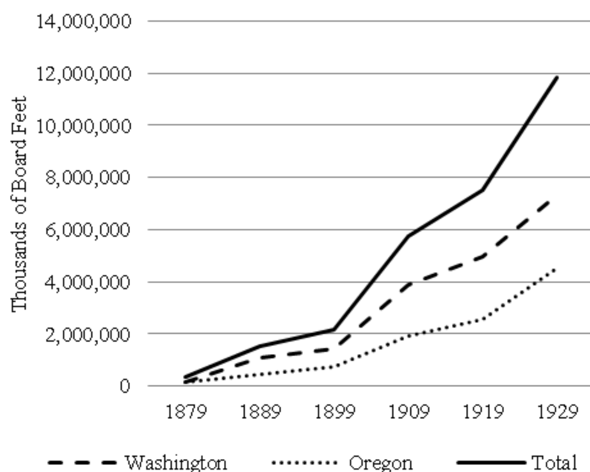
[9] Ileen DeVault, "Family Wages: The Roles of Wives and Mothers in US Working-Class Survival Strategies, 1880-1930," *Labor History* 54, no.1, (2013): 1-20; J. Trent Alexander, "Defining the Diaspora: Appalachians in the Great Migration," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 37, no.2 (2006): 219-247; Michael B. Katz, Mark J. Stern, and Jamie J. Fader, "Women and the Paradox of Economic Inequality in the Twentieth-Century," *Journal of Social History* 39, no.1 (2005): 65-88; William P. Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005); James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Frank Tobias Higbie, "Rural Work, Household Subsistence, and the North American Working Class: A View from the Midwest," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 65 (2004): 50-76.

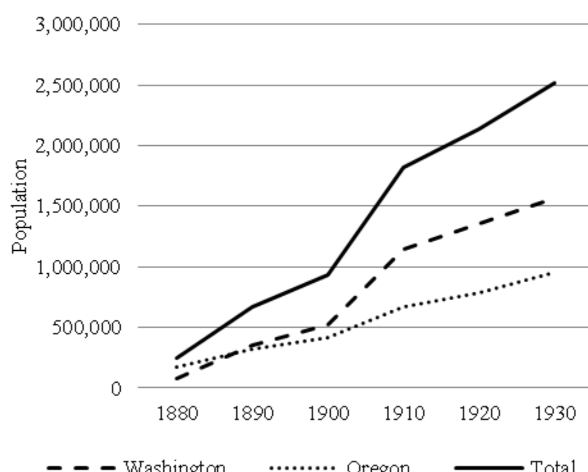
[10] Larry H. Long, *Migration and Residential Mobility in the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988); Gregory, *Southern Diaspora*, 355-6; Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts*, 102.

Chart 1.1.1. *Lumber production in Washington and Oregon, 1879-1929*



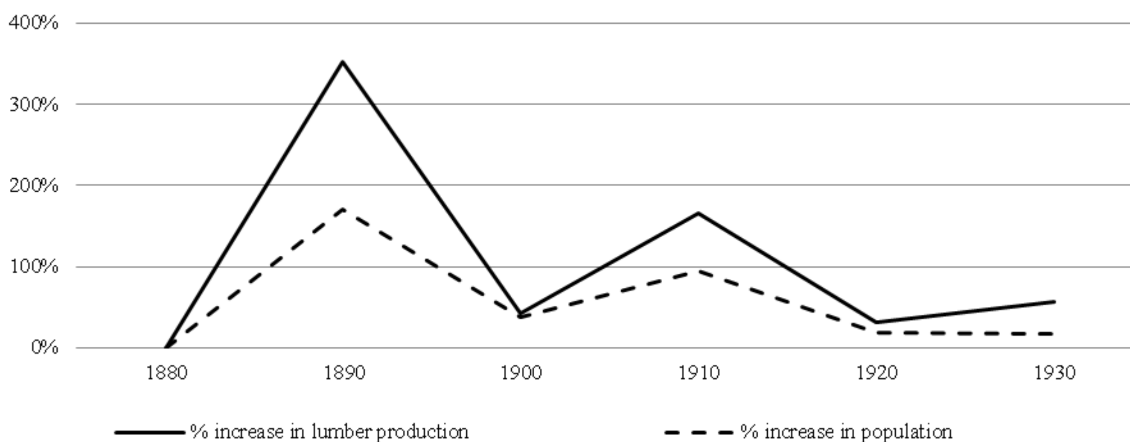
Source: Census of Manufactures, 1880-1930.

Chart 1.1.2. *Population of Washington and Oregon, 1879-1929*



Source: Census of Population and Housing, 1880-1930

Chart 1.1.3. *Percent increase in lumber production and population in Oregon and Washington, 1880-1930*



Source: Census of Population and Housing, 1880-1930, Census of Manufactures, 1880-1930.

Northwest from a backwater region into a national economic center, stating that "the lumber industry is the wheel which sets all other wheels in motion." The Board believed that the investment capital brought by lumber operators would be an important factor in turning the Northwest into a major American region. It similarly predicted that the industry would develop a transportation infrastructure that would make the Northwest a central shipping and railroad hub. But more than anything else, it would be the "upwards of

one hundred thousand people per year" coming to the region to find work in the woods that would do the most to transform the Northwest into "the New Empire."[11]

The pamphlet would prove prophetic. Between 1880 and 1930, Washington and Oregon's combined population grew from less than a million to more than 25 million and, as the immigration board had predicted, this had everything to do with the lumber industry. Hundreds-of-thousands of people from across the region, country, and globe were drawn to the Northwest by timber. Their migrations reshaped the demographics of counties and cities. The traditions they brought with them would create new cultural landscapes. The political impact of their unions would eventually be far reaching, affecting everything from local politics to forest conservation. In Northwest history, only the Depression and World Wars would do more to shape the population.[12]

This is not usually something that historians looking at the timber industry have explored. Several histories speak to the lumber industry's political, economic, and geographic role in regional history. Less talked about is the industry's central role in the Northwest's demographic history. We can get some sense of that role by comparing the expansion of lumber production with the expansion of the region's population (charts 1.1.1 and 1.1.2). Between 1880 and 1930, the population of Oregon and Washington increased by more than a factor of ten. At the same time, lumber production in both states increased by a factor of more than 25, from roughly 22 million board feet (f.b.m.) in 1880 to more than 188 million f.b.m. in 1930. These variables seems little more than correlated until we look at the way in which population increases and lumber production increases followed striking similar trends (chart 1.3), rising and falling in close concert.

The reason that lumber was central to the Northwest's population boom had everything to do with the industry's manpower requirements. Even though lumber would become one of the most mechanized and machinery-dependent industries in America, operations nevertheless demanded large crews composed of many workers. Beginning in the 1910s, the average logging crew numbered around 100 men, though crews of 200 or even 300 were not uncommon. Sawmills had similar labor demands and employed anywhere from 60 to 500 men. When you consider that the region's largest operations ran two or three dozen crews and three to five mills, it's not difficult to understand why the timber industry was a powerful demographic force. Nor is it much of a surprise that the region's largest firms, like Weyerhaeuser, Long-Bell, Simpson, St. Paul & Tacoma, and Blodel-Donnovan, were also the region's

[11] The Oregon Immigration Board, *The New Empire: Oregon, Washington, Idaho: Its Resources, Climate, Present Development, and its Advantages as a Place of Residence and Field for Investment* (The Oregon Immigration Board: Portland, 1888), 92, 93.

[12] Carlos A. Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 148-206; Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 110-236.

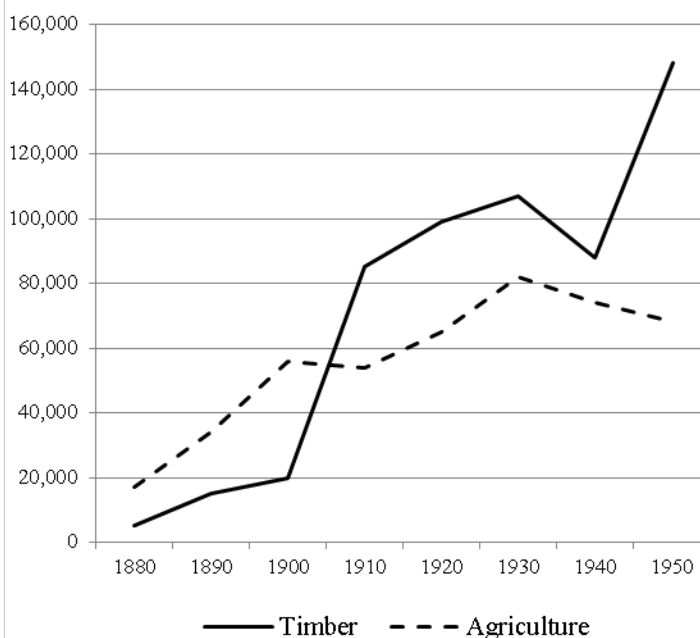


Chart 1.2. *Number of Agricultural Workers and Timber Workers in Washington and Oregon, 1880-1950*

Source: IPUMS, 1880, 1900-1950; Census of Population and Housing, 1880-1930.

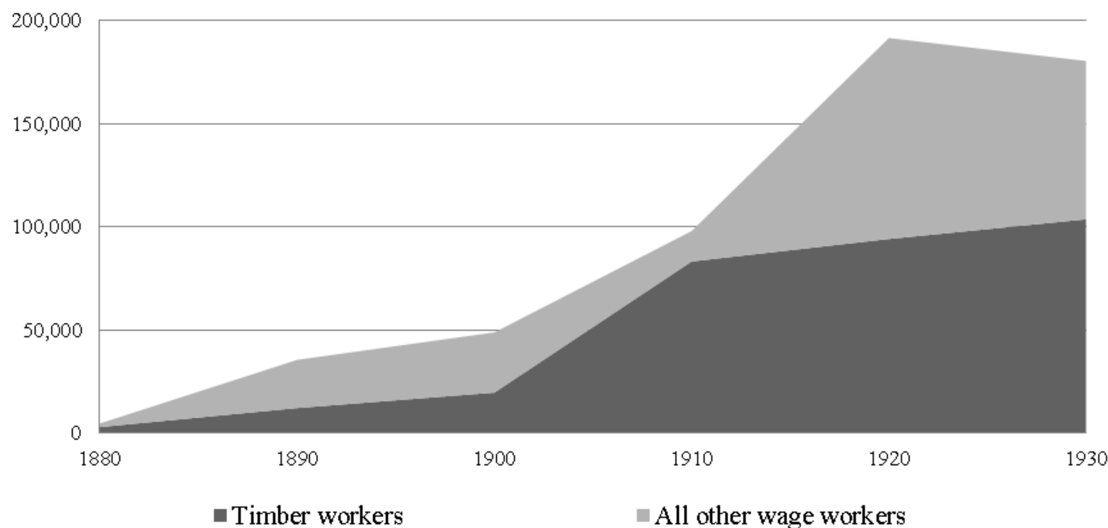
largest employers. In 1920, Weyerhaeuser alone paid out more than 30% of all wages earned in Washington State.[13]

The way lumbermen's demands reshaped the labor market in the Northwest can be seen in Chart 1.2, a comparison of employment in agriculture and lumber. It shows that the lumber industry was creating a new, industrially-oriented regional workforce. In 1880, the timber industry employed fewer than 7,000 of the Northwest's residents while more than 20,000 of the region's people made their living on farms. While employment in agriculture expanded throughout the century, it could not keep pace with the lumber industry. By 1910, nearly 100,000 Northwestern wageworkers were employed in lumber while only about 60,000 of the region's inhabitants still depended on farming.

Chart 1.3, showing timber workers as a portion of all non-agricultural wage-workers in Washington and Oregon, shows just how central the lumber industry was in shaping this new industrial workforce. Since its inception in the 1880s, the lumber industry has been responsible for employing more men than any other industry in the region. From 1900 to 1910, the peak years of the lumber boom, lumber employed more wageworkers in the region than all other non-agricultural industries combined. In 1900, roughly 50% of all non-agricultural Northwestern wageworkers were employed in timber, and in

[13] Hidy, Hill, and Nevins, *Timber and Men*, 36. See also Schwantes, *The Pacific Northwest*, 184-206; Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 203-237; Cox, *The Lumberman's Frontier*, 291-330.

Chart 1.3. *Timber workers as a proportion of all non-agricultural wage workers in Washington and Oregon, 1880-1930*



Source: Census of Manufactures, 1880-1930.

1910 the industry employed nearly 85% of the region's non-agricultural wageworkers. Even after World Wars I and II, when the Northwest's economy increasingly turned toward manufacturing, the timber industry still employed between 35% and 45% of all the region's non-agricultural workers.

While these statistics are impressive, the demographic transformation brought about by the lumber industry was actually far greater. The maturation of the lumber industry made the region's robust shipbuilding industry possible and contributed to the development of the region's ports, both of which served to bring several thousand more workers to the region. Even more workers came to be employed in the plants that produced the locomotives, steam engines, and turbines used in mechanized logging.[14]

Just as the Oregon Immigration Board had predicted, the timber industry had come to shape and define the population of the Northwest. This was something that a sawyer named Egbert Oliver recognized as well. Standing on a hillside one night in the 1920s, looking out over the rapidly growing city of Aberdeen, Oliver took note of the city's many new sawmills and homes that'd been built since his arrival in town ten years earlier. He spotted many new businesses in town that catered to timber workers: shops selling corked shoes and cafeterias that staid open late to serve the men coming off the mill's night shift. The wigwam burners used to treat lumber sent small particles of ash floating into the air, which slowly fell and covered the city's buildings and streets, gently reminding all of the town's residents that Aberdeen was a city made by lumber. "Up and down the country," he wrote, "the mill whistle was the

[14] Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 110-236.

heartbeat of the people."[15] Who, then, were these people whose lives had become tied to the mill whistles and what circumstances brought them into the timber industry's orbit?

"THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY:" THE NORTHWEST'S FIRST GENERATION OF TIMBER WORKERS

> *I was born on a farm down in Io-way;*
> *I pulled the tall corn and I worked in the hay.*
> *Got caught by a girl but she set me free;*
> *I heard the timber out in Oregon calling me.*[16]

The above verse, from a Willie Nelson song called "Lumberjack," begins to answer that question by speaking directly to one of the most socially significant aspects of life for the Northwest's first generation of loggers: the migration from farm to timber. Nelson recorded this song in the early-1950s, while working as a disc jockey in Vancouver, Washington. He based he lyrics off of stories he'd heard from old timber workers he met in town. The song therefore goes into details that are usually overlooked in more popular cultural products dealing with loggers, making "Lumberjack" a far less romanticized view of life in the woods. Nelson tells about the difficulty of life in the camps, dangers in the woods, and exploitative working conditions. And, as this verse shows, the song pays a great deal of attention to workers' migrations and where they came from before they started working in the woods.

Perhaps William Cook and Phillip Gottfried were two of the timber workers Nelson had known and written about in his song. Both had been born on farms where they worked the tall corn and hay. Cook was born on a family farm in 1882 in the community of Dallas, Oregon to Oliver and Irene Cook, German immigrants who'd come to the Northwest by way of an agrarian community in Indiana. Gottfried was born on a family farm not too far from the Cooks. His parents were also German immigrants who'd come to America in 1852 and lived in Ohio for some time before making the journey to the Willamette Valley, probably in the 1870s. Cook and Gottfried worked on their families' farms throughout their younger years but heard the call of the Oregon timber sometime in their thirties. By 1910, both men worked fulltime as sawyers in a Falls City mill.[17]

As Oregon-born, second generation immigrants who'd grown up on farms and entered a life of industrial labor around the turn of the century, Cook and Gottfried are emblematic of the Northwest's first generation of loggers. From 1880 to 1910, workers in the timber industry largely came from small family

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[15] Egbert S. Oliver, *Homes in the Oregon Forest: Settling Columbia County, 1870-1920* (Brownsville, Or.: Calapooia Publications, 1983), 15.

[16] Willie Nelson, "Lumberjack," on *A Classic and Unreleased Collection* (Rhino/WEA, 1995).

[17] Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States: 1880, Schedule 1--Population*, Bridgeport Precinct, Polk County, Oregon, enumerated June 17, 1880; Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900, Schedule 1—Population*, Falls City Precinct, Polk County, Oregon, enumerated June 11, 1900; Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910—Population*, Falls City Precinct, Polk County, Oregon, enumerated April 15, 1910; Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States: 1870, Schedule1—Population*, Union Township, Boone County, Indiana, enumerated July 1, 1870 and Spring Valley Township, Greene County, Ohio, enumerated June 8, 1870.

farms and rural towns. Several of these towns, like Dallas and Falls City, had been founded by the region's first white settlers in the 1850s and 1860s and had remained predominantly agricultural for decades. But the birth of the timber industry was slowly reorienting these places towards industrial labor. We can get some sense of this by looking at the census returns from Cook and Gottfried's home of Falls City. In 1880, there were 79 households in the Bridgeport Precinct where Falls City was located. Of these, 55 households were located on family farms and only 10 households had a family member working in the lumber industry. Twenty years later, the precinct's population had expanded to 126 households. Yet, only 40 of these were located on a family farm. Instead, the heads of most families earned their primary income from work in logging camp or as sawyers, probably in the large Crown-Willamette mill that had been built in town three years earlier. By 1910, there were fewer than a dozen family farms left in Falls City and work in the timber industry had become the primary economic activity of the town's residents.[18]

This socioeconomic transformation was partly a consequence of the new economic opportunities created by the lumber industry and several young men no doubt left the farm for the woods because a life of industrial labor seemed preferable to a life in the fields. At the same time, this transition was a product of the politics and history of Northwestern boosterism. The Northwest's first white settlers were drawn to the region not by timber but rather the promise of cheap land and ideal agricultural conditions. Thousands of years of rising and receding rivers had deposited rich alluvial soil in major river valleys, and the year-round temperate climate combined with more-than-ample rainfall ensured a long and productive growing season. This rich farmland, however, was limited to relatively narrow strips of land running along rivers. While the region's first white settlers established highly productive farms—indeed, today some farms in the Willamette, Skagit, and Snohomish River Valleys have been in continuous operation for more than a hundred years—settlers arriving after the 1870s found the most desirable land taken, forcing them onto rock-strewn and timber-filled agricultural tracts.[19]

If the best land had already been settled by 1870, however, families like the Cooks and Gottfrieds did not necessarily know it. Thousands of settlers had been sold a false bill of goods by an aggressive boosterism campaign led by financial interests attempting to encourage economic growth in the region. Chambers of commerce, steamship companies, and mining companies all took part in a far-reaching advertising designed to sell Oregon and Washington to would-be settlers. Likewise, the federal

[18] Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States: 1880, Schedule 1--Population*, Bridgeport Precinct, Polk County, Oregon, enumerated June 17, 1880; Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900, Schedule 1—Population*, Falls City Precinct, Polk County, Oregon, enumerated June 11, 1900; Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910—Population*, Falls City Precinct, Polk County, Oregon, enumerated April 15, 1910.

[19] Byron Hunter and Harry Thompson, "The Utilization of Logged-Off Land for Pasture in Western Oregon and Western Washington," United States Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin 462 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911). See also, Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 113-141; Lommis, "The Battle for the Body," 73-118.

government pursued an aggressive policy of settler colonialism and publicized the region to encourage the westward movement of whites. A U.S. House of Representatives report, for instance, sold the Northwest to commercial interests by stating that "the soil was found to be rich, and well adapted to the culture of all the useful vegetables found in any part of the United States," and describing the Columbia as "a smooth and deep river" with "safe and easy navigation."[20] Early steamship operators who sunk their vessels in anyone of the river's many churning rapids likely disagreed. But it was the railroads that played the largest role. Throughout the 1880s, as the transcontinentals reached the Northwest, railroad magnates actively promoted settlement as a way to quickly unload federal land grants. The Oregon Immigration Commission, headed by the Northern Pacific Railroad's Henry Villard was the most forthright. In addition to publishing several widely circulated pamphlets, it took out ads in Eastern and Midwestern newspapers, often printing copy in German, Swedish, and Norwegian. At best, these ads stretched the truth and at worst lied. "Start that orchard of yours this spring," announced one ad promoting the sale of plots in the central Cascades on credit, "you do not have to wait until you get a large amount of money saved up." Other pamphlets promised days spent working "exceedingly rich soil," and nights "cool and conducive to sound slumber."[21] In 1914, Isaac Swett, secretary of the Oregon Civic League, testified before the Commission on Industrial Relations that "very many people were drawn into this country upon the theory that it was a land of milk and honey."[22]

Only that when they arrived, many found that there was no honey and they'd have to do their own milking. Relegated to the worst land, these would-be-farmers found their plots covered with acres of trees that would have to be removed before planting could begin. Several thousand more families settled on cheap land sold to them by timber companies who'd already harvested the lumber. While these "stump ranchers" did not have to contend with tall trees, clearing the land was no easy task. A U.S. Department of Agricultural bulletin from 1924 estimated that clearing the ground on a single acre of stump ranch required 50 days of human labor, 34 days of horse labor, and 205 pounds of explosives.[23]

Early twentieth century sociologists characterized the transition from an agricultural to industrial economy as a socially disruptive process. But Northwestern farmers frequently welcomed the chance to work in the woods. For one thing, because stump ranching and timber harvesting went hand and hand, logging was a job many already knew how to do. A.J. McCracken, a Washington logger who grew up in

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[20] As quoted in William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 63.

[21] As quoted in Carlos A. Schwantes, *Hard Traveling: A Portrait of Work Life in the New Northwest* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 41.

[22] Testimony of Issac Swett, August 1914, *Report of the Commission on Industrial Relations*, 64th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Document 415, vol. 5, p.4605. Also see James B. Hedges, "Promotion of Immigration to the Pacific Northwest by the Railroads," *The Mississippi Historical Review* 15, no.2, (September, 1928): 183-203.

[23] US Department of Agriculture, "Farming the Logged-Off Uplands in Western Washington," (Department of Agriculture Bulletin, No. 1236, 1924), 2. Also see White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change*, 113-141.

the central Cascades remembered that "through necessity we had to cut the logs," and it was on the farm where "I learned to log."[24] McCraken said that it was his work on the farm that helped convince a foreman to give him his first job in the woods. More importantly, working in the woods provided stump ranching families with a crucial income they could use to support themselves while they cleared the land. William Z. Foster, an early Oregon homesteader who would eventually become General Secretary of the American Communist Party in the 1920s, remembered that his farm in Oregon's Hood River Valley "was inspiring country to spend a few months yearly in the spring and summer," but ultimately he earned his way "by working in logging camps or on railroad jobs in the surrounding country."[25]

As Foster also shows us, the Northwest's earliest loggers were highly mobile. Like Foster, several workers spent the winter and summer months in nearby logging camps and returned home for spring planting and fall harvesting. Workers not only moved between farm and factory, but logging operations as well, seeking out the best wages, safest worksites, and most favorable working conditions. Other times, they were forced to move when camps shut down under the pressure of wildly unpredictable market conditions. This mobility has come to define the Northwest's early loggers. Historians, however, have too often misread this mobility and made it synonymous with rootlessness. Workers on the move are not necessarily workers without a community and looking closely at their histories draws into question the view that itinerancy was an endemic condition.

We can begin to see this by looking at marriage rates in the IPUMS samples. In 1900, nearly 41% of the industry's wageworkers were married, suggesting that while many workers moved, they remained connected to a family.[26] Looking through small town newspapers, which often reported on the comings-and-goings of local residents shows that not only did migratory workers remain connected to families, but that their travels were planned and cyclical. In 1906, for instance, the *Sultan Star* reported that John Tyre would spend the summer in a Darrington, Washington logging camp and would return to his family in the fall. J.A. Robinson was currently looking for work in Seattle, but would soon return to his wife and children who remained on the family farm. In the fall, the paper reported that C.H. Barnes had recently returned from a summer in the logging camps of western Montana, and M.A. Baldwin had just come back from the orchards in Wenatchee.[27]

Echoing what reporters for the *Sultan Star* observed, Cloice Howd, an industrial economist studying labor conditions in the Northwest, found that worker transience conformed to distinct patterns.

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[24] Transcript, A.J. and Loren McCraken interview, July 13, 1975, by Steve Addington, KIT 75-39 sa, *Washington State Oral/Aural History Project*, Special Collections, University of Washington, 4.

[25] William Z. Foster, *Pages from a Worker's Life* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), 31.

[26] 1900 IPUMS.

[27] *Sultan Star*, June 14, 1906, p.3 and September 28, 1906, p.3. Also see Kevin R. Marsh, "The Ups and Downs of Mountain Life: Historical Patterns of Adaptation in the Cascade Mountains," *Western Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (Summer, 2004): 193-213. Similarly, Frank Tobias Higbie has argued that community and cyclical migration patterns and shaped worker mobility in the early twentieth century Midwest. See Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts*, 98-129.

"In general," he wrote, "the migratory logger does not circulate freely." Instead, they tended to move through fairly defined geographic regions. "A logger may have worked in every important camp on Puget Sound and Grays Harbor," he explained, "but he will seldom leave that region." Loggers in Willapa Harbor, Coos Bay, and the Columbia River Region were similarly bounded. "A small field is usually the limit of their wanderings," Howd concluded, because most workers stayed close to their homes to facilitate a return to the farm during the harvest. In other words, mobility was less perpetual and more a reflection of the unstable lumber economy and inability of agriculture to provide year-round support for families.[28]

This period of mobility and labor migration in the Northwest woods was short lived. As larger trusts and more permanent operations replaced the fly-by-night logging camps of the early twentieth century, employment became more stable. Several homesteaders and stump ranchers decided to take up wage work in the industry full time, probably seeing the promise of a steady paycheck preferable to the uncertain life of a farmer. As Nelle Davis, a stump rancher in eastern Washington remembered, most settlers "have not become sufficiently attached to the soil to want to spare a portion of their earnings to pay off the mortgage on it."[29] Environmental conditions also discouraged mobility. Easily accessible timber had all but been cut by 1910 and operations were forced deeper into the woods, making it difficult for workers to move between camps and their homes. At the same time, itinerancy was curtailed by operators' increasing reliance on company towns housing year-round workforces.

Though they would soon become outnumbered by foreign immigrants and overland migrants with more experience in industrial labor, the stump ranchers and farmers who made up this first generation of timber workers would have an important role in shaping the industry's culture. Stump ranching required no shortage of ingenuity and downright toughness. Because it often took years before a family could make their land profitable, families often resorted to hunting, fishing, and forest foraging as a way to survive the leanest of times. Early timber workers brought this tradition of land-use to camps and company towns, helping to root timber worker culture in agrarian patterns of land-use.[30]

"The Undesirable Element:" The Northwest's Second Generation of Timber Workers

In 1920, Frank Young was working as a laborer in a Gig Harbor lumber camp, not too far north of Tacoma, Washington. He'd been born in Denmark in 1886 and emigrated as a child with his family three years later. The Young family had initially settled in the small timber working community of Cumberland, Wisconsin, where Frank's father worked in a sawmill. Young came to Washington

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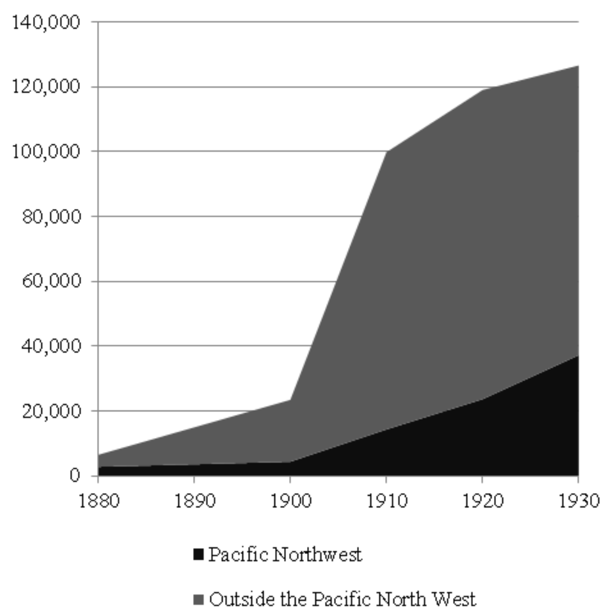
[28] Cloice R. Howd, "Industrial Relations in the West Coast Lumber Industry," *Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statitics* 349 (December 1923): 52-3.
[29] Nelle Portrey Davis, *Stump Ranch Pioneer* (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1942), 219.
[30] See Marsh, "The Ups and Downs of Mountain Life," 211-213.

Chart 1.4.1. *Birthplace of timber workers in the Pacific Northwest*[a]*, 1880-1920*[b]

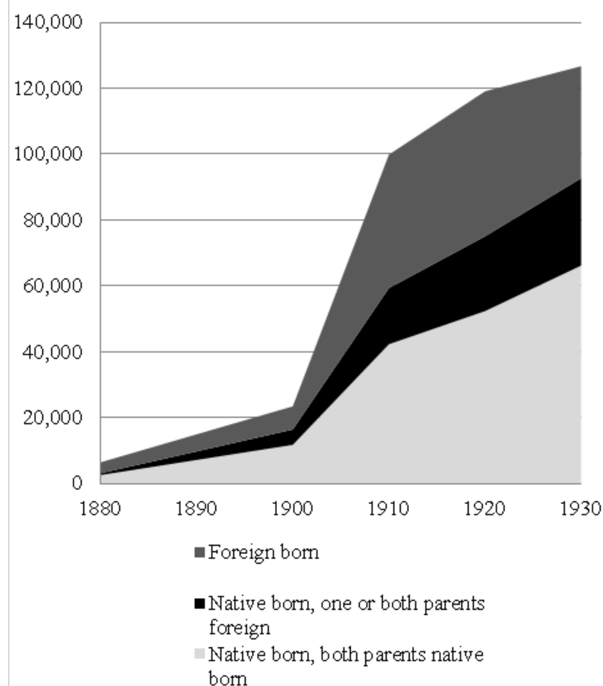


[a] Unless otherwise indicated, for this and the following charts/tables Pacific Northwest includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and northern California.

[b] Data for 1890 does not exist and has therefore been imputed.

Source: 1880, 1900-1930 IPUMS.

Chart 1.4.2. *Foreign birthplace and nativity of timber workers in the Pacific Northwest, 1880-1920*[a]



[a] Data for 1890 does not exist and has therefore been imputed.

Source: 1880, 1900-1930 IPUMS.

sometime after 1910. Young worked beside Andrew Brinck, a 36-year-old Norwegian immigrant who'd come to America in 1900. Like Young, Brinck came to the Northwest by way of the Midwest, where he also worked in a Cumberland-area logging camp before making the journey to Washington, also sometime after 1910.[31]

Young and Brinck are emblematic of the second generation of Northwestern timber workers: immigrants and migrants from outside the region who had experience in industrial labor. This was a fundamental change from previous decades. Chart 1.4.1 captures the dynamics of that change. From 1880 to 1910, between 30% and 40% of the industry's workers had been born in the region. After 1910, however, Northwestern-born men made up less than 20% of the industry's workforce. This newer generation of workers was not just coming from outside the region but, as chart 1.4.2 shows, outside the country. Again, from 1880 to1910, foreign-born workers made up less than 40% of the industry's

[31] Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population*, Gig Harbor Precinct, Pierce County, Washington, enumerated January 2, 1920; Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States: 1910 Schedule 1—Population*, Cumberland Township, Barron County, Wisconsin, enumerated June, 1900.

Table 1.1 *Place of birth of Pacific Northwest timber workers, 1920*

Midwest	31.1%
Pacific Northwest	19.9%
Scandinavia	13.6%
E. Euorpe	7.7%
W. Europe	5.5%
Asia	5.8%
Northeast U.S.	4.7%
Canada	3.7%
Southern U.S.	5.1%
Other/missing	2.9%
Total	119,094

Source: 1920 IPUMS.

workforce. But after 1910, foreign-born and first generation immigrants made up more than 60% of all the region's timber workers.

The social landscape represented by charts 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 was a consequence of the new corporate forms in the Northwest woods. Before 1910, the industry had been composed of several small and poorly capitalized operations whose manpower needs were more than adequately met by local farmers. After 1910, the industry was dominated by a handful of large firms. Unlike earlier operations, which catered to local lumber markets, firms traded lumber on national and international markets that demanded a near constant supply of timber. After the transcontinental railroads reached the region, Northwestern lumber literally started going everywhere, from San Francisco to New York. The creation of the Panama Canal in 1914 also made it easier to ship lumber internationally, and firms started selling lumber to Europe and South America. To stay viable, these new firms had to run multiple hundred-man crews and keep their mills staffed 24 hours a day. In short, they needed more workers than local rural communities could supply. Like industries across the country, timber trusts found the solution to their manpower needs in the millions of immigrants arriving in America in the early twentieth century and the millions of others who were leaving rural communities and setting out for new regions and new cities in search of jobs.[32]

In other words, the reorientation of the Northwest timber industry towards a national market reoriented the industry's labor market towards a broader geography. Looking at the birthplaces of workers employed in the industry in 1920 (table 1.1) shows just how broad this geography had become. Every major U.S. region was represented in the woods. Most American-born workers came from the

[32] On the market economics of the timber industry, see Thomas R. Cox, *Mills and Markets: A History of the Pacific Coast Lumber Industry to 1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974); William G. Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators: Political Economy of the U.S. Lumber Industry, 1890-1941* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982).

Midwest, but several thousand came from the East, South, and Mountain West. Workers also came from across the globe. Scandinavian countries supplied most of the immigrant labor in Northwest camps, but there were significant numbers of Western Europeans, Eastern Europeans, and Asians.

This second generation of timber workers was also unique in that they'd generally grown up in working-class communities dependent on industrial labor. Unlike William Cook and Phillip Gottfried, who'd both been raised on the family farm, men like Frank Young and Andrew Brinck had been raised in a Wisconsin town where nearly every adult male worked in a logging camp or sawmill.[33] Others had experience working in resource extraction industries like mining, or as farm hands in the rapidly industrializing agricultural industry. While large numbers of immigrants came from agrarian communities in their homelands, many more came from industrial communities dependent on logging, mining, ship building, commercial fishing, or manufacturing.

This created both opportunities and problems for employers. Men with experience in industrial labor, and particularly men familiar with the ins-and-outs of machine logging, provided Northwestern operators with a skilled, efficient workforce. But workers with industrial experience also tended to have labor movement experience, a problem for operators determined to keep their camps free of radicalism. Several Midwesterners had been members of the American Federation of Labor's Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesotan sawmill or shingle weaver locals organized in the 1890s. Still others had been veterans of the IWW's battles in the Mesabi iron range. Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes commonly belonged to Scandinavian trade union leagues founded around the turn of the century and notable for their Socialist tendencies. Several Finns belonged to the Communist Party and many Eastern Europeans were outspoken Socialists or anarchists. These migrant and immigrant workers, in other words, constituted what R.W. Vinnedge, president of the Pacific Coast Logging Congress, called in 1928, the "undesirable element."[34]

Undesirable as they may have been, their labor was crucial and employers therefore adopted several strategies to meet labor demands and, at the same time, weed out radicalism. The most widely-used tactic was to simply import workers that employers knew to be loyal. Focusing again on the lives of Young and Brinck shows how this process often worked. It is no accident of history that both men worked in Cumberland, Wisconsin and eventually found themselves in Gig Harbor, Washington. Throughout the late-nineteenth century, Cumberland had been a typical upper-Lake-States agrarian community. This changed when a furniture salesman and civil war veteran named Edward Griggs bought roughly one-hundred million board feet of standing timber from the North Wisconsin Railway company.

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[33] Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States: 1910 Schedule 1—Population*, Cumberland Township, Barron County, Wisconsin, enumerated June, 1900.

[34] R.W. Vinnedge, "President's Address of the 19th Annual Pacific Coast Logging Congress," *the Timberman*, November, 1928, p.39.

The purchase changed the region almost overnight, as Cumberland's farmers signed up with Griggs to work his new logging operations. Griggs' business soon became the most profitable lumber company in Wisconsin, and along with this profitability came notoriety. In 1883, Northern Pacific railway magnate James J. Hill invited Griggs to Washington to tour the Northwest's timber stands. Hill had been courting Midwestern lumber companies for some time, looking for an operator with the capital to establish a mill that catered to a national market and that, coincidently, would rely on rail for lumber shipments.[35]

The idea of a large mill supplying lumber to national and international markets appealed to Griggs as well. In February 1888, the Tacoma Press was the first to spread the news that the recently incorporated St. Paul & Tacoma lumber company had purchased several thousand acres of timberland in Gig Harbor and a spit of land on Tacoma's Commencement Bay for a large mill complex. When completed, the mill would be capable of producing more than 90 million board feet of lumber in a year, making it the largest mill in the world. The company, however, would not come close to meeting those production figures until around 1910, and the central problem was a lack of labor.[36]

Labor economists often make migration a simple story of people following jobs. But as Griggs had found, sometimes people need prodding before deciding to take to the road. The company promised workers from the Wisconsin operations like Young and Brinck higher wages in Washington, robust social welfare programs, and in some instances, paid for workers' overland journey. St. Paul & Tacoma was only one of about a dozen Midwestern lumber companies that employed this strategy. Weyerhaeuser, Long-Bell, and several other large trusts that migrated from the Midwest to the Northwest offered similar incentives to their workforces, a fact that explains why such a large percentage of the Northwest's timber workers came from the Lake States. [37]

The large number of Midwesterners in the region was also a consequence of the economic conditions created by lumber capital's flight from the Lake States. In 1900, more than 65,000 wage workers had been employed by the lumber industries in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Ten years later, fewer than 50,000 jobs remained, and by 1910 the upper-Midwest's timber industry employed only around 40,000 workers. This new economic reality no doubt made men like Young and Brinck's decision to follow St. Paul & Tacoma an easy one.[38]

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[35] Murray Morgan, *The Mill on the Boot: The Story of the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 3-54.

[36] *Ibid*., 55-65.

[37] St. Paul & Tacoma Public Relations Administration Committee, "Twelve Months in Forest Industry Public Relations," November 17, 1927, St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company, acc.# 0315-001, box 241, Special Collections, University of Washington; W.B. Greeley, "Problems and Needs of the West Coast Lumber Industry," The Timber Conservation Board (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, June 1921); Geoff Mann, "Race, Skill, and Section in Northern California," *Politics and Society* 30, no. 3 (September, 2002): 465-496; James B. Hedges, "Promotion of Immigration to the Pacific Northwest by the Railroads," 183-203.

[38] Bureau of the Census, *Census of Manufacture 1914s—Vol. 1: Reports by States* and *Census of Manufactures 1929—Vol. 1: Reports by States* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office).

Young and Brinck made the decision to go to Washington largely free of coercion. This wasn't the case for several immigrant workers who'd fallen victim to the unscrupulous practices of employment agencies. The use of employment agents in large immigrant cities like Chicago and New York was common throughout Western resource extraction industries, but central to lumber companies' ability to keep a steady supply of cheap and easily exploited labor flowing into their camps. Like regional boosters in the late-nineteenth century, early twentieth century employment agents promised unsuspecting and often unemployed immigrants an easy life of high wages in the Northwest woods. Stretching the truth, though, was the least of their sins. As one investigator found, Chicago agencies contracting with Northwestern timber companies charged men anywhere from $1 to $6 for a job and routinely charged Greek and Italian immigrants upwards of $15—this, at a time when the average weekly wage in most Northwestern logging camps was around $3 a day. Companies typically paid agents a moderate fee for every worker referred, meaning that enterprising "sharks" made money on both ends of the transaction, collecting legitimate fees from companies and far less legitimate fees from workers. Often, in periods when hiring slowed, agents continued to charge men a fee and send them westward, and only after arriving would they discover there was no work.[39]

Employment agents served a political as well as economic function, and in addition to supplying the industry's bosses with cheap labor, they helped keep the woods free of would-be agitators. Agencies administered English-language exams, required citizenship as a condition of employment, and kept extensive blacklists of known radicals. J.G. Brown, president of the International Union of Timber Workers told the Commission on Industrial Relations that several agents "compel men to sign a statement that they are not now, and will not during their employment with the firm, become a member of any labor organization."[40]

Employer concerns about immigrants' propensity for radicalism shaped an ethnic and racial hierarchy in the woods that often determined occupational structures. Several companies preferred to hire Italians, Greeks, and Croatians because they were perceived as docile and disinclined towards radicalism. As one young immigrant remembered, companies liked Italians because they'd not yet learned "to stand up to a boss and tell him to stick his job up his ass."[41] Yet, Eastern Europeans were seen as unable to handle skilled work and were therefore relegated to the most menial and lowest paying jobs in a camp, usually on railroad crews. Japanese immigrants were seen as hard workers who'd do the jobs, according to one foreman, "whites refuse to work." They "do the dirty work willingly," he continued and "they can

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[39] A.E. Wood exhibit, presented to the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Portland, August 1914. On employment agents, see Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 109; Charlotte Todes, *Labor and Lumber* (New York: International Publishers, 1931), 95.
[40] Testimony of J.G. Brown, U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Seattle, August 1914.
[41] Angelo Pelligrni, *American Dream: An Immigrant's Quest* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1986),34.

jump around and work fast."[42] This meant that Japanese men were often forced into green chain work, the physically demanding job of stacking lumber on the tail end of sawmills. Bosses also hired Japanese workers because they were seen as loyal. As one Japanese foreman put it, "You ever see any of my boys gamble? You ever see my boys drunk? You ever see a Jap boy make moon-shine? You ever see a Jap boy who comes and works one week and then go away? You ever see a Jap I.W.W.?"[43]

Among all the immigrant groups working in the woods, Scandinavians were most favored and routinely given the most skilled, prestigious, and highest paying jobs. The Scandinavian lumber industry began making the transition to high-lead and steam-powered logging nearly two decades before the Northwestern lumber industry. Many Scandinavian immigrants therefore understood the finer details of machine logging at a time when Midwesterners and Northwesterners were just acclimating to the new technology. A foreman from a Ring and Merrill operation on Washington's Olympic Peninsula, for instance, found Finnish immigrants an indispensable part of operations, since they were the only ones who knew how to operate the new skidder systems in use at the camp.[44] Swedes were highly regarded as high-climbers, since the Swedish lumber industry had been making use of high-lead logging since the 1910s.[45]

In actual practice, there's no evidence to suggest that Scandinavians made better timber workers or that Northwestern-born men couldn't quickly pick up the necessary skills. But cultural perceptions about ethnic groups are powerful things, and despite any evidence to the contrary, operators held fast to the idea that their camps couldn't function without a good crew of Scandinavians. This became a point where employers' desire for skilled and experienced workers ran headlong into their desire to keep the industry free of radical influence. Writing to a lumber operator in Northern Washington, a British Columbian employment agent named R.R. Andrews attempted to discourage the hiring of Scandinavians, writing that "political complexions" are an important consideration when hiring, and that whenever possible Scandinavians should be avoided because it is "well known that they are more inclined to be red."[46] For operators weary of radicalism it was probably a good bit of advice, but one few followed, since skilled Scandinavians had come to be seen as an indispensable part of many operations. Employers decision to welcome Scandinavians into camp, it would turn out, would be a crucial factor in creating and sustaining working-class radicalism in the Northwest woods.

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[42] Transcript, interview with Mr. Ellis, Mill Superintendant, William C. Smith Papers, box 20, acc. # 311, Special Collections, University of Oregon, p. 4.

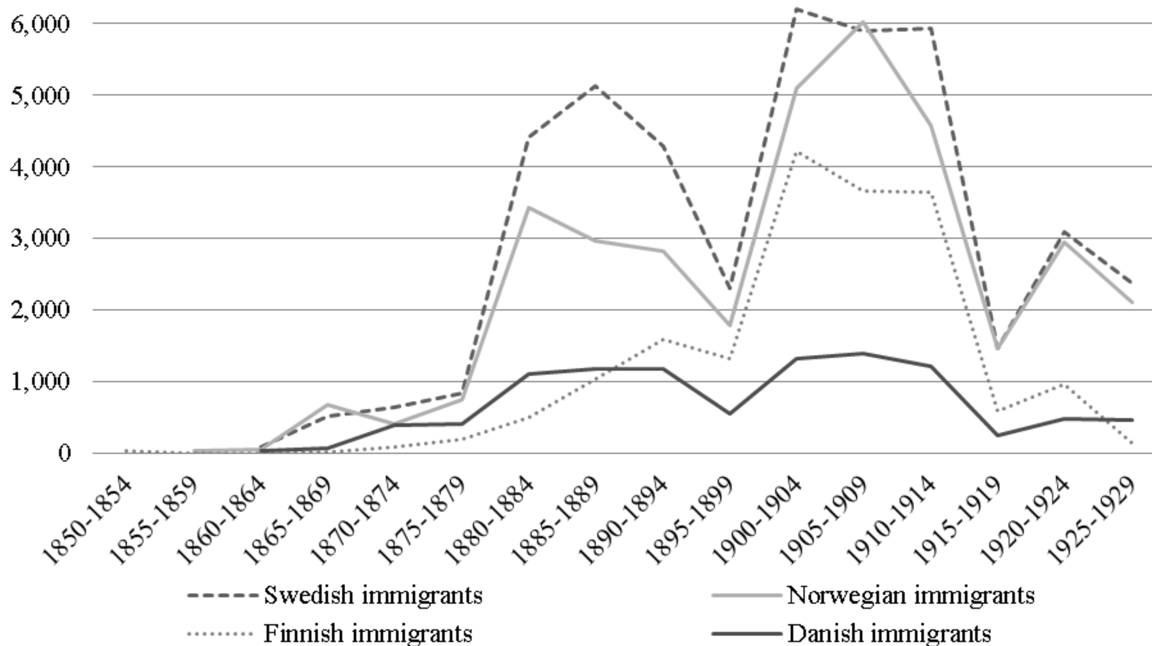
[43] Transcript, interview with Mr. Matsui, Japanese foreman, *ibid*., p.5.

[44] Richard A. Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rainforest: Production, Science, and Regulation* (Vancouve: UBC Press, 1998), 29.

[45] On the Scandinavian lumber industry, see Thorsten Streyffert, *Forestry in Sweden* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1958).

[46] R.R. Andrews to R.J. Filberg, 16 October, 1925, Records of Comox Logging & Railway Company, Box 3, CLR Series 2, Special Collections, Courtenay and District Museum, Courtenay, British Columbia.

Chart 1.5. *Year of immigration for Scandinavians living in the Pacific Northwest in 1930*



Source: 1930s IPUMS.

The political complexions and red inclination, as Andrews had put it, of Scandinavian workers had largely been shaped by the history of Scandinavian immigration to the Northwest. As chart 1.5 shows, Scandinavians arrived to the region in two waves. The first Swedes, Norwegians, Finns, and Danes left their home countries beginning in the 1860s. They'd mostly come from rural agrarian communities in the Scandinavian interior. This first wave was cut short by a Scandinavian-wide depression from 1900-1904. The depression primarily affected agricultural markets, and in addition to cutting off immigration from agriculturally-dependent communities the depression reoriented the Scandinavian economy towards industry. Throughout the early twentieth century, thousands of Scandinavian farmers left the interior regions for coastal regions dependent on logging, fishing, and shipbuilding. When immigration resumed at the end of the depression, Scandinavian émigrés came less from the interior agricultural regions and more from these coastal industrial regions.[47]

For Scandinavian-Americans who'd arrived prior to the turn of the century, the depression was seen as an economically as well as culturally destructive event. Early Scandinavian immigrant identities were rooted in ethnic pride, agrarian folk traditions, and the Lutheran Church. Mass migration to cities and industrial regions had made these folk traditions and religious institutions far less important in

[47] H. Arnold Barton, *A Folk Divided: Homeland Swedes and Swedish Americans, 1840-1940* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), 13-113.

Table 1.2. *Industires worked by Scandinavian-born living in Washington and Oregon in 1930, by year of immigration*

	Immigrated before 1900	Immigrated in or after 1900
Agriculture	16.0%	8.1%
Timber	6.5%	15.8%
Construction	6.0%	8.4%
Railroads and Transportation	3.9%	4.8%
Wholesale and Retail Sales	3.8%	4.0%
Fisheries	1.9%	3.6%
All other industries	15.0%	19.3%
N/A or none reported	46.9%	35.9%
Total	40,590	65,657

Source: 1930 IPUMS.

Scandinavian society and culture. Members of the first wave immigrant community came to believe the countries they left no longer existed and, consequently, saw themselves as more Scandinavian than the millions of Scandinavians who'd never left Scandinavia. This also meant that older immigrant communities felt they had little in common with the more recent working-class immigrants. A first wave Swedish immigrant named G.H. van Koch, for instance, opined that these newer Scandinavians were of "poorer quality than before." They had an apparent disinclination for hard work, a strong inclination for heavy drinking, and displayed "socialistic and anarchistic tendencies." In Koch's view, these more recent immigrants failed to live up to the "strong, industrious, and law-abiding stock of past times."[48]

We can see evidence of the social rift described by Koch by looking at the types of work older and more recent immigrants did. As table 2 shows, Scandinavian immigrants who'd arrived in Washington and Oregon prior 1900 tended to work in agriculture, while only about 6% worked in the timber industry. On the other hand, close to 16% of all Scandinavian immigrants arriving after 1900 worked in timber, while only 8% of the more recent arrivals were farmers. Second wave Scandinavian immigrants also tended to settle in cities and lumber-producing counties, while older immigrants continued to live in counties heavily dependent on agriculture. In 1930, for instance, the populations of Washington's Wahkiakum County and Oregon's Clatsop Counties, both heavily dependent on timber, were composed of nearly 30% Scandinavian immigrants who'd arrived after 1900, while the population of each county was composed of less than 5% immigrants who'd arrived prior to 1900. On the other hand, Washington's Pend Oreille County and Oregon's Grant County, both located east of the Cascades

[48] G.H. von Koch, as quoted in *ibid.*, 163.

and both heavily dependent on farming, had a large proportion of first-wave Scandinavians and only a handful of second-wave immigrants.[49]

The rift between first and second wave Scandinavian immigrants had implications far beyond economic practices and settlement patterns. Because of the attitudes endemic in Koch's comments, later arrivals to the region were frequently ostracized from the Scandinavian fraternal organizations and churches founded in the late-nineteenth century. Similar barriers were erected around language, as older immigrants continued to speak the language of their homeland, read Swedish and Norwegian language newspapers, and looked down upon more recent immigrants who used English. For their part, immigrants arriving after the depression often wanted nothing to do with first-wave immigrants, who they often saw as arcane and backwards.[50]

The largest point of contention, however, was that second wave Scandinavian immigrants often preferred to stand behind the red flag rather than their countries' national banner. Several Swedes and Norwegians had been members of the *Landsorganisationen i Sverige* (*LO*), a Scandinavian-wide trade union league highly critical of nationalism and strongly in favor of internationalism and Socialism. Likewise, the Finnish Socialist Party was a vocal proponent of international working-class solidarity. Ostracized from the first generation's ethnic organizations and immigrant support networks, these industrial-oriented immigrants created new organizations and support networks that tended to emphasize class identities over ethnic identities. Both Seattle and Portland had rather large Swedish and Norwegian workingmen's clubs. Astoria, Oregon was home to a large community of Finnish Socialists who worked in both the lumber and commercial fishing industries. In places like Aberdeen, the Red Finn Hall was a popular gathering place for radical Finnish immigrants who used the space to host Marxist reading groups and worker education classes, as well as more sanguine functions like dances and parties.[51]

These radical working-class Scandinavian communities would play a large and important role in the political history of the Northwestern timber industry's workers. Finns in Grays Harbor were among the last members of the IWW in the region, and their English and Finnish language newspapers like *Sosialisti,* the *Industrialisti*, and *Luokkataistelu* (class struggle), almost single-handedly kept radical working-class politics alive in the region throughout the 1920s, when employer and state suppression sought to eradicate the far left. Veterans of the *LO* were among the only timber workers with organizing experience when union drives got underway in the 1930s. As one Swedish member of the International

[49] 1930 IPUMS.

[50] Barton, *A Folk Divided*, 210-237.

[51] Aaron Goings, "Red Harbor: Class, Violence, and Community in Grays Harbor, Washington," (PhD Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 2011), 359-377; Jon T. Kilpinen, "Finnish Cultural Landscapes in the Pacific Northwest," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (Winter, 1994/1995): 25-34; P.G. Hummasti, "Finns on Both Sides: The Development of Finnish Communities along the Lower Columbia River," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 93, no. 3 (Summer, 2002): 137-145; Barton, *A Folk Divided*, 210-237.

Woodworkers of America (IWA) told it, native-born workers "did damn little to organize trade unions in the early years" and the union was largely built through the efforts of Scandinavians.[52] When the IWA was finally organized, its first and most radical leaders would mostly be Scandinavian immigrants. The union's first vice-president, Ernie Dalskog, and its first secretary, Hjalamar Bergren, were both Finnish Communists. Washington State's District Council was led by Ralph Nelson and Karly Larsen, Swedish and Danish immigrants, respectively.[53]

"THESE PEOPLE WERE NOT NOMADS"

Working-class immigrant and migrant communities in the Northwest woods not only revolved around class identities and radical politics, but ideas of family, home, and stability. This has been something lost in a great deal of the literature, but something that becomes very much apparent when listening to the words of the men and women who actually lived in the camps. Ruth Manary, who lived in a Lincoln County, Oregon logging community, remembered of the loggers in town, "these people were not nomads; very few moved away." Her descriptions show that in terms of ethnicity and culture, Lincoln County was a dynamic place. But in terms of mobility, it was quite static. "There were few changes in day-to-day lives," she wrote, and "the longer we all lived in camp, the more of a community we became."[54]

Turning to census data shows that the type of community described by Manary was very much rooted in workers' acceptance of marriage and family. As table 1.3 shows, timber workers have always tended to marry at high rates. By 1920, when Manary was living in Lincoln County and the timber industry's workforce had become predominately composed of immigrant and migrant labor, married workers made up a majority of men in the woods. By the 1930s and 1940s, single men working in the industry had become rare. Historians looking at the Northwest lumber industry have often differentiated between Northwestern-born "home guards" and immigrants, arguing that while workers from Washington and Oregon frequently married, the majority of the industry's migrant and immigrant workers remained unconnected to families.[55] Thus, we might assume that the data in table 3 is skewed. Yet, parsing marriage figures out by place of birth (table 1.4) shows something interesting: not only were large percentages of migrant and foreign-born workers married, but they were actually more likely to be married than the "home guards."

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[52] As quoted in Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam, *One Union in Wood: A Political History of the International Woodworkers of America* (Vancouver: Harbour Publishing, 1984), 9.

[53] Goings, "Red Harbor," 359-362; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 8-11.

[54] Ruth Manary, "Reminiscence: Ruth Manary on Life at a Lincoln County Logging Camp in the 1920s," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 92, no. 1 (Spring, 1991): 81.

[55] Schwantes, "The Concept of the Wageworkers' Frontier," 54-4; Todes, *Labor and Lumber*, 77-79.

Table 1.3. *Marital status of Pacific Northwest timber workers, 1900-1940*

	Ever Married[a]	Never Married	Total
1900	40.8%	59.2%	23,458
1910	37.0%	63.0%	99,891
1920	49.9%	50.1%	119,093
1930	58.5%	41.5%	126,656
1940	68.3%	31.7%	108,527

[a] Includes married w/ spouse present, married and seperated, widowed, and divorced.

Source: 1900-1940 IPUMS.

Table 1.4. *Marital status of Pacific Northwest timber workers by place of birth, 1920*

	Ever Married	Never Married	Total
Midwest	57.8%	42.2%	37,069
Pacific Northwest	40.0%	60.0%	23,665
Scandinavia	43.9%	56.1%	16,222
E. Euorpe	49.6%	50.4%	9,228
W. Europe	44.2%	55.8%	6,496
Asia	47.8%	52.2%	6,900
Northeast U.S.	55.8%	44.2%	5,541
Canada	52.4%	47.6%	4,447
Southern U.S.	56.3%	43.7%	6,092
Other/Missing	52.9%	47.1%	3,433
TOTAL	49.9%	50.1%	119,093

Source: 1920 IPUMS.

Marriage is an important variable for helping us rethink community and family dynamics in the Northwest woods, but it might not even be the best variable to look at. As Edward R. Murrow's story showed, young men living in their parents' homes frequently picked up the saw and axe in their teenage years. From 1910 to 1940, roughly 13% of the industry's workers were under the age of 18.[56] Focusing solely on marriage hides these workers from view, even though they were members of a family. Housing

[56] 1910-1940 IPUMS.

Table 1.5. *Household type*[a] *of timber workers in the Pacific Northwest, 1900-1940*

	Family household	Non-family household	Total
1900	61.8%	38.2%	23,458
1910	52.0%	48.0%	99,891
1920	66.1%	33.9%	119,092
1930	74.4%	25.6%	126,655
1940	86.9%	13.1%	108,527

[a] Calculated by recoding "relation to head of household" variable in IPUMS.

Source: 1900-1940 IPUMS.

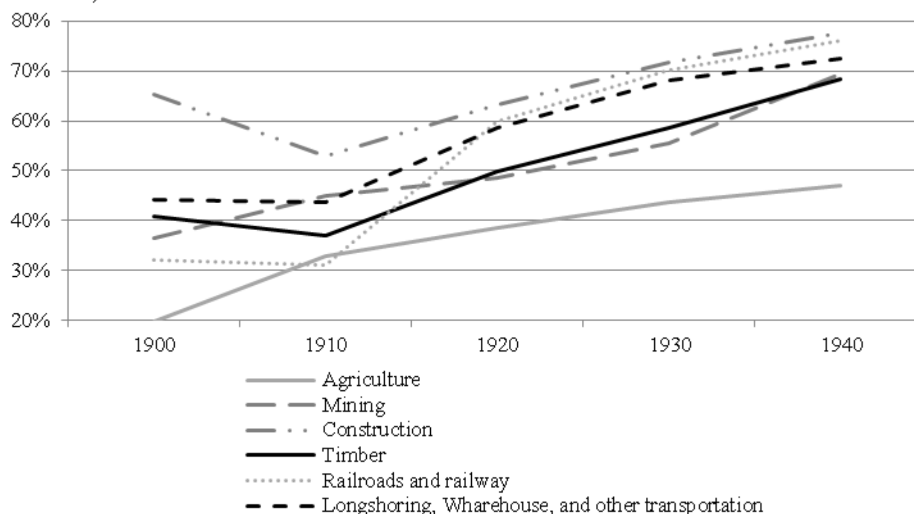
Table 1.6. *Household type of Pacific Northwest timber workers by place of birth, 1920*

	Family household	Non-family household	Total
Midwest	71.2%	28.8%	37,069
Pacific Northwest	76.3%	23.7%	23,665
Scandinavia	52.8%	47.2%	16,222
E. Euorpe	55.1%	44.9%	9,229
W. Europe	66.3%	33.7%	6,496
Asia	26.0%	74.0%	6,901
Northeast U.S.	76.0%	24.0%	5,541
Canada	61.2%	38.8%	4,447
Southern U.S.	88.8%	11.2%	6,092
Other/Missing	62.4%	37.6%	3,433
TOTAL	66.1%	33.9%	119,095

Source: 1920 IPUMS.

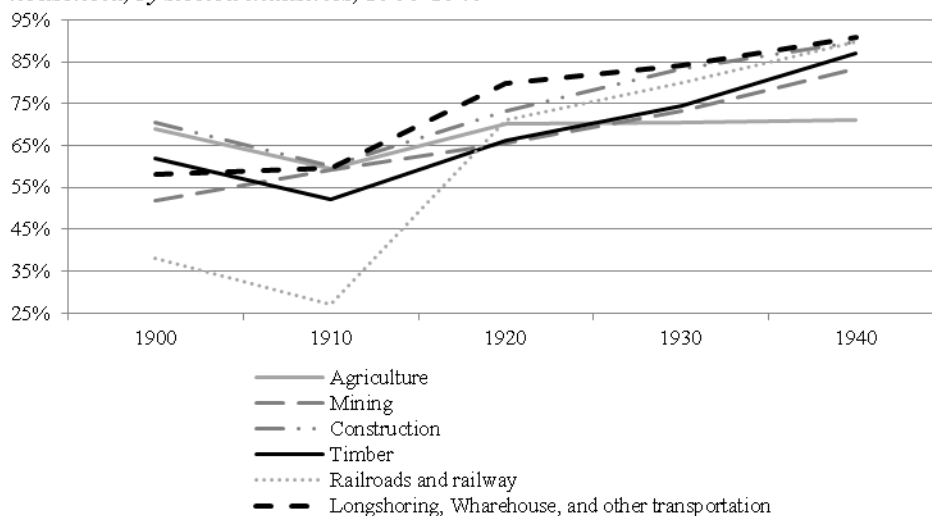
status is a far more inclusive variable to look at. As table 1.5 shows, with the exception of 1910, workers living in a family home have consistently made up more than 60% of wageworkers in the industry. By 1920, two out of every three timber workers lived in a family home. Once again, parsing these data out by birthplace (table 1.6) shows that it wasn't just "home guards" living with families. More than half of the Scandinavian immigrants working in the industry lived in a family home and nearly three-quarters of the Midwestern migrants working in lumber lived with a family.

Chart 1.7.1. *Percentage of Pacific Northwest wage workers ever married, by selected industries, 1900-1940*



Source: 1900-1940 IPUMS.

Chart 1.7.2. *Percentage of Pacific Northwest wage workers living in a family household, by slected industries, 1900-1940*



Source: 1900-1940 IPUMS.

The rapid growth of the industry after 1900 did indeed bring in large numbers of single men, but as these statistics show, those same single men have been overrepresented by sociologists and historians. Many timber workers accepted families and homes. The significance of married workers in the lumber industry becomes even clearer when comparing timber workers to workers in other industries that have generally been regarded as more family-oriented. Between 1900 and 1920, the Northwest's mining, shipping, and steel industries employed nearly the same percentage of married workers as the lumber industry (chart 1. 7.1). Construction workers did tend to marry at higher rates, but not by much. Turning

again to the household variable similarly shows that timber workers were just as family-oriented as workers in other industries (chart 1.7.2).

The large number of family men in the lumber industry once again had everything to do with policies intended to keep radicalism in check. In particular, marriage was seen as a solution to the IWW radicalism of previous decades. A great deal of Wobbly rhetoric idealized the young, single, itinerant male and constructed marriage as anathema to class consciousness. Marriage, explained one article in an IWW newspaper, is a "social evil." Not only did wives and children distract class conscious workers from the revolution, but families would be dragged into poor wageworkers' destitute lives. A true revolutionary, the article continued, "has too much manhood to be willing to half starve a wife and children." Instead, "the only thing worth living for is to fight the employing class."[57] If the single man was indeed more radical, as the IWW had indicated, then employers reasoned that the married man, as one of the region's lumber operators put it, was "necessarily more settled, more loyal and more conservative."[58]

The lumbermen's belief that married men made ideal workers led them to adopt several policies that encouraged families in their camps. Employers gave preferential treatment to married workers, made accident insurance contingent on marriage, and in some cases offered financial assistance to immigrant workers trying to bring their families to the country. Yet, the best tool employers had at their disposal was the company town. By offering cheap rent, amenities and social activities, and promoting the camps as an ideal place to raise children, employers sought to recruit family-oriented workers who they believed would be reluctant radicals. At the same time, employers could use the threat of eviction to keep would-be agitators in line.[59]

From workers' perspective, it's not difficult to understand why many chose life in the company towns. For all their faults, logging camps offered just as many inducements. Rents were indeed cheap, schools available, and the tight-knit communities looked like ideal places to raise families for workers weary of large industrial cities. Demographic data also shed light on why many workers chose a life in the camps. Despite perceptions to the contrary, timber workers were generally older. Between 1910 and 1930, the average age of men employed in the industry was 34. If we subtract the roughly 15% of timber workers under the age of 18 and living in the home of a parent, the mean age becomes 38. Yet, workers tended to marry at a relatively young age. In 1920, the average age of timber workers at the time of their marriage was 24. These statistics therefore suggest that several of the timber industry's workers were

[57] "The Social Evil," *Industrial Worker,* April 8, 1909, p.3-4.
[58] Frank H. Lamb, "The Principles of Labor Maintenance," *The Timberman*, August, 1918, p.207.
[59] Richard A. Rajala, "Bill and the Boss: Labor Protest, Technological Change, and the Transformation of the West Coast Logging Camp, 1890-1930," *Journal of Forest History* 33 (October, 1989): 168-179; Linda Carlson, *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 187-198.

already married when the company town system took shape in the 1920s and simply moved to the camps in order to take advantage of employer policies that aided them in providing for their families.[60]

Employers' decision to encourage a family-oriented workforce in the interest of discouraging radicalism would turn out to be one of the greatest ironies in the Northwest timber industry's history. Families would, more than any single other factor, encourage timber workers to take up the banner of unionization in the 1930s. Unlike Wobbly rhetoric of earlier years, IWA rhetoric focused on the duty of men to provide for their wives and children and promised unionization as the only way to guarantee family-supporting wages. At the same time, the IWA made the concept of community and family central to its larger social vision, arguing that responsible environmental management and forest conservation polices were necessary to protect rural working-class communities dependent on logging. The women who lived in the camps besides their logging husbands would be an important part of the story as well. The women's auxiliaries they created in the late-1930s would prove crucial to sustaining the IWA in its formative years and they'd similarly lead many of the union's social programs in the 1940s.

CHOCKERTOWN REVISITED

Writing in the *American Mercury* in 1943, Stewart Holbrook, the famous Northwest journalist, lamented what he saw as the decline of Chockertown, a small logging camp on the eastern side of Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Holbrook had visited the town twenty years earlier and had been impressed by the town's raucous nightlife, extensive red light district, and the sheer quantity of rye consumed by young and rowdy timber workers well into the evening. Returning to Chockertown in the 1940s, however, Holbrook found life to be decidedly more docile. Twenty years earlier, he wrote, the red light district was nearly two blocks long and "the cribs here numbered at least a score and they housed sixty women." Now, there were fewer than a dozen prostitutes. Only two saloons remained, Joe's Tavern and the Logger's Rest, and both had ceased to offer spirits, now serving only beer. Entering the Logger's Rest, Holbrook was taken by the passive nature of the bar's patrons. "The odd thing is that nobody hit anybody," he wrote, "nobody threw a beer bottle." Instead of blowing their paychecks on women and liquor, Holbrook explained, the town's loggers were now using their wages to shop for "domestic things" down at the Red Front Department Store and pay for haircuts and shaves at the barber shop.[61]

Holbrook didn't attribute Chockertown's transformation to a new sense of virtue among loggers. "Morals haven't changed," he wrote, "they never change." Rather, he identified another force responsible for what he saw as a striking social transformation. The camp's relatively tame nightlife, he explained,

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[60] 1910-1930 IPUMS.
[61] Stewart Holbrook, "Lumberjacks' Saturday Night," *H.L. Mencken's The American Mercury*, March, 1943, p.24.

"means that many of today's loggers have wives." There was no shortage of disdain in Holbrook's tone. He'd made his career celebrating the wild and debauched nature of the Northwest's timber workers, describing them as tough, rugged, men who not only built the country, but were the embodiment of American masculinity. The civilization of loggers through marriage amounted to the loss of national character, and the country was the lesser for it.[62]

There's only one thing wrong with Holbrook's understanding of Chockertown's social transformation: the camp had always been home to several families. In reality, Chockertown was the company town of Brinnon, located on the northern bank of the Dosewallips River, right where it empties into Hood Canal. In 1920, 220 people lived in Brinnon, and 86 men worked in the timber industry. Of these, 48 were married and 56 lived in a family home. Brinnon did have its share of unmarried workers, most of whom lived in the bunkhouses on the eastern edge of town. But families were hardly a recent development in the camp's history.[63]

In other words, Holbrook is guilty of remembering a past that never existed. Perhaps he willfully distorted the truth. More likely, he did not see married workers during his first visit to Brinnon because they did not fit into his already established image of the Northwestern timber worker. Holbrook had built a career on celebrating the masculine virtues of timber workers. He liked to talk about hard work and rowdy barroom brawls. There was no place for women in his narrative. Either way, he helped create and sustain a fiction that has very much come to define our understanding of the Pacific Northwest's timber workers. This makes the story of Holbrook and Brinnon the story of the entire Northwestern timber industry, writ small. Like Holbrook, Progressive Era investigators, Wobblies, and historians have not seen what's been right before their eyes because the reality of the social landscape did not meet their politically and culturally determined expectations. Verisimilitude requires that we clear the air of this fog of expediency. More importantly, the family men and women who formed the backbone of the industry, built its unions, and shaped its landscape deserve to have their stories told. Only when we leave Chockertown behind can we begin to write their history.

[62] *Ibid.*, 25.

[63] Department of Commerce—Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population*, Brinnon Precinct, Jefferson County, Washington, enumerated January 2 and 3, 1920.

CHAPTER 2

"THE LOGGER IS THE BOSS OF THAT POWER"

TECHNOLOGY, WORK, AND ENVIRONMENT

"One minute gone," the man on the ground screamed, the panicked tone in his voice clearly audible, even over all the loud machinery. His words filled the forest valley, ricocheting off the hillsides, reverberating through the tall trees, until they reached Oiva Wirrkala, tangled in a rope, 204 feet up a Douglas fir. Wirrkala worked as a highclimber, the crewman who scaled and topped spar trees and set the rigging for the high-lead logging systems that had become more-or-less standard in Northwest camps by the 1920s. It was a daredevil job, requiring no small amount of fearlessness. Like a telephone lineman, highclimbers like Wirrkala strapped-on iron spurs, worked their way up the spars—knocking branches off on the way up—until they'd made it more than 200 feet off the forest floor. The old highclimbers used crosscut saws—the "misery whip" they called it—to top the trees. But in Wirrkala's day, when speed and efficiency had become more important than safety, highclimbers used explosives to blast off the tops—we'd "shot 'em off with dynamite," Wirrkala recalled. Wirrkala cut his fuses sixteen feet long, leaving him about eight minutes to get out of the tree after he lit the fuse—seven minutes and forty-five seconds more than an experienced climber like him needed. Still, he'd told his man on the ground to start shouting out time, letting him know how long he had to get down, in the unlikely event of a problem. Today there'd been a problem. Wirrkala lit the fuse, made it about five feet, and his safety line tangled, trapping him in the tree, out of reach of the fuse and unable to descend. The man on the ground's panicked scream let Wirrkala know that he only had about seven minutes to get this figured out.[1]

This was hardly the first time Wirrkala had found himself in a precarious position. This kind of danger was endemic to industrialized work in the Northwest woods. Wirrkala was about thirty years old when he found himself trapped high in that tree and had already been working in what loggers called "highball" outfits for close to seventeen years. He quit school in the eighth grade and got a job on the whistle wire in the same camp as his father and uncle, both Finnish immigrants and already stared death in the face plenty of times before. There'd been that time down in Grays Harbor, back when he was chasing hook, when a chocker slipped loose and sent the haul back line whipping back at his head, like a cracking whip. Or there'd been that time that giant spruce barberchaired on him up at the Brix Camp. The timber split clear forty feet up the trunk, teetered for a quick second and almost fell on him before he even knew what'd happened. "It's a rough game, there's no question about it," he said. When you

[1] Oiva Wirkkala interview by David L. Myers, September 22, 1976, transcript, Washington State Oral/Aural History Project (hereafter WSOAHP), PAC 76-32dm, p.12.

stepped on that train to the job site every morning, "you were not sure if you were going to come back feet first" in a coffin. For Wirrkala, getting stuck in a tree, seven minutes away from being blown up, was all in a day's work. "I wasn't getting panicky yet," he remembered.[2]

Wirrkala started throwing "all kinds of slack" into his line, trying to get enough rope to either climb the five feet back up to cut the fuse or to get out of the tree. "Two minutes gone," the man on the ground yelled, even more worried. Still, Wirrkala remained calm and only "started getting kind of a cold sweat a little bit." "'Three minutes gone,' still was stuck." He gave the line one final "really heavy heave" and snapped the snag loose. Wirrkala kicked his spurs out of the tree and let gravity carry him away from the danger, falling ten or fifteen feet at a time, every now and then slamming his safety harness or kicking his spurs into the tree to arrest his fall. About twenty feet off the ground, he kicked off one last time, his spurs sending bark and wooden shrapnel flying through the air, and landed on the forest floor only moments before "that blast went off and the top went sailing."[3]

Wirrkala's story has much to tell us about work in the early twentieth century Northwest woods, not the least of which is the common and even routine prevalence of risk and danger. When men like Wirrkala entered the woods, they encountered a landscape transformed by steam power. Starting in the early twentieth century, steam powered engines and complex cabling systems began replacing hand tools and draft animals on the forest floor. By the 1920s, when Wirrkala was climbing, the Northwestern timber industry had become one of the most mechanized resource extraction industries in the industrialized world. Workers were now vulnerable to previously unknown dangers, things like snapping cables, powerful saws, and exploding boilers. Steam-power was also fast, and workers were expected to conform to the rhythms of the machine, making the work even more dangerous.

While Wirrkala's story provides a vivid scene of how dangerous timber work could be, it also shows us the important role that skill played in the productive process. Highclimbing was not only dangerous, but physically demanding. It was a job where dexterity and on-the-spot decision making made the difference between success and failure, and life and death. Wirrkala's work was not unique in this regard, yet skill is rarely a quality attributed to timber workers. Alongside mechanization, timber firms increasing reliance on college-trained logging engineers is typically assumed to have routinized and regimented the labor process in the woods. Although machines and managers did fundamentally change the nature of timber work, skill remained essential in the woods.

In order to begin to understand how the productive process became more mechanized yet still relied on workers' skill, we need to think about the ways in which the environment shapes the labor

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[2] *Ibid*., 9. For Wirrkala's work history see his earlier interview: Wirkkala interview by Meyers, January 30, 1976, transcript, WSOAHP, PAC 76-29dm; and his interview in the documentary, *Loggers and Their Lore: Becoming a Tree Topper*, KCTS9, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gi9Sb3BopWQ]

[3] Wirrkkala interview, 12-13.

process. By subjecting the forests to the machine, the region's operators were trying to make the labor process as standardized and routine as assembly line work. The problem is, forests are complex environments and as such often proved resistant to this sort of industrial rationalization. This made workers' on-the-ground knowledge of forests crucial to the productive process. The work did not exist independently from nature and the landscape, but interacted with and was shaped by nature, a fact that should force us to think in more complex terms about the ways in which working-class experience and identity interact with landscapes.

Historians who've written about the labor process in the Northwest woods have argued that the technologies and managerial controls employers adopted in the early twentieth century diluted workers' skill and environmental knowledge. Richard A. Rajala has written, for instance, that "the development of extractive technologies" brought "a progressive reduction in labour requirements, less reliance on physical and conceptual skills once considered essential to the industry, and a consequent loss of autonomy as loggers found themselves increasingly subject to the discipline of machine-pacing." That's certainly how employers saw the situation and Rajal's study sheds a great deal of important light on capital's rational and view of the productive process. But loggers often told a different story about work, technology, nature, and labor control. As Finley Hays, a contemporary of Wirkkala's, who worked the Oregon timber near Tillamook put it, "the woods are full of power, and the logger is the boss of that power." Because workers like Wirkkala and Hays often saw themselves as skilled operatives, the bosses of steam power, it should come as little surprise that work cultures easily became oppositional cultures, resistant to subjugation by both manager and machine. Timber workers hold on to their "fierce independence," Hays continued, and "resist mightily" when "forced into the detestable mold of conformity."[4]

Understanding the history of timber worker culture, the history of unionization in the 1930s, and the fierce independence Hays described, in short, starts by understanding how the landscape shaped and was shaped by labor. Yet, while workers did ultimately alter the meaning of forests through their labor and work cultures, they did not do so independent of larger historical forces. A speculative rush on the Northwest's forests beginning in the early twentieth century created the geographic context in which workers' relationship to the landscape would play out.

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[4] Richard A. Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest: Production, Science, and Regulation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1998), 5. Finely Has, *Lies, Logs and Loggers* (Chehalis, 1961), 50, 88. Rajala's other works make a similar argument, see "The Forest as Factory: Technological Change and Worker Control in the West Coast Logging Industry, 1880-1930," *Labour/Le Travail* 32 (Fall 1993): 73-104; and "Bill and the Boss: Labor Protests, Technological Change, and the Transformation of the West Coast Logging Camp, 1890-1930," *Journal of Forest History* 33 (October 1989): 168-179. Ken Druskhka argues in the same vein, see his *Working in the Woods: A History of Logging on the West Coast* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 1992); and *Stumped: The Forest Industry in Transition* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985). My analysis in this chapter, instead, relies on more recent literature that shows how workers in mechanized industries use their knowledge of landscape and environment to resist exploitation. In particular, this chapter is indebted to Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

"A LARGE NUMBER OF STRANGERS": THE GEOGRAPHY OF SPECULATION

No one reporting for the Coos Bay *Harbor* in March 1906 seemed to know why a "large number of strangers" had recently come to south-central Oregon. They came and went mysteriously, travelled "incognito" according to one report, often arriving on the last train of the day, entering town under the cover of night. There'd been some supposition. Some were said to represent "considerable capital." Others were rumored to have come from San Francisco, or the Lake States. Unsubstantiated reports had the strangers meeting with local politicians, or Forest Service officials, or travelling to Washington DC to confer with congressmen. But these were little more than rumors, gossip, and second hand tales.[5]

Looking a few hundred miles to the North might have provided the *Harbor's* reporters with some clearer insights. In the 1890s, San Francisco investors had begun speculating in Puget Sound timberland. In 1900, the timber baron Frederick Weyerhaeuser bought 900,000 acres of Washington timberland at $6 an acre from his good friend, the railroad magnate James J. Hill, touching off a rush for land in the Northwest. In a period of about three years, a dozen or so investors and speculators had bought up nearly every available piece of land in Washington. In 1903, the provincial government of British Columbia made crown land available for purchase, setting off another land rush north of the border. In 1904 and 1905, speculators bought up everything available in Portland and through the Willamette Valley. Had the *Harbor's* reporters considered this, they might have better understood the reason for the secrecy of southern Oregon's newest arrivals. They were trying to finalize sales before word of their intentions got around. Buy low before another frenzied rush for land began.[6]

As it was, the strangers' motivations didn't become clear to the residents of Coos Bay until that summer. In August, O.E. Sether announced that he'd purchased 10,000 acres of forestland outside the city on behalf of the Wisconsin-based Menasha Wooden Ware Company. The following December, C.A. Smith announced that he'd amassed over 100,000 acres of timber near Haynes Inlet to the north through a combination of deals. And two years later, in 1908, a representative from the giant Weyerhaeuser timber conglomerate announced the purchase of 160,000 acres in the hills surrounding Friday Inlet.[7]

Although the strangers represented large timber trusts from back East, they had no intention of cutting any timber on their Northwestern holdings. The conventional historic wisdom has it that Midwestern forests had become completely denuded by the turn of the century and that timber barons

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[5] As quoted in William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon* Revised Edition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998, 2006), 29.

[6] Thomas R. Cox, *The Lumbermen's Frontier: Three Centuries of Land Use, Society, and Change in America's Forests* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2010), 263-289; Cox, *Mills & Markets: A History of the Pacific Coast Lumber Industry to 1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press); Robert E. Ficken, *The Forested Land: A History of Lumbering in Western Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987); William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 205-212.

[7] Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 26-39.

from the east looked to chase the cut west. In reality, cutting rates in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan had not yet peaked in 1900 and many Midwestern forests were capable of sustaining intensive harvesting for many more decades. The strangers who came west were not looking for fresh timber but rather acting on what had become the axiom of the early twentieth century North American timber industry: "only speculators make good profits." Starting in the late-nineteenth century, timber prices began a slow but steady rise. It didn't take landowners in the Lake States long to discover that buying, holding, and then selling lands when stumpage prices rose was simpler and more lucrative than harvesting. The undeveloped markets of the Pacific Northwest—then considered a backwater by most investors—offered timber speculators a chance to buy hundreds-of-thousands of acres of forestland at bargain prices. After purchasing their land all they had to do was wait for the lumber market to improve and they could unload the land at a significant profit, all without the cost of building mills and establishing logging operations. Speculation, the availably of forestland, and the relative ease with which speculators could acquire that land would, in a short time, create an entirely new geography of landholding in the Northwest's forests. [8]

The strangers arrived in the Northwest at a peculiar moment in the history of forest management and regulation, when American control had been established but propriety law was unenforceable. Although the federal government and railroads had laid claim to what, for centuries, had been Native lands, the earliest laws regulating timberland ownership were quite loose since the state hadn't yet established a regulatory structure. This meant, in practice, that throughout the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the trees belonged to anyone willing to take them. A few strong-backed men working in a small crew with only a few oxen and some hand tools could profitably work the woods without a large initial overhead investment in land. The trees did, of course, belong to someone, usually the federal government or railroads. But few policing mechanisms existed to go after timber thieves. As one observer noted of these small crews, colloquially known as "logging pirates" for their flagrant disregard of timber rights, "no one can find fault with them but Uncle Sam, and he is far distant."[9]

Pirate logging existed with certain built-in restrictions that made it a relatively sound economic and environmental practice. While the job could be lucrative, it was also difficult, dangerous, and back-breaking, facts which dissuaded many would-be pirate loggers from entering the forests. The men who did tempt their fates among the trees found that the work was excruciatingly slow. Working with only hand tools and pack animals, crews might harvest only a few trees a day. Once they'd harvested those

[8] William G. Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators: Political Economy of the US Lumber Industry, 1890-1941* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1982), 35-55. Cox, *Lumbermen's Frontier*, 263-289; Ficken, *The Forested Land*, 91-103.

[9] As quoted in Ficken, *Forested Land*, 32. For more on pirate logging, see Murray Morgan, *The Last Wilderness* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1955), 235-245; Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rainforest*, 7; Cox, *Lumbermen's Frontier*, 284-285. For a history of pirate logging in British Columbia, see Donald MacKay, *The Lumberjacks* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978).

trees, the only way to transport them to mills and market centers was by floating them along rivers, which was only possible during the freshets of late-winter and spring. These factors ensured that mills did not become flush with timber and helped keep the market more-or-less stable. At the same time, these factors preserved forest ecologies. Because a single tree took so long to harvest and crews depended on waterways, pirate loggers tended to only work riverside timber and only harvest the larger trees that brought more at the mills. This left mountainside timber nearly untouched throughout the nineteenth century and left small trees standing, making pirate logging a relatively non-invasive practice. Though there's nothing to suggest that pirate loggers had any conservationist vision, they actually practiced early forms of selective cutting and sustained-yield harvesting, though they would not have understood it as such.[10]

Had one of these pirate loggers taken the time during a spring sojourn to the mill to stop and look at the register of any hotel in anyone of the Northwest's mill cities and towns, he might have been able to see that his days were numbered and that new ideas about landownership and timber rights were on the horizon. In 1894, the Southern Pacific Railroad began selling off portions of its Oregon land grant for $2.50 an acre, and as the news spread, "every hotel in the timbered sections of the state" quickly became "crowded with timber land speculators, cruisers and locators" from across the country, remembered Stephen Puter, one of the many easterners who'd come to the region looking to scout out land deals.[11] Four years later, James J. Hill started selling Northern Pacific land for $8 an acre, more expensive than Southern Pacific land, but still an amazing deal given that the timber on these tracts was valued at thousands of dollars. San Francisco investors, most who'd become rich through mining, were the first to take advantage of these deals and test the speculative waters. But it was Weyerhaeuser's Northern Pacific timberland purchase that opened the floodgates and a sent a small army of what logging manager George Long called "scalawag timber brokers" pouring into the Northwest.[12]

Yet, few of these speculators would be successful in securing land deals. As an investment strategy, timberland speculation relied on amassing as much land as possible as quickly as possible. Successful speculators would be the ones who had the political power to strong-arm politicians into overlooking fraudulent sales and few reservations about skirting the law. In the Northwest's forests, it was the rich who got richer. Congress had originally stipulated that railroad grants could only be sold to settlers in 160 acre lots, a provision which both railroads and land brokers flagrantly ignored. Other

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[10] See Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), 88-92.

[11] Stephen Puter, *Looters of the Public Domain by S.A.D. Puter, King of the Oregon Land Fraud Ring: Embracing a Complete Exposure of the Fraudulent System of Acquiring Titles to the Public Lands of the United States* (Portland: Portland Printing House, 1908), 20.

[12] As quoted in Ralph W. Hidy, Frank Ernest Hill, and Allan Nevins, *Timber and Men: The Weyerhaeuser Story* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 223.

companies used intermediaries to secure acreage through the Timber and Stone act of 1878, which allowed any settler to buy federal land at $1.50 an acre, provided he worked to make the land fit for agriculture, and the Oregon School Endowment Act of 1887, which similarly allowed homesteaders to purchase unused acreage in townships. Unable to keep pace, smaller players quickly sold off their lands to the larger conglomerates and trusts. A 1909 report by the Federal Bureau of Corporations (not published until 1914) found that thirty-eight companies held roughly half of all the available timberland in Washington and sixty-eight companies held more than seventy percent of Oregon's forests. In other words, in the span of about a decade, millions of acres of forestland once held in the public trust had come to be owned by a small handful of powerful corporations. This process of corporate consolidation, mergers, and concentrated land acquisition would continue steadily throughout the rest of the twentieth-century.[13]

The region's new landholders tended to believe that speculation was a sure thing. As it turned out, they were as shortsighted as they were fraudulent. Washington state forester Everett Griggs pointed out that the problem with sitting on land waiting for stumpage prices to climb is that "taxes and fire wait for no man."[14] Most Northwestern counties levied taxes on the value of standing timber, not the land, meaning that as timber prices increased, so did taxes, cutting into potential future profits. A series of more than a hundred fires burning up and down the Cascades in 1902 sent insurance prices climbing, adding yet another unanticipated carrying cost. In 1907, timber prices began falling for the first time in nearly two decades. Landowners realizing that speculation was not without financial risk looked to unload their holdings and found they'd have to do so at a significant loss. Speculators were backed into a financial corner: a small handful of companies owned nearly all the land, the land could not be sold given new market realities, and taxes and fires were eating into profits. There seemed only one way out. Writing back to the head offices in Minnesota, George Long, Weyerhaeuser's director of Northwest operations, pointed out what many were likely thinking but few yet saying: "we have to commence out here sooner or later to manufacture."[15]

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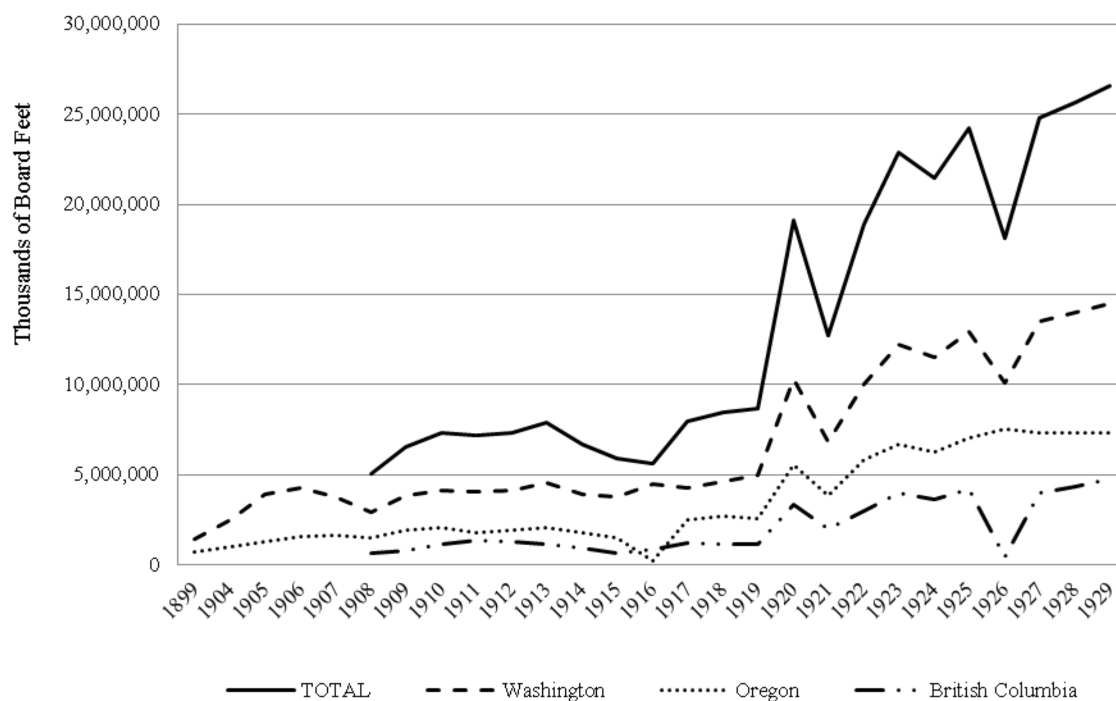
[13] United States Bureau of Corporations, *The Lumber Industry*, Vol II: *Concentration of Timber Ownership in Selected Regions* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913-1914). For a sustained discussion on the Bureau of Corporations report, see Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators*, 48-54.

[14] Everett G. Griggs, "The Lumber Industry in its National Scope," *National Problems Affecting the Lumber Industry: Official Report, Ninth Annual Convention, National Lumber Manufactures' Association* (National Lumber Manufactures Association, 1911), 125.

[15] As quoted in Charles E. Twining, *George S. Long: Timber Statesman* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 42. On the economics of Northwest timberland speculation, see Wilson Martindale Compton, "The organization of the lumber industry, with special reference to the influences determining the prices of lumber in the United States," (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, Princeton, 1915), 107-125; Cox, *Lumbermen's Frontier*, 306-307; Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislatures*, 24-32.

Chart 2.1. *Lumber Production in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia, 1899-1929*



Source: Herman M. Johnson, *Production of Lumber, Shingles & Lath in Washington & Oregon, 1869-1939* (Portland: Pacific Northwest Forest & Range Experiment Station, US Department of Agriculture,Augut 25, 1941); James Kingston, *Statistical Record of the Lumber Industry in BC,* Bureau of Economics and Statistics, 1908-1962.

The shift from speculation to cutting came far sooner than later, almost overnight by some accounts. Looking at the Census of Manufactures gives us some sense of the speed of this transformation. In 1890, the census reported roughly 600 sawmills and logging operations in Oregon and Washington. In 1900, there were approximately 1,150 sawmills and logging camps in the region. And in 1905, that figure had climbed to 1,406. Looking at the size and productive capacity of these new operations also helps us see how quickly change came to the forests. In 1890, the total value of all machinery, tools, and implements was roughly $6.5 billion. In 1905, that figure had nearly tripled and the industry’s equipment was valued at $18.4 billion. In 1889, the Inman-Poulsen mill near Portland, then the largest mill in the region, boasted an annual production capacity of 200,000 board feet (f.b.m.). In 1912, the St. Paul and Tacoma’s mill complex could turn out 500,000 f.b.m. in a single ten-hour shift. Looking at industry-wide production figures (chart 2.1) tells an equally dramatic story. Prior to 1905, the entire Pacific Northwest (including Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia) timber industry cut

between 2 and 3 billion f.b.m. annually. By 1907, the industry routinely cut that much in a six month period and by 1920, the industry routinely cut more than that in a single month.[16]

Where was all this timber going? The simple answer is everywhere. Since the 1870s, Northwest lumber had been loaded onto ships bound for California, mostly San Francisco. For most of the mid-eighteenth century it was cheaper to ship logs to Asia than it was to haul them across the continent and throughout the 1880s, lumbermen established important market connections in Hong Kong and China. The regional arrival of the transcontinental railroads in the 1880s and 1890s significantly opened up the lumber market and billions of board feet started going to Chicago and other cities in the Midwest. The earthquake that nearly leveled San Francisco in 1906 was especially good for Northwest lumbermen. In response to the disaster Weyerhaeuser expanded its Everett mills and started shipping billions of board feet down the coast. San Francisco was almost entirely built by timber milled by Everett sawyers. The completion of the Panama Canal in 1914 also opened up new markets. By 1918, Northwest lumbermen were shipping more than 48 million board feet through the canal. Most of this was bound for the states around the Gulf of Mexico, though some of it ended up in Chile and Argentina. Until the start of World War II, England was almost entirely reliant on British Columbian lumber. The Crown retained ownership of most of the province's forests and for most of the twentieth century was the leading consumer of British Columbian lumber. Likewise, British Columbia lumber was used throughout the British Empire, finding its way into construction projects in India and the Middle East. However, not all of the trees cut in the Northwest woods left the region. Northwest lumber was central to the region's steam ship industry as well as the growth of cities like Seattle and Portland.[17]

The mad rush to provide lumber for these markets created one vicious economic cycle after another. Timber prices fluctuated widely as the new high capacity mills began turning out more lumber than the market could bear, sending prices plummeting. Operators attempted to solve the problem of overproduction through overcapitalization, taking out credit to buy machines and build increasingly higher-capacity mills capable of turning out enough timber to remain economically viable in even the most depressed market conditions. In 1905, the entire industry in Washington and Oregon was valued at $51 million. Less than ten years later, the Census of Manufactures reported that the industry was worth

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[16] Census Office, *Report on Manufacturing Industries in the United States, Part I: Totals for States and Industries at the Eleventh Census: 1890* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), special statistics for Oregon and Washington; Bureau of the Census, *Census of Manufactures for 1905*, *Part III: Special Reports on Selected Industries* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1908), special statistics for Lumber and Timber Products; Bureau of the Census, *Census of Manufactures for 1914*, *Vol. I: Reports by States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), special statistics for Oregon and Washington; Herman M. Johnson, *Production of Lumber, Shingles & Lath in Washington & Oregon, 1869-1939* (Portland: Pacific Northwest Forest & Range Experiment Station, US Department of Agriculture,Augut 25, 1941); James Kingston, *Statistical Record of the Lumber Industry in BC,* Bureau of Economics and Statistics, 1908-1962.

[17] Thomas R. Cox, *Mills and Markets*, 117-24; Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 34-7, Ficken, *This Forested Land*, 43-7.

$114 million.[18] When the market absorbed the excess timber and prices rebounded, operators nevertheless continued to run full boar in order to repay their creditors, quickly sending the industry into yet another cycle of overproduction. Cut-over lands were allowed to go delinquent, forcing counties to raise taxes on standing timber, which only encouraged operators to cut quicker. By the 1920s, the standard economic rules of supply and demand no longer governed the Northwest forest economy. A once stable and predictable marketplace had been replaced by what Charolette Todes called in her study of the industry the "anarchy of production."[19]

Speculation had been conceived of as a slow process, a waiting game between landholders and the market. Now, speed and "cut-out and get-out" replaced patience as the guiding maxim of the timber industry. The pirate logging crews of the previous century disappeared with little fanfare, their death rattles drowned out by the ear-deafening whine of steam turbines and the earth-rattling shake of the new donkey engines and steam-powered turbines that now ruled the forests. The geography of speculation and anarchy of production had set into motion a new cycle of human and resource exploitation.

"No Ground Too Wet, No Hill Too Steep": Highball Logging

The collapse of the speculative market made the massive liquidation of forests necessary. Steam power made large-scale forest liquidation possible. Steam revolutionized every phase of the timber industry, from the way logs were harvested, to how they were milled and shipped to market. But steam's transformative power was most clearly displayed in woods where it led to nothing less than a complete transformation of the forests. Northwestern operators divided logging into three distinct phases. A standing timber was first felled, then "bucked" into an appropriate length for the mill, and finally "yarded" off the forest floor to a central landing to await shipment to the mill. From the earliest days of logging, yarding represented the most difficult, physically intensive step in the logging process. As aptly described by R.V. Stuart, a logging superintendent from British Columbia, yarding was "the most frustrating and irritating business that you could imagine."[20] The central problem confronting men like Stewart was Newton's first law of motion: a large log lying on the forest floor at rest wanted to stay at rest, and it took an incredible amount of power to overcome that standing inertia. Environmental factors unique to Pacific Coast forests made yarding even more difficult. Unlike the Midwest, where most logging sites were relatively flat, operators in the Northwest were working on steep hillsides, often made

[18] Bureau of the Census, *Census of Manufactures for 1905*, *Part III: Special Reports on Selected Industries* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1908), special statistics for Lumber and Timber Products; Bureau of the Census, *Census of Manufactures for 1914*, *Vol. I: Reports by States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), special statistics for Oregon and Washington.

[19] Charlotte Todes, *Labor and Lumber* (New York: International Publishers, 1931), 32. Also see Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators*, 35-55; Cox, *Lumbermen's Frontier*, 291-307; Ficken, *Forested Land*, 56-77.

[20] As quoted in Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 18.

slippery and unstable by constant rains. The Douglas firs and spruces of Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia were also larger than anything with which operators from Wisconsin or Minnesota had to deal. Old growth timbers frequently tipped the scales in excess of a hundred tons, and heavier logs were not uncommon.[21]

A Northern California lumberman named John Dolbeer deserves the initial credit for making yarding slightly less frustrating by being the first to apply steam to the process. In 1885, Dolbeer modified a steam-powered windlass used to raise a ship's anchor to drag fallen timber over the forest floor. "Dolbeer's Donkey" garnered little notice from poorly capitalized late nineteenth-century pirate loggers, given its high overhead cost. But for the well capitalized firms entering the forests in the early twentieth century, the donkey engine provided a means to make what had been the most time consuming part of the logging process significantly faster. George Emerson, one of the first to employ donkey engines in his logging operation near Grays Harbor, gives us a good sense of why Northwestern lumbermen found steam engines to be an advantage over draft animals. "They require no stable and no feed," he wrote in a popular trade journal, "all expense stops when the whistle blows, no oxen killed and no teams to winter." Yet, for Emerson, the real advantage of the mechanical donkey was that it liberated lumbermen from the environment. With steam, he continued, there is "no ground too wet, no hill too steep, it is easy to see they are a revolution in logging."[22]

Dolbeer's Donkey was only the beginning and it set off a roughly two-decade-long quest for power, speed, and efficiency on the forest floor. The first donkey engines could not operate on hillsides exceeding a 16% grade. In the 1910s, operators began adopting a newer design called the Lidgerwood Skidder that, thanks to a geared haul back drum and larger boiler, could yard on hillsides that exceeded 30% grades. The real revolution was in cabling systems. Dolbeer Donkeys hauled in logs by way of a cable running off the haul back drum and attached directly to the timber, a system known as ground-lead logging. While this was an improvement over animal logging, for many of the reasons Emerson listed, it was not without fault. Logs hung-up on stumps, or were driven into the soft wet ground. Cables snapped and chokers, the device used to attach the cable to the timber, slipped loose. Every hang-up and every broken cable forced production to momentarily pause as a worker solved the problem. The powerful Lidgerwood Skidders allowed for aerial logging and high-lead systems, which used cables threaded through blocks on a tall spar tree to partially suspend a log in the air, allowing it to glide over the forest floor faster and with fewer hang-ups. The real advantage of high-lead logging, however, was speed. By 1920, high-lead systems were capable of pulling in logs across the forest floor at more than a 1,000

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[21] For a discussion of the environmental factors unique to Northwest logging, see Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 10-14; White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change*, 88-92.

[22] George H. Emerson, "Logging on Grays Harbor," *The Timberman* 8 (September 1907), 20. On Dolbeer, see H. Brett Melendy, "Two Men and a Mill: John Dolbeer, William Carson, and the Redwood Lumber Industry in California," *California Historical Quarterly* 38 (March 1959): 59-71.

feet/second, a figure which makes it easy for us to imagine what work in the industrial woodlands looked like. Workers in what they called these "highball outfits" now dodged hundred-ton logs flying at breakneck speeds, dipping and diving around cables and chokers flying through the air, struggling to see the next turn coming in through the fog-like clouds created by the steam breathing skidders.[23]

Nor is it hard to imagine what the environmental effects of all this might have been. Historian Richard White has argued that steam power created "a new forest."[24] A more accurate statement might be that it just about entirely denuded the forest. Steam power directly led to the near universal adoption of clearcutting as the preferred harvesting method. There were both economic and mechanical reasons for this. The high overhead cost of donkey engines and cable systems, as well as the time and effort required to set-up these technologies at new sites encouraged operators to cut as much timber as possible in order to recoup their investment in time and money. At the same time, because taxes were levied on the value of standing timber, there were financial incentives to level entire tracts. Clearcutting also fulfilled operators' desire for speed and efficiency. Rigging cable systems in an open forest, after all the timber had been felled, made setting up high-lead systems quicker, reduced hang-ups, and avoided the trouble of trying to snake cables and logs through standing timber. Finally, what reason did timber operators have to not clearcut? Few of the region's operators had any long-term financial plans in the region and taking the time to cut selectively and wait for the forests to rebound simply did not fit their new *modus operandi* of "cut-out and get-out."[25]

Clearcutting led to a host of unforeseen ecological consequences. It destabilized hillsides, sending silt into rivers, filling in salmon and steelhead spawning grounds. It eradicated crucial animal habitats. As Nancy Langston has shown, cleaructting nearly wiped out the elk herds in the Blue Mountains along the eastern Washington-Oregon border.[26] Perhaps one of the most surprising things about clearcutting is how much timber from a completely denuded tract actually made it to the mill. Powerful donkey engines ripping timbers through the forest floor destroyed nearly as many trees as they successfully yarded. Broken timbers, smaller trees, and undesirable species were left on the forest floor

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[23] For data about yarding speeds, see Alfred J. Van Tassel, *Mechanization in the Lumber Industry: A Study of Technology in Relation to Resources and Employment Opportunity* (Report No. M-5, Work Projects Administration, National Research Project, Philadephia, March 1940), 12-14. There is an enormous amount of literature describing, often in excruciating detail, the Lidgerwood Skidder, aerial systems, and high-lead logging. See Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 20-29; Andrew Mason Prouty, *More Deadly Than War!: Pacific Coast Logging, 1827-1981* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), 50-86; Clarence Ross Garvey, "Overhead Systems of Logging in the Northwest," *The University of Washington Forest Club Annual* 2 (Seattle, 1914): 1-13; Drushka, *Working in the Woods*, 58-131; Merv Johnson, Philip H. Schnell, John T. Labbe, *In Search of Steam Donkeys: Logging Equipment in Oregon* (TimberTimes, 1996); Richard Somerset Mackie, *Mountain Timber: The Comox Logging Company in the Vancouver Island Mountains* (Winlaw, BC: SonoNis Press, 2009), 113-143.

[24] White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change*, 94.

[25] On the transition to clearcutting, see Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 88-122; William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 210-215; Eleanor C.J. Horwitz, *Clearcutting: A View from the Top* (Washington: Acropolis Books, 1974).

[26] Nancy Langston, *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares: The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 79-80.

Table 2.1. *Area Cut by Timber Industry in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia, 1909-1929*

Year	Production (million f.b.m.)	Logging Waste (million f.b.m.)	Total (million f.b.m.)	Equivalent Square Mileage[a]
1909-1911	38,927	31,142	70,069	1,095
1912-1914	40,365	32,292	72,657	1,135
1915-1917	36,292	29,034	65,326	1,020
1918-1920	66,955	53,564	120,519	1,883
1921-1923	99,884	79,907	179,791	2,809
1924-1926	119,218	95,375	214,593	3,353
1927-1929	140,927	112,742	253,669	3,963
Total	542,568	434,056	976,624	15,258

[a]Assumes one square mile of forestland contains 64 million f.b.m. This is a conservative estimate of typical Douglas fir old-growth Pacific Northwest forest. These production and waste figures also count the Northwest's pine forests. Because pine forests are less dense than fir forests, the actual square mileage cut in these years was actually much higher.

Source: Herman M. Johnson, *Production of Lumber, Shingles & Lath in Washington & Oregon, 1869-1939* (Portland: Pacific Northwest Forest & Range Experiment Station, US Department of Agriculture, Augut 25, 1941); James Kingston, Statistical Record of the Lumber Industry in BC, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, 1908-1962; US Forest Service, "Douglas Fir: An American Wood," US Department of Agriculture, FS-235, October, 1984.

to rot. According to a 1927 report by US forester Allen Hodgson, the Northwest timber industry wasted more than 1.5 billion board feet annually through breakage and inefficient yarding. Another 3 billion board feet went unused due to small size.[27] Logging waste magnified the ecological consequences of clearcutting. Rotting trees left to decay on the forest floor provided the ideal breeding ground for a host of new invasive bugs, which spread to yet uncut tracts. In the summer months, waste piles drying-out on the forest floor caught fire from the sparks ejected by donkey engines and quickly spread to healthy standing timber, wiping out even more forest.[28]

Just how much timberland steam allowed operators to cut is difficult to determine given these complex ecologies. The US Forest Service attempted to document the extent of the problem first in 1920, and again in 1927, but received industry pushback that made understanding the extent of denudation

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[27] Allen Hodgson, *Logging Waste in the Douglas Fir Region* (Portland: West Coast Lumberman, 1930), ix-x.

[28] See Bureau of Entomology, "The Relation of Insects to Slash Disposal," US Dept. of Agriculture Circular 411, 1928; E.E. Hubert, "The Disposal of Slash on Timber-Sale Areas in the Northwest, *Journal of Forestry* 18 (1920): 24-56; Thornton T. Munger and R.H. Westveld, "Slash Disposal in the Western Yellow Pine Forests of Oregon and Washington," US Dept. of Agriculture, Technical Bulletin No. 259, September, 1931. Steven G. Archie, *Clearcutting in the Douglas-fir region of the Pacific Northwest* (Pullman, WA: Cooperative Extension Services of Washington State University, 1974); Donald H. Gray, *Effects of forest clear-cutting on the stability of natural slopes: results of field studies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, College of Engineering, Dept. of Civil Engineering, 1973). There is a significant amount of literature dealing with the environmental effects of clearcutting. Much of it is didactic (as their titles suggest). For two classic instances, see Nancy C. Wood *Clearcut: The Deforestation of America* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1971); Edward C. Fritz, *Clearcutting: A Crime Against Nature* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1989). A somewhat more nuanced, first-hand account of clearcutting, that nevertheless still sides with the environment, is Robert Michael Pyle, *Wintergreen: Rambles in a Ravaged Land* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986.

difficult.[29] We can, however, arrive at some general conclusions using data gleaned from published production statistics, but not without some speculation. The central problem is how to account for the logging waste documented in Hodgson's 1927 report, the increased incidence of disease, and fires caused by industrial logging. In other words, we know how much acreage made it to market, but we don't know how much acreage was actually cut. Foresters debate the correct loss ratio to apply. But using even the most conservative estimates we can see that toll industrial logging took on the Northwest's forests was truly staggering (table 2.1). Between 1909 and 1929, the peak years of highball logging, the timber industry in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia cut more than 15,000 square miles of forest. To put this number in perspective, that is roughly the same area of Delaware, New Jersey, and Connecticut combined. That figure is also a testament to the speed and efficiency of steam. Using hand tools and pack animals, it had taken North Atlantic loggers, going all the way back to the days of the British colonies, roughly 250 years to cut through that much acreage. It took Midwestern lumbermen roughly three-quarters a century to cut this much forest. In the Northwest, steam made this possible in two decades. It bears repeating that these data are based on conservative loss estimates. In reality, steam's effect on Northwest forest denudation was likely much higher.

Steam also revolutionized the way timbers were transported to mills. The traditional method of using rivers and skid roads to haul timbers was slow and heavily dependent on the seasons. More importantly, relying on rivers made it nearly impossible to access high-elevation timber, up in the mountains, where rivers did not flow. With the drive to reach as much forest land as possible, and cut as quickly as possible, it became necessary, as Alfred Van Tassel explained in his 1940 study of timber industry mechanization "to break the dependence on water transportation." Railroad provided the solution and, Van Tassel continued, "freed the industry from its geographical limitations."[30] By 1915, logging locomotives were capable of climbing 9% grades (most commuter lines were limited to 2%). This ensured that virtually no timber stand in the region was out of reach. At the same time, railroads allowed for year-round production. No longer did operators have to wait for the spring freshets but rather, as one operator noted, could count on "a continuous, large and reliable flow of logs daily throughout the year."[31]

Like donkey engines and aerial yarding systems, logging railroads allowed more speed and efficiency in cutting and it's once again not difficult to imagine how logging technology contributed to

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[29] For a discussion of the Forest Services' attempt to understand clearcutting, see Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise*, 204; Ivan Doig, "When the Douglas-First Were Counted: The Beginning of the Forest Survey," *Journal of Forest History* 20 (January 1976): 20-27; and W.E. Frayer and George M. Furnival, "Forest Service Sampling Designs: A History," *Journal of Forestry*97 (December 1999): 1-8.

[30] Van Tassel, *Mechanization in the Lumber Industry*, 9.

[31] Nelson Brown in *The Timberman* 21 (August, 1920), 35. For a discussion of the technological aspects of logging railroads, see Robert D. Turner, *Logging by Rail: The British Columbia Story* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1990); Dramer A. Adams, *Logging Railroads of the West* (Seattle: Superior Publishing, 1961);.

regional forest denudation. But logging railroads' real transformative power was in reshaping the entire geography of the Northwest. By 1920, one trade journal found that in Washington and Oregon alone, lumbermen had built nearly 300 independent railroad lines consisting of more than 2,800 miles of track.[32] From 1920-1929, operators laid close to 1,400 miles of track per year, meaning that on the eve of the Depression, more than 15,000 miles of logging railroad lines crisscrossed the region.[33] This created an entirely new regional industrial infrastructure, linking distant hinterlands to urban sawmills, allowing logs in the highest Cascadian peaks to be transported to the mills of Seattle or Tacoma in less than a day. An anonymous author writing in the *Timberman* estimated that logging lines "reach out to every 40-acre subdivision in the logging area."[34] Just as William Cronon has shown for commerce railways in the late-nineteenth century Midwest, logging railroads "left almost nothing unchanged."[35]

The transformation on the terminus of the timber industry's productive chain, sawmills, was no less dramatic, a fact that makes perfect sense since sawmill capacity had to keep pace with increased production in the woods. Unlike logging operations and railroads, where steam was not used with any uniformity until the early twentieth century, steam had been more-or-less standard in Northwestern sawmills since the 1870s. What changed, however, was power of the steam turbines driving the saws. In 1916, sawmills in Washington produced, on average, 6.9 horsepower. By 1929, sawmills averaged more than 844 horsepower.[36] This is the modern equivalent of trading a Moped for a Lamborghini. New powerful turbines were accompanied by other technological innovations that allowed mill owners to run larger saws, at ever increasing speeds, such as direct-connect motors, roller bearings, and new alloys.[37]

For those of us who've never been on the inside of a working sawmill, what all these technical figures mean might be hard to fathom. The descriptions of work life inside the new mechanized mill offered by a young sawyer named Egbert Oliver, though, may help provide some insight. Oliver went to work in the mills of Cosmopolis, outside Aberdeen, Washington, in 1917. He described the mill as "the asshole of civilization, the sink hole of the lumber industry." What made the mills so perturbing was the speed of the saws. When the large circular saws hit the timbers, they're "traveling at a speed of about one hundred miles an hour or near a thousand feet a second," Oliver explained, "it is of course invisible except as a motion like the wind, and as it strikes the log in a hurricane of roar and whirr and the mill shakes and the floor vibrates until as you stand there your teeth chatter." Oliver, however, was most in awe of the giant bandsaw at the head of the mill. "To say that the bandsaw is huge," he wrote, "is to say the obvious, but to give an uninitiated person a valid conception of how it really operated is like trying to

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[32] *The Timberman* 21 (August, 1920), 35.
[33] Cox, *The Lumbermen's Frontier*, 315.
[34] "Railroad Logging in the West," *The Timberman* 21 (August, 1920), 21.
[35] William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), 73.
[36] Van Tassel, *Mechanization in the Lumber Industry*, 23-24.
[37] *Ibid.*

explain the power and immensity of the tidal surf to one whose experience with water is limited to the bathtub." Steam power, in other words, had transformed the mills into violent hell-scapes, a fact that had not been lost on Oliver. The mills were "Hades or the underworld," places of "darkness, noise [and] peril of whirring saws, clattering conveyors, and treacherous cogs and wheels and constantly moving parts."[38]

All told, steam power in the Northwest woods represented capitalism in all its creative and destructive dynamism. Technological developments on the forest floor, in railroads, and in the mills transformed the forests, established new market connections, enabled the commodification of hinterland space, and helped to fashion an entirely new regional geography. But, as Oliver's descriptions begin to show, steam's creative capacity was matched only by its destructive potential. The powerful saws turning in Cosmopolis's mills and the large donkey engines ripping timbers off the forest floor led to the leveling of thousands of acres of forest. And, these technologies claimed the lives of thousands of workers. In other words, there was a cost for all this power, but it would not be borne by the bosses.

"A Goodly Degree of Risk": The Cost of Steam

Studying the way steam had changed the labor process in the woods, Dorothy Marie Sherman noted that "there are not a great number of 'soft' jobs around a lumber camp, nor any that do not involve a goodly degree of risk." What startled Sherman the most was that workers had developed their own language, a short-hand of sorts to describe threats they faced daily. Workers caught in the "bight of the line" had been hit by a slack cable that'd suddenly gone taught. Cables that were "siwashed" around stumps could jerk loose under pressure and send debris flying into a crewman. She doesn't tell us what a "crotch line" was, "the less said the better." A "jagger" was a stray wire on a cable that cut men's hands open. A timber being yarded constantly kicked up "chunks," or pieces of debris that went tumbling down hill and could easily slam into a man with his back turned. A man could be caught in a "gopher hole," trapped under a log pile while setting chokers. Loggers had to watch out for "widowmakers," the term applied to dead branches hung up in the forest canopy that fell without warning, often striking crewman directly on the head. A "schoolmarm" was a forked tree, dangerous because it fell unpredictably. A toppling tree might "barber chair," or split up its base when falling. The timber "teeters on top of that slab before it comes down," a logger explained to her, and "you don't know whether to run back, whether

[38] Egbert S. Oliver, "Sawmilling on Grays Harbor in the Twenties: A Personal Reminiscence," folder 275, box 6,International Woodworkers of America Papers, Special Collections, University of Oregon, Acc # Bx 199, pgs. 2, 4, 25.

Table 2.2. *Fatalities in Logging[a] and Sawmilling[b] in Washington and British Columbia, 1925-1929*

Year	Washington			British Columbia			TOTAL
	Logging	Sawmills	Total	Logging	Sawmills	Total	
1925	180	37	217	67	11	78	295
1926	185	47	232	60	22	82	314
1927	168	45	213	73	14	87	300
1928	149	41	190	68	15	83	273
1929	138	41	179	84	14	98	277
TOTAL	820	211	1031	352	76	428	1459

[a]Includes logging camps and logging railroads.

[b]Includes sawmills, shingle mills, pulp and paper factories, and creosoteing.

Source: Washington Department of Labor and Industries, Division of Industrial Insurance, The Workmen's Compensation Act, *Annual Reports,* 1925-1929; British Columbia Workmen's Compensation Board, *Annual*

Table 2.3. *Non-fatal Injuries in Logging and Sawmilling in Washington, 1925-1929*

Year	Logging			Sawmilling			Total		
	Temporary Disablity	Permanent Partial Disability	Permanent Total Disability	Temporary Disablity	Permanent Partial Disability	Permanent Total Disability	Temporary Disablity	Permanent Partial Disability	Permanent Total Disability
1925	4,756	590	16	4,625	549	14	9,381	1,139	30
1926	5,003	746	9	4,904	660	5	9,907	1,405	13
1927	4,667	687	13	4,189	588	8	8,856	1,275	21
1928	5,177	742	27	3,847	600	8	9,024	1,342	35
1929	5,562	836	19	4,798	765	20	10,360	1,602	39
TOTAL	25,165	3,601	84	22,363	3,162	54	47,528	6,763	138

Source: Washington Department of Labor and Industries, Division of Industrial Insurance, The Workmen's Compensation Act, *Annual Report*, 1925-1929.

Table 2.4. *Accident Frequency per 1,000,000 Hours Work in Washington, 1925-1929*

Year	Logging				Sawmilling			
	Temporary Disablity	Permanent Partial Disability	Permanent Total Disability	Fatals	Temporary Disablity	Permanent Partial Disability	Permanent Total Disability	Fatals
1925	72.66	9.02	0.24	2.75	52.5	6.23	0.16	0.42
1926	80.04	11.93	0.14	2.96	54.26	7.3	0.05	0.52
1927	76.4	11.24	0.21	2.75	56.78	7.97	0.11	0.61
1928	89.3	12.8	0.47	2.57	54.42	8.49	0.11	0.58
1929	98.75	14.85	0.34	2.45	56.17	8.96	0.23	0.48

Source: Washington Department of Labor and Industries, Division of Industrial Insurance, The Workmen's Compensation Act, *Annual Report*, 1925-1929; Herman M. Johnson, *Production of Lumber, Shingles & Lath in Washington & Oregon, 1869-1939* (Portland: Pacific Northwest Forest & Range Experiment Station, US Department of Agriculture, Augst 25, 1941).

to run to the side or where to go." And perhaps most tellingly of all, wages were referred to as "blood money." [39]

The language Sherman discovered speaks to how routine and normalized danger had become in the industrialized woodlands. Alongside Sherman's observation, we have several stories and anecdotes testifying to the prevalence of danger in this world. Ellery Waler, a University of Washington undergraduate who worked in the woods during his summer break recalled seeing a man killed after being caught in a yarding cable. "Instead of calling the ambulance, Walther wrote, the foreman "dragged the body off to one side and threw a coat over it." When a worker objected to the callousness with which his departed comrade was being treated, the foreman barked, "the ambulance won't do the kid any good now. Get back to work."[40] Most men, who worked in the woods more regularly than the college-going Walther, seem to have struck a slightly less serious, even fatalistic tone when describing death in the woods. If your buddy is killed in the woods, went a widely circulated joke, best to just leave him lie there. That way he can still collect a full day's pay—and "no matter what, a day's pay is a day's pay."[41]

Loggers' language, jokes, and the stories offered by people like Walter let us know that steam power had turned the woods and mills into treacherous places. But just how treacherous were they? We can begin to answer this question by looking at data collected from workmen's compensation boards. Table 2.2 lists fatalities in the Washington and British Columbia timber industry from 1919-1929, showing that in the period of a decade, more than 3,000 men were killed working in the woods as mills. As table 2.3 shows, non-fatal injuries were far more common. These data are shocking enough, but consider just how frequent accidents were. Table 2.4 shows the accident rate per million work hours, roughly the total time a 400 man crew, the standard in most logging camps and sawmills in the 1920s, worked in a year. Putting the data in this table another way, there was a roughly one-in-four chance that a worker would be seriously injured in the course of a normal year. And even if a worker made it through the year injury-free, he'd likely known and seen a worker badly hurt or killed.

Historian Andrew Mason Prouty has famously argued that Pacific Coast logging was "more deadly than war." Some wars are more deadly than others, of course, but at the very least the timber industry was the most dangerous place in the Northwest for most of the twentieth century. In 1925, the same year Washington logging averaged 2.75 fatalities per million work-hours, all other industries in the

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[39] Dorothy Marie Sherman, "A Brief History of the Lumber Industry in the Fir Belt Area," (MA Thesis, University of Oregon, 1934), 22. There is a wealth of literature detailing "loggers speak." See Wilbur A. Davis, "Logger and Splinter-Picker Talk," *Western Folklore* 9 (April, 1950): 111-123; Guy Williams, *Logger-Talk: Some Notes on the Jargon of the Pacific Northwest Woods* (Seattle: University of Washington Book Store, 1930); Joanne Dheilly, *Timber Talk, as Heard in the Woods of British Columbia* (West Vancouver: Waterwheel Press, 1985). See also Bus Griffiths, *Now You're Logging* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour, 1978).

[40] Ellery Walter, *The World On One Leg* (New York, 1928), 92.

[41] As quoted in Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 55. For many similar anecdotes testifying to danger in the woods, see what is the best work on safety in the Northwest timber industry: Prouty, *More Deadly Than War!*.

state averaged .91 fatalities per million work-hours. Likewise, that same year, when there were 72.6 temporary disabilities per million work-hours in logging, all other Washington industries reported 44.6 temporary disabilities per million work-hours. Prouty may overstate his argument, a bit. Then again, he writes "since the boss loggers arrived in [the Northwest], 17,889 loggers and millmen have died at their posts on the job. The woods have produced enough casualties to provide the American battle deaths for six Pontiac Uprisings (1763-64), or for two-and-one half Wars of the Revolution (1775-83), or for seventy-one-and-a-half Custer's Last Stands (1876), or for eighteen bloody Battles of Tarawa (1943)."[42]

As shocking as these data may be, they don't paint the complete picture. Many records from the Oregon's Workmen's Compensation Board are missing and we can therefore only guess as to the true extent of industrial accidents across the Northwest.[43] It is also important to note that the compensation boards adopted a fairly strict definition of what constituted "temporarily disabled." According to Washington regulations, as long as a worker could return to his original job after healing, even if he'd lost a finger or in some cases an entire limb, his accident was filed as a temporary disability.[44]

Nor do these data take into account the many illnesses from which timber workers suffered. Because steam power allowed for year-round logging, men were forced to work in the coldest winters and through the fiercest rainstorms, making colds, the flu, and pneumonia common. Sawyers working in cramped and enclosed mills breathed in sawdust all day, which created tiny fissures in their lungs and made them susceptible to tuberculosis. As part of her study on labor in the Northwest timber industry, Charlotte Todes found that 6.6 out of every 1,000 sawmill workers died from tuberculosis annually, a rate well above the national average.[45] A 1925 public health study of Washington's shingle mills found that of the 279 workers surveyed, 30% suffered from "cedar asthma," a condition caused by the inhalation of caustic cedar sap thrown into the air by saws. An article in *The Shingle Weaver* further described the symptoms of the disease: respiratory problems, nausea, phlegm, nervousness, and a severe "gripping sensation at the throat." The problem was so bad in fresh lumber where the sap had not yet dried out, the article continued, that "several owners confessed they could not enter their own mills when the green timber was being worked on."[46]

Finally, focusing on numbers has a way of reifying the truly horrific nature of industrial violence in the Northwest wood and by looking at actual accident reports we can get a better sense of the brutality of this world. On October 19, 1924, for instance, Joseph Shey was "cursed to death" under a falling tree. Six days later, a log fell on M. McMoen's leg, sending him to the hospital for an emergency amputation,

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[42] Prouty, *More Deadly Than War!*, 169. Also see Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, *Sixth Annual Report*, 1937, 86.
[43] Prouty, *More Deadly Than War!*, 155-159.
[44] *Ibid.*,141-145.
[45] Todes, *Labor and Lumber*, 48.
[46] *The Shingle Weaver*, Feb. 17, 1917, 1.

from which he "failed to rally…and died." Bruce Canning was crushed between two logs on October 30. That same day, Fred Gakin fell from a logging train, "the engine passing over his body and death being instantaneous." Loggers fell victim to falling trees and snapping cables. Sawyers died when they came into contact with the new high powered saws now being used in mills. The same day Shey met his fate, Arnold Eches was caught in a saw and "one leg was torn off, the other leg broken, and his skull fractured." A few days later, William Edwards was killed when a timber "kicked back" into his head, "driving it against the left eye," and "cutting his face open."[47]

Several factors combined to make the woods and mills dangerous places, but the new pace of labor demanded by steam power no doubt tops the list. The best place to get a sense of the ways in which speed created danger is by looking at the work of shingle weavers. Shingle mills were some of the most dangerous places in the entire industry and shingle saws were notorious for taking fingers. Cutting shingles to an appropriate size required sawyers to reach over and around trim saws, their fingers only hundredths-of-an-inch away from the blade. This was dangerous enough, but weavers were also expected to fill quotas that forced them to work incredibly fast. Most mills required workers to produce between 20,000 and 30,000 shingles in a standard ten hour shift and more experienced sawyers could produce 40,000 shingles in a day. This means that weavers had to produce roughly a shingle a second, every second, over the course of a ten hour day. Working with such a small margin of error, it's not hard to imagine how, at the end of a long shift, inside a hot mill, and blinded by the sawdust that filled the air, a weaver could momentarily lose focus and just as quickly lose a finger. When a reporter from the *Seattle Star* visited a Ballard shingle weaver's union meeting in 1913 and noticed that not one of the thirty men in attendance had all ten fingers, he jokingly surmised that a sawyer had to surrender two fingers as the cost of employment—the rest would be taken as needed.[48]

In addition to speed-ups, political and cultural factors made the timber industry dangerous. Although every Northwestern state and British Columbia had workmen's compensation acts on the books by 1917, these laws did very little to stem the tide of industrial accidents in the Northwest woods as they did nothing to establish safety protocols. Rather, they simply provided payouts for workers already injured. Industry trade organizations actually lent their political support to workmen's compensation laws. They helped operators convince the public they took the matter of safety seriously without actually

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[47] "Accident Experience for October 1924 (summary)," St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Co. Records, folder 78d, box 145, Acc# 0315-001; Special Collections, University of Washington.

[48] *Seattle Star*, Apri 9, 1913, 8. Ballard journalists seem to have had a sense of humor about all the fingers lost in their town's mills, which up until 1905, was considered the shingle capital of the world. In 1894, one writer observed that Ballard "will soon have to open a graveyard for fingers." *The Timberman*, June 1900, p.18. While the *Shingle Weaver*, the newspaper of the shingle weaver's union, tended to take the issue of lost fingers a bit more seriously, even it joked around from time to time. Went one poem published in the paper: "There was once a shingle weaver,/Who hadn't lost a thumb./A showman heard about him,/ And sent for him to come,/ And join his aggregation of freaks." "A Freak Shingle Weaver," *The Shingle Weaver* May 19, 1917, p.1.

having to adopt safety practices that might have made the industry less efficient. Operators also found that it was easy to avoid their own culpability for accidents by appropriating a larger cultural perception that timber workers were reckless, incompetent, and heavy drinkers. Writing in a trade journal in 1915, a sawmill owner from Victoria noted that in the previous year nearly 200 men in British Columbia had been killed by trees and he conservatively estimated that "ninety percent of these accidents" could be traced back to "a man whose brain is muddled with the effects of liquor."[49] There is no reason to take these claims seriously, but such charges nevertheless helped fuel the perception that workers, not bosses, needed to take responsibility for the safety problem. Responding to the criticism that high-lead logging had increased the accident rate in the woods, F.C. Riely of the Bloedel-Donovan Lumber Company wrote, "I can truthfully say that in every case where a man has been injured around our works since using this method of logging, it was either his own carelessness, or was an instance where the injury was unavoidable and would have happened under any circumstance."[50]

Official studies, however, told a different story. A 1912 report by the Washington Workmen's Compensation Board found that of the accidents reported that year, 12.3% were the fault of the workman involved, 4% were the fault of a fellow worker, and 81.6% were found to be "inherent in the trade—that is, due primarily to the nature of the work rather than to personal fault."[51] In other words, most injuries were avoidable and the comments of bosses like Riley simply served to shift the blame away from mechanization and further normalize the industrial regime in the woods. Not surprisingly, workers tended to agree more with the Workmen Compensation Board's findings and less with employers like Riley. Sometime around 1917, Emil Engstrom was working a camp in Ohop, Washington where a violent windstorm had torn up a nearby forest tract. "There lay piles of giant Douglas fir trees heaped up, some of them eight feet tall at the butt of the cut. Some of the roots were hanging in mid-air full of dirt and rocks, seemingly impossible to buck." Trees lay on the ground, crisscrossed over one another, ready to turn and fall without notice. A few men in camp "told the time keeper 'to make it out,' rather than risk life and limb." For those like Engstrom who stayed, it was "a frightful undertaking, a few men were expected to lose their lives and others to be crippled. But those piles of trees were too valuable to let lie there and rot."[52]

Engstrom thus shows us the volatile choice that mechanization, steam power, the new pace of labor, and more than anything else, corporate greed forced timber workers into: stay safe and starve or work and perhaps die. Yet, machines were not the only things in the woods shaping work life and

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[49] As quoted in Prouty, *More Deadly Than War!*, 23.
[50] F.C. Riley, "The High Lead," *The Timberman* (November, 1915), 49.
[51] State of Washington, Department of Labor and Industries, Workmen's Compensation Act, *Fourth Report for the period ending December 31, 1912*, p.173.
[52] Emil Engstrom, *The Vanishing Logger*, 94.

constraining workers' actions. Starting around 1910, workers were subjected to the managerial controls of logging engineers, increasingly coming out of the Northwest's colleges and forestry schools.

"THE RIGHT HAND OF THE LUMBER INDUSTRY": MANAGING WORKERS AND NATURE

In 1910, George Peavy, a pioneering forester who'd recently assumed the position of Dean of Forestry at Oregon State University, announced that his school's new policy would be to "keep in close touch with the leading lumbermen of the state to the end that it may meet as fully as possible their special needs."[53] A few years later, Canadian forestry schools began making similar statements, indicating a new partnership with the timber industry. No one was as direct, however, as Henry Suzzallo, president of the University of Washington from 1915 to 1926. In 1916, representatives from timber trade groups approached the University of Washington's president and offered financial funding for the university's fledgling college of forestry. In return they wanted a say over curriculum development and new courses developed on the topic of logging engineering. Suzzallo accepted and later that year announced that UW's College of Forestry would now act as the "right hand of the lumber industry."[54]

The corporatization of Pacific Coast forestry colleges was a crucial and necessary step in operators' attempts to industrialize the region's woodlands. Steam donkeys, high-lead yarding, and railroads were complex industrial systems requiring specialized engineering knowledge. These technologies also demanded large crews doing specialized work. Using the region's colleges to train managers and engineers gave the industry's operators a way to better organize production and make the industry more efficient. Yet, the industry's reliance on a new managerial class was as ideological as pragmatic. Shifting managerial duties to largely middle-class logging engineers was a way to better govern workers, to make work more regimented, and to short-circuit any sense of independence workers often get when they have control over production. The Northwestern timber industry is not unique in this regard. The whole industrialized world became more dependent on a class of professionally trained mangers throughout the early twentieth century. What was unique about Northwestern timber, however, is that logging engineers were not only trained in the industry's technological aspects, but its environmental aspects as well, meaning that the same class of supervisors responsible for managing work also became responsible for managing forest ecologies. Relying on logging engineers, in short, allowed timber capital to submit both workers and nature to the same industrial regime, which would only serve to help blind onlookers to the true human and environmental costs of the industrial regime.[55]

The forestry profession had not always served at the right hand of the industry. Late-nineteenth and early twentieth century foresters weren't exactly what we'd call environmentalists, but they weren't

[53] As quoted in Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Coast*, 56.
[54] As quoted in *ibid*., 59.
[55] For a discussion of the managerial regime in the woods, see Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 65-80.

entirely in the pockets of industry either. Foresters coming from east coast schools, most notably Yale, tended to see no contradiction between controlled timber harvesting and long-term forest health, and sought to develop management plans that allowed for both production and preservation. At the same time, they took pride in their independent intellectual curiosity, allegiance to empirical observation, and ability to develop timber management plans that, whatever their eventual outcome, at least strove to not let the industry run roughshod over the forests. This changed as timber capital began employing foresters.

George Drake personifies the new role of forestry in Pacific Coast industry. Drake was born in New Hampshire in 1889 to a father who taught him to love the outdoors through hunting and fishing. He attended college at Penn State University and decided to major in forestry because, a friend told him, "it was a life out West where you rode around on horses and had a perpetual picnic in the woods at Uncle Sam's expense." Drake's first job was with the US Forest Service conducting fire survey studies in northern Oregon. After World War I, Drake travelled to Washington and hired on with the Simpson Logging Company who'd recently put out the call for trained foresters. Drake found working in public industry far different from his life in the public sector. He spent less time studying forest ecologies, working to develop management plans, and more time thinking about the best way to route railroads through logging tracts. On the rare occasions when he was asked to use his scientific training, he found he was asked to develop studies justifying clearcutting that could be used to promote the industry's image. Working in industry, he remembered, "you're not just a straight forester. You're an engineer, or a botanist, or public relations man."[56]

Drake came to industrial forestry gradually. Most came into the profession more directly, receiving their training in colleges where industry representatives had dictated curriculums. Suzzallo, Peavy, and a handful of professors, deans, and university officials are partly responsible for turning the Northwest's forestry schools into managerial training grounds, but the real credit goes to George Cornwall and the Pacific Coast Logging Congress, one of the many trade organizations representing the regions operators. Cornwall, who became the Congress' first secretary not long after its founding in 1909, was the first to propose that the region's forestry schools could provide operators the managers they were looking for now that steam power had become more-or-less the standard way of doing business. "He wasn't forestry-minded in the sense of being a forester," George Drake, who worked with Cornwall in the late-1920s, recalled, "but he was very much interested in the logging industry or anything that would tend to make it more effective."[57] For the next three years, Cornwall led a campaign in the Congress, moving members to financially support fledgling forestry schools in return for a say over curriculum development. The end result of Cornwall's efforts was a resolution adopted at the fourth

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[56] "A Forester's Log: Fifty Years in the Pacific Northwest," transcript, interview with George L. Drake by Elwood R. Maunder, 1958, 1961, 1967, 1968, Forest History Society, Durham, North Carolina, 2004, p. 16, 32.

[57] Transcript, Drake interview, 53.

session of the Congress that stated, because "the logging and lumber industry is probably the largest single contributor to the support of higher education," regional universities should "provide courses in logging engineering" and "grant degrees upon completion of such courses." To oversee curriculum development, the Congress established a committee to "co-operate with the faculties" in the "planning of such courses as may be required."[58]

Looking at the forestry curriculum in the University of Washington's course catalog shows just how successful the Congress' curriculum committee was. In 1907, before the curriculum committee resolution had been passed, forestry students took fairly standard classes such as botany, surveying, forest economics, forest organization, silvicutlure, and dendrology. In 1915, three years after the committee's creation, the college began offering classes covering "the construction and use of all types of logging machinery and equipment," and "topographic and railroad surveying applied to logging operations." In 1919, the college went a step further and created a "specialization in logging engineering" and a "specialization in the business of lumbering," in which students studied things like the "practical operation" of sawmills or "financing, accounting, and advertising," and could take electives on logging railroad engineering.[59]

The entrance of professionally trained logging engineers into the timber industry fundamentally changed the way production was organized, planned, and carried out. Sitting in offices, far away from the actual sites of work, college-trained forestry engineers used topographic maps, land surveys, and timber stand studies to plan for every detail, from the layout of yarding systems to the routes of logging railroads. The most significant change was the use of quotas to guide production. Before the days of logging engineers and professional trained managers, logging crews decided where to cut, what methods to employ, and set the pace of their own labor. To use a term familiar to students of labor history, the manager's brain was under the workingman's cap. But with decision making now resting with college-trained foresters, scientific studies detailing how fast crews could work and how much production could be expected in a shift became the tools used to guide production and set the pace of labor.[60]

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[58] "Resolutions," in Pacific Logging Congress, *Annual Session of the Pacific Logging Congress, 1912-1915* (Portland: The Timberman, 1915), 385. For his part, Cornwall stated that the reason for the Pacific Coast Logging Congress' establishment was to oversee sanitation improvements in camps. He explained this in his speech at the Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909, reprinted in *The Timberman* 9 (August 1909), 52. See also, Gage McKinney, "'A Man among You, Taking Notes,': George M. Cornwall and the Timberman," *Journal of Forest History* 26, no.2 (April, 1982): 76-83. There is, however, little evidence that other than a few cursory attempts, Cornwall or the Congress focused much on camp sanitation. After 1912 in particular, it is clear that the Congress' sole purpose was to oversee college curriculum development. See Harold K. Steen, "Forestry in Washington to 1925," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1969), 225-226; Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 58-59

[59] University of Washington, *Catalogue for 1907-8* (Olympia: C.W. Gorham Public Printer, 1908), 210; University of Washington, *Catalogue of the University of Washington: 1915-1916* (Seattle: Frank M. Lamborn Public Printer, 1916), 283; University of Washington, *Catalouge: University of Washington for 1919-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1920), 132-4, 211.

[60] Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rainforest*, 61-64.

Logging engineers adopted two quota systems. In sawmills, the Bedaux System became more-or-less standard by the mid-1920s. Under the system, engineers studied every job in a mill, set production quotas called "B-unites" based on their observations, and standard times in which a B-unit should be completed. Logging camps relied on a slightly less formal system known as bushelling. Both used a combination of carrot and stick to make work faster. Crews exceeding standardized production times were sometimes, albeit rarely, rewarded with bonuses, while men who routinely failed to meet production goals were often fired. Workers complained that B-unit times were unrealistic and impossible to fill. An industrial engineer studying the Bedaux system for the American Federation of Labor in 1930 commented that, "stripped of its pseudo-technical verbiage," the Bedaux system "is nothing more or less than a method of forcing the last ounce of effort out of workers at the smallest possible cost in wages," a complex system designed to deliver a simple message: "work like hell." In the few instances when crews exceed B-unit times, the foreman typically took a cut, meaning they'd paid their boss to speed them up.[61]

At the same time industrial foresters used their engineering training to reorganize the productive process, they used their silvicultural training to shift public and academic perceptions of clearcutting. One of the most pervasive theories corporate foresters developed was a twisting of pioneering work done by a US forester named E.T. Allen. In 1903, Allen was among the first foresters to discover the critical role of fire in natural Douglas fir forests succession. According to Allen's research, Douglas fir need direct light to germinate. As firs grew, they dropped their seeds on the forest floor, and the seeds were stored in the substrate until a fire cleared the forests and they could benefit from direct sunlight. Corporate forests made what they saw as a logical, though empirically untested deduction from Allen's findings. If seed was naturally stored in forest substrate and was only waiting for sunlight to grow, then forests cleared through mechanical means would naturally regenerate. Industry foresters, in other words, argued that clearcutting was the ecological equivalent of natural fire.[62]

Had this argument only appeared in trade journals and industry publications, it would likely have not been all that influential or even worth historical consideration. But the seed-storage theory and the idea that clearcutting and fire were ecologically one in the same travelled widely. They were incorporated into curriculums, used in public speeches by industry representatives to ensure weary politicians or preservationists that industrial logging posed no long term threat, and starting in 1920, began appearing in academic scientific journals. No doubt, this reflected the fact that academics were

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[61] Geoffrey C. Brown, "The Bedaux System," *American Federationist* 45 (1930): 942. For more on the Bedaux system, see Jeremy R. Egolf, "The Limits of Shop Floor Struggle: Workers vs. The Bedaux System at Willapa Harbor Lumber Mills, 1933-35," *Labor History* 26 (1985): 195-229.

[62] See E.T. Allen, *America's Transition from Old Forests to New* (Seattle: American Forestry Magazine, 1923) and *Practical Forestry in the Pacific Northwest: Protecting Existing Forests and Growing New Ones* (Portland: Western Forestry & Conservation Association, 1911). For the use of Allen's findings in industrial forestry, see Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 92-3; Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators*, 157-158.

cautious about critiquing an industry that had recently become their benefactor. Writing in *Ecology*, for instance, J.V. Hofmann, casually linked fire and cutting, writing that "when the forest is removed by fire, or cutting, the stored seed is left under favorable germination conditions."[63] Over the next few years, academics became more forthright in their claims, generating a host of theories all asserting that forests could naturally regenerate, including the seed-storage theory proposed by Hofmann, the wind-seed theory (wind will naturally reseed forest stands), and the animal-storage theory (animals eat seeds and then spread them to cut-over lands through excrement). Around the middle of the decade academic foresters began arguing that cutting was actually better for forests. In a 1924 *Scientific Monthly* article, S.B. Show argued that forests allowed to naturally regenerate were unhealthy and more susceptible to fire and disease, meaning that cutting was actually beneficial to forest ecologies. "The act of cutting," he wrote, is the "only tool available to arrest the progress of normal succession."[64]

Not every professional forester was so committed to towing the company line. US Forest Services officials who'd learned silvicultural science in the years before the corporatization of forestry schools tried to sound the alarm. In 1923, Henry S. Graves, dean of Yale Forestry, made a sociological case for timber preservation, arguing that increased forest denudation would soon eliminate outdoor recreational opportunity and inflate prices on remaining timber, making "many articles essential to convenience and comfort beyond the reach of a large part of the population."[65] Writing alongside corporate foresters, Willard G. Van Name warned that soon "we shall have no wild places and no areas left in their natural condition except barren and inaccessible mountain tops."[66]

Not every forester was a company shill, but try as they might to sound the alarm over forest denudation, the voices of progressive foresters were easily drowned out by the chorus of industry-backed scientists who'd established clear cutting as a sound silvicultural practice. Meanwhile, lumbermen had become politically and economically powerful in the region and they used the forestry schools they'd largely funded to validate widespread liquidation. At the same time, the speculative collapse and the drive to "cut out and get out" ensured that timber trusts and the boss loggers would take no long-term stock of their actions. And, in order to liquidate the woodlands as quickly as possible, they'd subjected both the workers and the forests to the machine and a factory-like managerial regime. But, could the forests be managed like a factory?

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[63] J.V. Hofmann, "The Esbalishment of a Douglas Fir Forest," *Ecology* 1 (January 1920): 51.

[64] S.B. Show, "The Management of Forest Properties in the California Pine Region as a Problem in Applied Ecology," *Scientific Monthyly*19 (November, 1925): 551.

[65] Henry S. Graves, "Public Welfare in Relation to the Conservation of Natural Resources," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 105 (January, 1923): 9.

[66] Willard G. Van Name, "Scientific Service That the National Forests Might be Rendering," *Science* 65 (February, 1927): 173.

"To Hell With the Boss": Nature and the Limits of the Industrial Regime

Several writers have answered this question in the affirmative, and the factory metaphor has become the preferred way to describe Northwest logging during the peak highball years. In the 1940s, for instance, the famous journalist Stewart Holbrook wrote that the Northwest's forests had come to resemble "a giant factory without a roof."[67] Despite the widespread use of the factory metaphor, it is actually difficult to find workers expressing similar sentiments. They seemed to know something that Holbrook did not: work in the woods required skill, an intimate knowledge of the landscape, and it didn't resemble anything approximating factory work.

We can begin to see this by looking at an unexpected place: the breakfast table. As a boy in a small Oregon logging town, Sam Churchill remembered that the men's morning meal typically consisted of a healthy dose of baked goods—pastries, pies, and muffins—served along some quick breads like pancakes or waffles. When they were available, Churchill continued, the crews preferred fresh fruit and berries with their pancakes, but made due with preserves and syrups most of the year. Eggs were standard breakfast fare, as were steaks, pork chops, and bacon. Lunch tended to be a smaller affair, only because loggers had to carry it out with them to the job site, but by most accounts dinner was an equally gluttonous affair. "A working logger such as dad," Churchill estimated, "could usually handle around nine thousand calories a day."[68] Cloice Howd, a federal investigator conducting a study of labor relations in the coastal forest industry made a slightly more conservative estimate. He believed that loggers took in around 5,000-6,000 calories a day.[69] When considering these numbers it should be kept in mind that the average logger was small and skinny. The barrel chested logger of popular imagination really only existed in popular imagination, and as a branding tool of a paper towel company. Large men actually tended to be looked upon with disdain in a logging camp. Size often comes at the expense of speed and a worker carrying too much weight might slow-down the entire crew.[70]

Timber workers could eat so much and yet remain skinny because their labor, despite routinization and mechanization, remained physically demanding, something that had everything to do with the environment. We can get some sense of this by looking at yarding crews. Yarding began with "chasers" or "hookmen" grabbing the chokers flying out to the forest floor on the high-lead cables. Some of the more experienced workers grabbed the chokers "hot" while they were still moving, dangerous because one misstep could lead to a chocker in the head. After the chaser grabbed the chocker, he dove

[67] Stewart Holbrook, *Holy Old Mackinaw: A Natural History of the American Lumberjack* (New York: Macmillian, 1945), 184.

[68] Sam Churchill, *Big Sam* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 23.

[69] Cloice R. Howd, "Industrial Relations in the West Coast Lumber Industry," Bulletin No. 349, US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 1923, 31.

[70] For a discussion of meals in logging camps, see Joseph R. Conlin, "Old Boy, Did You Get Enough of Pie?: A Social History of Food in Logging Camps," *Journal of Forest History* 23 (October 1979): 164-185.

into a wood pile and snapped it around a log—it made an audible click letting him know it was secure and unlikely to slip—and sprinted away. This was the whistle punk's signal to sound the whistle, letting the donkey puncher know to "give 'er snoose," which sent the haulback drum turning and the "turn" flying towards the landing. Some things to keep in mind, here. Chasers sent hundreds of turns in during the course of a ten hour shift, meaning they were sprinting, at top speed, back and forth, nearly all day. This would be demanding enough, but they were also working on steep hillsides, littered with stumps, debris, and often made wet and slippery during the rainy winter and spring months, forcing them to dance and dip across the landscape with the dexterity and agility of ballerinas. Finely Hays explained that "a rigging man is at the mercy of the weather, gill poking sticks and limbs…He stumbles and falls, dives into the mud and brush, squirms and kicks, forcing his way under a log, and in general works half the time with his hind end higher than his head."[71]

The landscape not only made the work physically challenging. It also demanded an excruciating eye for detail and very specific knowledge, which we can see in the work of fellers. Felling a tree may seem like a straightforward task, a simple matter of cutting through a trunk and letting gravity do the rest. But, as Jasper Chase explained, "there is a lot to knowing which way a tree goes and where to fall it."[72] Trees in a logging site could not simply be felled haphazardly. They had to lie on the ground in a uniform direction to make yarding efficient and safe. Nor could a falling tree land on rocks, divots, or an already downed tree, as this tended to shatter the timber, making it unusable. "If you didn't save your timber," a feller from Washington named Elijah Meece said, "why, you didn't last long."[73] Fellers like Meece and Chase therefore developed an intricate feel for the forests topographies that allowed them to put down the timber quickly and safely. Ed Stoneburg, who worked alongside Meece, explained that he ran through a mental checklist every time he felled a timber. How will the slope of the hillside affect how the tree lands? Does this tree have a lean to it? Is there a wind on this hillside that might push the tree in an unexpected direction? Are the trees in this forest tract firmly rooted, or might they pull up their root ball as they fall? Does this tree have internal rot that might cause it to break unexpectedly? Only after these questions were answered did Stoneburg begin cutting, first by notching-out the tree with an axe, then using a nine-foot crosscut saw to finish the job. Cut your notch an inch too deep, Joe Stoneburg explained, and the tree might fall backward instead of forward. An inch too shallow and the timber might barber chair. With a good notch, however, Stoneburg knew, "the tree was gaged to go exactly so, allowing for the wind and the lean of the tree and all."[74]

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[71] Finley Hays, *Lies, Logs and Loggers* , 49.
[72] Jasper Chase interview by Steve Addington, July 16, 1975, transcript, WSOAHP, KIT 75-40sa, p.5.
[73] Eiljah H. Meece interview by Michael A. Runestrand, June 16, 1976, transcript, WSOAHP, WCT 76-31mr, p.3.
[74] Joseph Stoneburt interview by Steve Addington, August 1, 1975, transcript, WSOAHP, KIT 75-42sa, p.26.

Other jobs in the industry, which onlookers often saw as unskilled, required no less attention to detail. Daniel Strite, who worked on a logging railroad crew outside Tillamook Bay throughout the twenties, took particular pride in his work, even though it was largely considered to be one of the most menial jobs in a camp. Using dynamite and pick axes, he remembered, they cleared railroad cuts through hardrock that were as "smooth as glass and level as a pool table." Windblown trees crossing the tracks, "their shallow overthrown roots rising 16 feet or more above the ground" had to be cut and rolled off the path, "a job requiring superior woodsman's skill." All in all, Strite concluded, the work of the railroad crews was "a joy to behold."[75] Even in the mills, where the work appeared to be far more routine, efficiency and productivity depended on sawyers' nuanced understandings of lumber. A Vancouver, BC shingle mill owner named Charles Plant told an interviewer that his operation's entire profitability depended less on modern saws and steam power and more on a worker's "quickness in observing defects and cutting them out properly."[76] Similarly, a 1935 Forest Service study of coastal fir mills found that experienced sawyers "familiar with the characteristics of the logs" to be far more productive than young sawyers who "had not handled 'the stick.'"[77]

Yarding crews, fellers like Chase, Meece, and Stoneburg, and railroad workers like Strite might have been at the managerial mercy of logging engineers, but ultimately everything depended on their ability to understand, evaluate, and negotiate the landscape, a fact that both confused and frustrated the region's operators. Writing in a trade journal in 1922, Minot Davis, the director of Weyerhauser's logging operations in Washington, speculated on why the Northwest's operators were having difficulty fully replicating the factory regime in the Northwest woods. "In a factory," he wrote, "once the character of the product is determined, the machinery tried out, and the organization completed, the working conditions are practically uniform from day to day. In the woods, conditions are seldom the same from day to day."[78] In other words, the perfectly rational and industrial regime promised by logging engineering had not come to fruition. While topographic maps, timber stand studies, and land surveys could be used to develop general guidelines and give engineers some sense of how things should work out, conditions out in the real world changed too quickly and too frequently to make the work entirely predictable. Frank Lamb, a company owner from up around Bellingham, Washington noticed much the same thing as Davis, but struck a decidedly more frustrated tone. "Fixed rules of procedure are of little use," he complained in a trade journal, "every proposition, every location, every camp, every day's work, even every log is a separate engineering proposition."[79]

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[75] Daniel D. Strite, "Up the Kilchis, Part I," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 72 (December 1971): 313.

[76] Elwood R. Maunder in Betty E. Mitson and Barbara D. Holman, "Red Cedar Shingles and Shakes: The Labor Story: Oral History Interviews with Elwood R. Maunder," *Journal of Forest History* 19 (July 1975): 115.

[77] J. Elton Lodewick, "How Much Does the Sawyer Influence Output?," *Forest Research Notes* 16 (June 1935): 52.

[78] Minot Davis, "Just What Do We Mean By A Logging Engineer," *West Coast Lumberman* 42 (April 1922): 36.

[79] Frank H. Lamb, "Logging Engineering Requires Skill and Experience for Success," *The Timberman* 18 (August 1919): 32.

Table 2.5. *Daily Wage Rates of Coastal Logging Camps and Sawmills, 1928*

Logging	
Hook Tender	$7.00
High Climber	6.20
Bucker, Head	5.00
Filer, Head	5.00
Faller, Head	4.80
Engineer, Donkey	4.60
Engineer, Loader	4.60
Filer, Second	4.60
Faller, Second	4.40
Bucker, Windfall	4.20
Bucker, Wood	3.40
Unhook Man	3.40
Whistle Punk	3.40

Source: "Minimum Wage Scale and Regulations, Pacific Coast Division," Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, Portland, OR, 1928

Both operators and forestry schools tried to solve this problem by requiring engineers to spend some time working in the woods, where they might gain some firsthand knowledge that would allow them to better understand and predict nature. Starting around 1916, for instance, the University of Washington's forestry curriculum required students to spend the summer after their junior year working in the woods or in a mill. But middle-class college kids spending the summer in the forests were tourists, not workers. The types of skills described by Stoneburg, Meece, and Strite took years to accrue. A single summer in the woods did not prepare engineers to understand the complexities of the environment any more than playing with Lincoln Logs would prepare someone to build a skyscraper. While it likely would have pained men like Davis and Lamb to admit it, this meant that they could not entirely rely on their managers and had to cede some autonomy to the workers in order to fill that persistent gap between theory and practice. Not surprisingly, this didn't seem to bother many workers. "Logging is a profession, a science without formula, a combination of skills and a glomeration of dirty hard jobs," wrote Bill Inud, and it cannot be done by bosses and engineers, most of who "never studied to set chokers or tighten guy lines."[80]

Loggers often commented that their knowledge of the forests and productive process was instinctive. "The trees just get in your blood," was a common statement made around logging camps. But skill and knowledge were actually accrued through years on the job, and timber workers

[80] Bill Inud, "Let Me Tell You—," in Hays, *Lies, Logs and Loggers*, 3.

"matriculated to this college of insane self-abuse," Inud explained. In logging camps in particular, workers had to ascend through an informal apprenticeship system to gain both know-how and the respect of their peers. Looking at the wage scale from 1928 (table 2.5) gives us some sense of how this informal apprenticeship functioned. Each step up the ladder came with better pay, but men had to earn their way there, as each promotion required more specialized knowledge of the forests, more responsibility in the productive process, and often came with more danger. As the wage scale indicates, many loggers entered the woods as whistle punks, as young as twelve or thirteen years old, and commonly worked in the same camps as their fathers and uncles. Many young men "cut their teeth on the whistle wire as a family tradition," Inud tells us. The whistle wire was a good place for a young logger to be. It was not physically demanding—it merely involved pulling the chain that sounded the whistle that let the donkey tender know to fire the engine—and it was one of the safer jobs in the woods (though many whistle punks were seriously injured or killed). More importantly, the whistle punk typically stood on the landing, on top of a hillside being logged. This allowed him to get a bird's eye view of the productive process and hopefully along the way absorb some knowledge that would serve him later in his career. After a few seasons on the whistle wire, the punks could graduate to the yarding crew. This was a workers first real test and his performance chasing down chokers would ultimately determine if he had the grit to make it in the woods and if he'd be accepted by the rest of the crew. "Setting chokers will make or break a man," explained Ellery Walter, the University of Washington undergraduate who spent his summers in the woods.[81] If after a few seasons the yarding crew didn't break a man, as Walter predicted it might, loggers could graduate to be buckers or fellers. This brought some measure of autonomy. While both were still subject to the bushelling system, they generally worked on their own in the woods, unlike the chasers, who worked under the supervision of the hooktender.

A few men graduated to the very top of the occupational ladder and became filers, head buckers, or donkey engineers. A select few became highclimbers. As Oiva Wirrkala's story has already shown, highclimbing was at the top of this apprenticeship because it was physically demanding and so dangerous and terrifying that only a few men ever dared strap on the spars. At the same time, highclimbing was on top of the occupational ladder because climbers set the yarding cables and therefore almost singlehandedly determined the efficiency and productivity of an operation. Although engineering plans dictated how yarding systems should be laid out, rarely did these plans reflect the realities of job sites. Perhaps a mudslide had reshaped the hillside. Or a windstorm might have wreaked havoc on the fallen timbers. Sometimes the ground was rocky and would not allow the rigger to properly set guylines, in which case a new spar had to be cut elsewhere. The donkey might be short a few horsepower that day, requiring the climber to make an adjustment in the rigging. Sitting high up on his perch in the spar, the

[81] Walter, *The World On One Leg*, 92.

climber considered all this, directing the rest of the crew, and setting the rigging to account for slight dips in the terrain and to avoid rocky yarding paths. As historian Robert Walls has observed, "the job was technically difficult, requiring not just physical abilities and a complete fearlessness of heights but also an intimate understanding of how the production process would be engineered at work sites that varied according to terrain, type of timber, and available equipment."[82] Because of this, many a logging operation was sidelined when a climber got fed up and quit, or was killed in action (unfortunately, the latter more common than the former). Not surprisingly, high climbers tended to walk around camp with a sort of swagger, a sense of craft pride, secure in the knowledge that they had ascended to the top of the occupational ladder, had garnered the respect of their fellow workers, and exerted considerable influence over the entire operation.[83] "He is one of the most respected and considered" members of a crew," a logger named Edgar Rotschy wrote in 1929, "and he shows it."[84]

The apprenticeship system served many functions in the woods, but most importantly it allowed workers to take some control over safety. Loggers frequently commented that next to the machinery and pace of work, "inexperience and recklessness" as Emil Engstrom put it, "were always the greatest danger out in the woods."[85] Workers were therefore only allowed to graduate to the next job in the occupational ladder once they had proven they were competent and could maintain some minimum safety standards. Workers, of course, had little say over who their bosses hired and fired. To work around this, workers often required new workers showing up in camp to spend a day or two working with an experienced crewman with a proven safety record. This let the rest of the crew know that "you'd been through school," explained John Liboky and that you "would get nobody hurt." Loggers not up to the job for which they hired out, Liboky continued, were quickly run out of camp by the more experienced men.[86]

The informal apprenticeship system in the woods was similar to an informal apprenticeship Thomas Andrews describes in his study of the Colorado coal industry. And like the apprenticeship system in the coalfields, the apprenticeship system in Northwester lumber "was at once physical, mental, and cultural."[87] Young men entering the woods learned what it meant to be a logger, what it took to work all day in the trees, and how to be tough. A.J. Larson remembered that the old timers he worked with on

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[82] Robert E. Walls, "The Highclimber's Performance: Private Labor, Public Spectacle and Occupational Tradition in the Pacific Northwest Timber Industry," *Western Folklore* 65, no. 1/2 (Winter-Spring 2006): 174.

[83] Indeed, another way we might measure the importance of the high-climber (and coincidently see that timber workers carried significant occupational autonomy) is by looking at operators' and engineers rush to develop yarding system technologies which made the high climber obsolete. Though many designs were played with from the 1920s-1950s, operators did not find a way to do away with climbers until the invention of the steel spar sometime in the post-war period. See Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 40-49.

[84] Edgar Rotschy, *Three Months With The Timber Buffaloes: Notes and Reflexions From a Logging Camp* (unpublished manuscript,, 1929), 16. One of the best sources to understand the work of highclimbers is Paul Reppeto, *Way of the Logger* (Chehalis, 1970).

[85] Engstrom, *The Vanishing Logger*, 44.

[86] John Liboky, sr. interview by Steve Addington, August 8, 1975, transcript, WSOAHP, KIT 75-44sa, p.1.

[87] Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, 164.

his first logging job taught him what it meant to "be a man working in the woods."[88] They also learned they were part of a "fraternity," as Rotschy put it, members of a select few whose corked shoes were well worn, who knew the difference between a running block and a cheese block, how to set a tail-hold and a tail-track.[89] At the same time, timber workers were taught to love the job and a sense of craft pride that quickly becomes apparent looking through any of their oral histories and memoirs. Roderick Haig-Brown, the famous British Columbia conservationist who spent the early twenties working highball camps up in Vancouver Island's Nimpkish River valley, remembered that "loggers have all the pride and clannishness of good craftsmen."[90] This is something Finely Hays seemed to recognize as well. "There are days," he wrote, "when the weather is just right, the machinery runs good, and the logs are flowing well. The symphony of sounds made by loaders, yarders, and saws are as sweet to a man's ear as a blonde's throaty murmured yes. Those are the days when your chest just naturally takes on more of that rare sweet air, the cigarettes taste good, and the lumps on the shins feel almost pleasant."[91] From these notions of craft pride, autonomy, and independence, it's not difficult to see how timber workers' occupational culture shaped their political culture and in future years would easily flow into an oppositional culture. In addition to learning how to "be a man," Larson further remembered of his first job in the woods, he also learned how to say "to hell with the boss."[92]

Surely Larson wasn't the only worker in the Northwest woods to arrive at such an analysis. In the 1930s, timber workers would start to organize industrial unions, a movement that would culminate with the founding of the IWA in 1937. These unions had a reputation for being pugnacious and defiant. The origins of the union culture in the Northwest woods can be traced back to many things, like radical immigrant cultures, longer histories of Northwest radicalism, and, in the IWA, the presence of Communists. At the same time, though, the union movements of the Depression years likely reflected the attitudes of loggers like Larson and their belief that these woods were theirs and that they wouldn't be controlled by managers or machines. Work was therefore important. It transformed the forests into places of solidarity and craft pride. But work was not the only mode through which the Northwest timber industry's workers fashioned a sense of place. At the end of a long day—ten hours of standing pocket-deep in water, rain falling straight down the collar, hands full of fir slivers—they returned to their wives and families, to their company home in the company town, where the boss had tried to create a geography of control. And here as well, they would complicate and confound their employers' attempts to control, create new landscapes and new ideas of place which similarly created cultural space for ideas about class and commonality to flourish.

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[88] Andrew Larson interview by Steve Addington, September 15, 1975, transcript, WSOAHP, KIT 75-49aa, 12.
[89] Rotschy, *Three Months with the Timber Buffaloes*, 14.
[90] Roderick Haig-Brown, "Author's Note" to *Timber* Northwest Reprints (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1993), v.
[91] Hays, *Lies, Logs and Loggers*, 49.
[92] Larson interview, transcript, p. 16.

<u>CHAPTER 3</u>

"WE DO NOT WANT ANY EXTRAVAGANCE"
COMPANY TOWNS, WELFARE CAPITALISM, AND NATURE

Angelo Pellegrini's train arrived in McCleary in 1913, sometime in late autumn, the time of year when deep gray rainclouds sweep in from the ocean and cover the sky. McCleary was a tough little company town outside Grays Harbor, the type of place where muddy ditches made up the streets and tar paper shacks passed for homes. That foul smell in the air was the acrid smoke coming off the two sawmills on the north end of town, the only evidence of modernity in this hell-hole. At one time the surrounding forests might have been something to behold, but by the time Pellegrini arrived all the trees had been sacrificed to McCleary's mills. Only stumps and rot remained. The town had been named after its founder Henry McCleary, a real bastard of a human being whose managerial philosophy made him more feudal lord than twentieth century industrialist. "A good kingdom is better than a poor democracy," he was fond of saying.[1] Workers in McCleary's sawmills and logging operations were among the lowest-paid in the regional timber industry and even then returned most of their earnings to the company for rent. The Pellegrini family had left Italy to escape their tenant farm, a vestige of feudalism. The soil had become hard and lifeless and the family found it difficult to fulfill their obligations to the landlord. Now, they found themselves in America, still ruled by a landholding baron and still surrounded by a fallowed landscape.

If Pellegrini looked upon this landscape with hopelessness and despair, we could probably find it in our hearts to forgive him. But landscapes are as much material realties as products of perception, and those of us who would see only barrenness in McCleary's forests have not lived the hard life of an early twentieth century working-class immigrant. For the six-year-old Italian boy, who'd eked out a living in the hardened fields of Tuscany, collecting cow dung for cooking fuel and often going hungry when the land didn't produce, the land surrounding McCleary offered everything. "Firewood littered the landscape," Pellegrini later remembered, and "there was game in the hills and fish in the waters." Others might have looked to the forests beyond McCleary and seen nothing but a rotting landscape. Pellegrini saw something that "awed and bewildered." In pure economic terms, the Pellegrinis were poor Italian immigrants, but the trees and forests of McCleary provided this peasant family with a wealth they had never known: "*speriamo e abbondanza*."[2]

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[1] Ernest Teagle, *Out of the Woods: The Story of McCleary* (Montesano, WA: Simpson Logging Company, 1956), 9. During the union organizing drives of the 1930s, the IWA and Henry McCleary would disagree about much. But the one thing they could get together on was that McCleary resembled more a kingdom than a democracy. Wrote Bert Dietz, an IWA organizer, "never a feudal baron of the dark ages ruled his land more despotically than McCleary Timber Co. rules McClerary." Bert Dietz, "The Little Kingdom of M'Cleary," *Timber Worker*, Sept. 18, 1936, 1.

[2] Hope and abundance. Angelo Pellegrini, *American Dream: An Immigrant's Quest* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1986), 8; Pellegrini, *Immigrant's Return* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), 47.

Pellegrini lived in McCleary for eight more years. In that time, he came to the forests well. When not in school or working a sawmill shift—child labor never bothered Henry McCleary—he spent his time outdoors. "I went to the forest every day and returned home laden with its precious fruit," he wrote, "there were nuts and berries in profusion. With my father I hunted grouse, pheasant, quail, and rabbit." He also combed the forest floor for the family's firewood, learned from his mother how to preserve the fruits and berries he picked along the way, and tended the small garden the family kept behind their home. In McCleary, Pellegrini wrote, "it seemed possible to live on the prodigal yield of the surrounding hills."[3]

In 1921, Pellegrini left town to attend high school in nearby Elma, and then college and graduate school at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he earned his doctorate and eventually gained a faculty position in the English Department. Although Pellegrini—or "Pelle" as he was known to colleagues and students—gained notoriety as a scholar of Romantic poetry and one of the best lecturers on campus, he is best remembered for his contributions to American gastronomy. In particular, his 1948 book *The Unprejudiced Palate* had a significant influence in shaping how Americans thought, and continue to think, about food. The book can usually be found among cookbooks, and rightfully so. Pellegrini's recipes for Tuscan peasant dishes like braised rabbit and polenta, home-cured *salame*, and *pasta e fagioli* are among the best published anywhere. But *The Unprejudiced Palate* is much more than a cookbook. It is a story of immigrant resourcefulness and an appreciation of good, simple food. It is about how immigrants encounter America and, more importantly, how immigrants maintain a relationship to their homelands and native cultures through cuisine.[4]

More than anything, though, *The Unprejudiced Palate* is a celebration of nature and an impassioned polemic for eating and living in harmony with the environment. Pellegrini dismissed the recipes calling for exotic ingredients published by "hack writers turned gourmets," which had become popular in post-war America, and instead encouraged his readers to look to the landscape to fill their tables. His prescription for the perfect salad, for instance, is elegant simplicity. "In the early spring, fill your bowl with tender dandelion shoots," he advised readers. "[W]ith the first spring crop from the garden, fill your bowl with leaf lettuce and romaine, or the first tender leaves of chicory. In the fall, fill the bowl with endive or escarole." At the same time Pellegrini saw nature as the key to a satisfied stomach, he argued that a connection to the landscape was central to a contented soul. Preparing a *minestrone* from vegetables grown in a home garden or a *risotto* from mushrooms picked on a walk

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[3] Angelo Pellegrini, *The Unprejudiced Palate: Classic Thoughts on Food and the Good Life,* 3rd ed. (New York: The Modern Library, 2005), 31. For Pellegrini's biography see, Pellegrini, *American Dream*; Ruth Reichl, "Angelo Pellegrini, a Slow-Food Voice in a Fast-Food Nation," *Seattle Weekly*, Apr. 14, 2010.

[4] These themes are also evident in Pellegrini's other works dedicated to food and the immigrant experience. See Angelo Pellegrini, *Wine and the Good Life* (New York: Knopf, 1965); Angelo Pellegrini, *The Food Lover's Garden* (New York, Knopf, 1970).

through the woods was, for Pellegrini, a form of "discovery and esthetic self-development." To abandon gardening, hunting and fishing for fast food and frozen dinners was, for Pellegrini, to deny "work that activates the bones and sinews and that at the end of the day, week, or month yields something for the worker to behold as entirely his own creation."[5]

If this philosophy towards food and nature feels familiar, there is good reason. The current ubiquity of urban farmers markets and organic groceries as well as the recent emphasis in American middle-class consumer culture on eating locally and seasonally can be traced back to Pellegrini's writing. Carlo Petrini, who in 1986 founded Slow Food International, an organization which played a significant role in the emergence of this new food culture, credits Pellegrini with first inspiring him to consider how people's relationship to the landscape can be preserved through cuisine. Similarly, chefs and restaurateurs who would popularize "eating local" and eating from "farm to table," like Alice Waters, James Beard, Michale Pollin, and TV cooking show host and fellow Seattleite Mario Batali (who wrote the introduction for the 2005 edition of *The Unprejudiced Palate*), all cite Pellegrini as a major influence.[6] While we can clearly trace modern middle-class attitudes towards food back to Pellegrini, we can also trace them back to McCleary. Although Pellegrini naturally drew on his early life in Tuscany and a larger Italian-American culture in writing *The Unprejudiced Palate*, he attributed much of what he learned about how to live in simple harmony with nature to his early life in western Washington. For the families that lived on the wages paid out in Henry McCleary's sawmills and logging operations, hunting, foraging and gardening to put food on the table was as much a requirement as a pastoral enjoyment. Learning to live frugally, on the bounties of nature, was as much a virtue as an economic necessity. "To the hard life of my early years," wrote Pellegrini, "I attribute a certain kind of resourcefulness I possess and that is seldom found in my contemporaries among middle-class Americans."[7]

Pellegrini's story is important because it highlights many unique elements of company town life in the Northwest woods. In the early twentieth century, employers across the industrialized world experimented with welfare capitalism. They offered workers insurance programs, higher pay, and homes in modern company towns. Employers said they were interested in the wellbeing of their workers. In reality, all this amounted to paternalism in disguise, a means of creating a culture of dependency that tied workers to the company and made labor protest unlikely or impossible. As Pellegrini's story shows, Northwestern timber companies charted a different course. They were still concerned about labor radicalism, but they had to balance this concern with the economic and geographic demands of regional

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[5] Pellegrini*, The Unprejudiced Palate*, 42, 207.

[6] See Reichl, "Angelo Pellegrini;" Don Duncan, "Angelo Pellegrini Dies—UW Prof, Author, Gourmet," *The Seattle Times*, Nov. 2, 1991; Roger Downey, "In Babbo's Garden," *Seattle Weekly*, Aug. 17, 2005. Mario Batali, introduction to Pellegrini, *The Unprejudiced Palate.*

[7] Pellegrini, *The Unprejudiced Palate*, 45.

timber production, a set of demands that made little room for the types of amenities and welfare capitalist programs offered in other industrial settings.[8]

In the absence of such conveniences, the people who lived in company towns turned to nature rather than their employer to meet their day-to-day needs. Game from the woods and fish from the streams became a way to supplement meager incomes and make it through the hard times, when companies were unable or unwilling to see to workers' needs. Immigrant peasants like Pellegrini had, of course, relied on the land their whole lives. The same is true for the thousands of other poor rural immigrants or former farmers who came to live and work in the world of Northwest timber, men and women for whom day-to-day survival on the farm or stump ranch meant knowing how to live off the land. For these people, life in the Northwest woods was very much an extension of their agrarian pasts. The same was likely true for Midwestern loggers who'd been living in isolate Lake States lumber camps, or Scandinavian immigrants who'd worked in resource extraction industries in their native lands. In the Northwest's company towns, these cultures mixed and melded. What was unique about life in company town life in the Northwest woods, though, was that this sense of place became defined in terms of working-class culture and politics. As workers and their families started to rely on the forest for survival, they came to see nature in their own terms, in ways that existed outside timber capital's construction of landscapes, and the belief they were dependent on the landscape, not their employers, contributed to a culture of freedom and independence. It would be this ethic of place and sense of that would, in large part, define industrial unionism in the Northwest woods in the 1930s and 1940s.[9]

COMPANY TOWN GEOGRAPHY

The winter of 1911 had been tough in British Columbia. There is no such thing as an easy winter in a land known as the Great White North, but temperate winds coming in from the ocean keep the winters relatively mild in the Pacific Coastal regions. This winter was different. Constant near-freezing temperatures and blizzards beginning in December and continuing through into January had forced the Western Lumber Company to shut down its coastal Vancouver Island camps. In Camp No. 1, located

[8] My analysis here reflects some more recent literature that explores community-formation in company towns and examines how workers challenged paternalism. See Ben Marsh, "Continuity and Decline in the Anthracite Towns of Pennsylvania," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, 3 (September 1987): 337-53; Jeffrey A. Drobney, "Company Towns and Social Transformation in the North Florida Timber Industry, 1880-1930," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 75, 2 (Fall 1996): 121-45; Elizabeth Jameson, *All That Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Katharine Rollwagen, "'That Touch of Paternalism': Cultivating Community in the Company Town of Britannia Beach, 1920-58," *BC Studies* 151 (Autumn 2006): 39-67; Chris Post, "Modifying sense of place in a federal company town: Sunflower Village, Kansas, 1942 to 1959," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 25 (June 2008): 137-159.

[9] See Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Kathryn Morse, *The Nature of Gold: An Environmental History of the Klondike Gold* Rush (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003); Lawrence M. Lipin, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Chad Montrie, *Making a Living: Work and Environment in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

near Cumberland, timber workers and their families had burned nearly every piece of scrap lumber they could dig from the snow just trying to keep warm. The next fall, when the days started to become shorter and cooler, A.M. Hilton, the foreman of Camp No. 1, ordered coal stoves for the company-owned houses so that the residents might be a bit warmer should the town again face a brutally cold winter. When Josh W. Couack, president of Western Lumber, learned of the requisition he questioned Hilton's managerial prowess. Don't you know "we are up there to facilitate logging" he asked Hilton, "and while we want things comfortable, we do not want any extravagance."[10]

Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, company town cultures became inseparable from the landscape largely due to a peculiar form of welfare capitalism rooted in the economic rationality of twentieth century lumbermen. Couack's aggravation over something as basic as coal stoves tells us a lot about that economic rationality. Employers like Couack believed that the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), not the poor wages and working conditions endemic to the industry, fanned the flames of labor radicalism. Because the IWW drew its membership from single male workers and their strength from a rhetoric that celebrated the revolutionary potential of young unmarried men, operators assumed that a family-oriented labor force could solve the problem of widespread working-class discord. At the same time, it was assumed that married men were naturally more subservient, more docile, and would not put their families' well-being on the line by striking. This assumption proved to be wrong. But until that time, employers began offering family housing, schools, and recreational opportunities intended to recruit a class of labor that one operator referred to as "necessarily more settled, more loyal and more conservative."[11] At the same time timber capital demanded stable workers it also demanded mobile operations, not tied to a single space, capable of moving quickly to get to the next tract of timber that had yet to be cut. Thus, while someone like Couack was willing to provide the absolute bare essentials necessary to recruit a family-oriented workforce, he was unwilling to devote resources to "extravagances" that would have inhibited mobility and cut into the bottom line.

This was an aberration in the Progressive Era, a throwback to earlier nineteenth-century company towns, where services and amenities tended to reflect a sort of austerity that Couack would have appreciated. In the early textile towns of New England, the coal fields of Appalachia, and the hard rock mines of the Mountain West, working-class families lived on the ragged edges, in destitute towns, in barely habitable homes. In his fictionalized family biography, Thomas Bell, a steelworker from Pennsylvania, described company housing in the company-controlled town of Braddock as "long, ugly rows like cell blocks, two rooms high and two deep, without water, gas or any kind, nothing but the walls

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[10] Couack to Hilton, folder 1, box 1, CLR Series 1, Comox Logging and Railway Company Records, Special Collections, Courtenay and District Museum, Courtenay, BC.

[11] Frank H. Lamb, "The Principles of Labor Maintenance," *The Timberman*, August 1918, p.207.

and the roofs."[12] Furthermore, companies charged exorbitant rents and often paid workers exclusively in scrip that could only be exchanged in a company store, where the prices of goods had been drastically inflated. This forced many families into a state of debt peonage who ended up, as country singer Tennessee Ernie Ford famously put it, owing their souls to the company.[13]

Companies reconsidered all this, however, after a strike wave in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1892, workers living in Andrew Carnegie's steel town of Homestead, Pennsylvania led a strike that gained national attention. Two years later a strike in Pullman shut down the national railroad system as workers at Pullman's Palace Car Company were joined in a sympathy strike by unions representing workers in allied trades. Like early nineteenth-century strikes, labor activism in Homestead and Pullman centered on basic issues of wages, hours, and working conditions. But both strikes were also responses to company town life. Workers at Pullman, in particular, not only demanded a new wage scale but lower rents and better services. Following the strike, employers turned away from the stick and towards the carrot. In addition to providing insurance programs and additional welfare capitalism schemes, companies offered new and lavish company towns, what historian Margaret Crawford has termed "workingmen's paradises," to convince employees of their largesse and promote a corporate culture rooted in harmonious industrial relationships.[14]

The sort of company town life advocated by Couack was not only unique to the early twentieth century but also a relatively recent development in the history of the Northwest timber industry's company town system. Early Northwest lumber and sawmill towns had actually been fairly nice places to live—they had to be. When the first lumbermen set up operations in the region in the mid-nineteenth century, the Northwest had yet to be settled by Anglo-Americans and employers had to offer inducements for workers to come out and live on what was then considered to be the edge of civilization. The first northwestern lumber company town, Port Gamble, Washington, founded in 1853, had the look and feel of the sort of quaint rural Maine village where the town's founders, Andrew Jackson Pope and Frederick Talbot, had come. Port Gamble's church was an exact replica of the Congregational Church in the founders' hometown of East Machias, Maine. The rest of the town was set on an orderly grid made up of manicured streets. Each home had been painted white and many came furnished with antiques that Pope and Talbot had brought with them. By 1880, every house had running water, something most lumber company towns would not have until the 1940s, if at all. Like Port Gamble, the company town of Seabeck, founded in 1857 by the Washington Mill Company, aimed at an idyllic atmosphere. Company

[12] Thomas Bell, *Out of This Furnace* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), 122-3.

[13] Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London: Verso, 1995), 37-45; Green, *The Company Town*, 28-32

[14] Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise*. On the Pullman strike, see *ibid*., 37-45; David Ray Papke, *The Pullman Case: The Clash of Labor and Capital in Industrial America* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1999). For a case study of company towns and welfare capitalism in the West, see Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, 197-232.

owner Edward Clayson remembered of his town, "we had a good library…a Sunday School, a brass band, two hotels, three saloons, [and] a baseball ground…we had about sixteen families, and as fine and robust a lot of health children as could be found."[15]

What changed, and what made Couack's vision more or less the standard of Northwest timber industry company town design, was the emergence of a new set of geographic imperatives dictated by the early twentieth century accumulation structures. The arrival of literally hundreds of timber firms to the region, each scrambling to grab a piece of a resource rapidly disappearing in the wake of mechanized production, put a premium on quick profits and mobile operations—what has famously been described as "cut-out and get-out." In this cutthroat and uncertain world, what is surprising is not that company towns lacked extravagance, but that anyone even bothered to build them in the first place. Firms entered the region, established operations overnight, and often disappeared just as quickly. Hundreds more failed without notice or warning, leaving the communities they had created to dissolve quietly and often unnoticed.[16]

The impermanent and transitory nature of early twentieth-century timber capital makes it difficult to paint a complete picture of the Northwest's company town system. Town abandonment was a central feature of the Northwest timber industry's socio-economic landscape. Towns were quietly deserted as the companies that owned them were bought and sold, turned over to the controlling interests of larger firms. The only place many of these towns continue to exist is deep in the archive of some major timber company, as a single line on a ledger of sale. Many more have been lost altogether. Their records vanished long ago, and their residents moved on before anyone cared to listen to their stories. Look at a present-day map of the Northwest and you'll not be able to find Navarro, California or Manley-Moore, Washington, though both towns maintained populations of more than 300 people throughout the 1920s. These were large rural communities by early twentieth century Northwestern standards, yet they no longer exist, having been abandoned in the 1930s after the surrounding timber had been exhausted. It is possible to find the Oregon town of Valsetz on a few, more detailed maps, but go there and you'll find

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[15] Edward Clayson, Sr., *Historical Narrative of Puget Sound, Hoods Canal, 1865-1885: The experience of an only free man in a penal colony* (Seattle: R.L. Davis Printing Co., 1911), 5. On Port Gamble, see Edwin T. Coman, Jr., and Helen Gibbs, *Time Tide and Timber: A Century of Pope and Talbot* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949); James B. Allen, *The Company Town in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1966), 15-20; Linda Carlson, *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2003), 71-74, 253; E.G. Ames, "Port Gamble, Washington," *The Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 16, no.1 (January, 1925): 17-19; Judith M. Johnson, "Source Materials for Pacific Northwest History: Washington Mill Company Papers, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. 51, no. 3 (July, 1960): 136-138. Port Gamble has been the site of an extensive historical preservation project. Today, it is managed by the National Park Service. Visitors can tour many of the old homes, restored to look like they did in the nineteenth century. See Douglas F. Davis, "Port Gamble: Unique Historical Restoration Project," *Journal of Forest History*, Vol. 19, no. 3 (July, 1975): 137-139.

[16] On the Northwest timber industry's accumulation regime, see Thomas R. Cox, *The Lumberman's Frontier: Three Centuries of Land Use, Society, and Change in America's Forests* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2010);Richard Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest: Production, Science, and Regulation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1998).

that it now sits at the bottom of a deep reservoir. The valley that contained Valsetz was flooded in the 1950s after the town's owner, the Oregon-American Lumber Company, folded.[17]

The only towns we have good evidence for are the ones in which owning interests stumbled upon slightly more permanent solutions to the problems of mobility. A few companies operated a centrally-located, fixed company town with several mobile satellite camps. At Lake Cowichan, British Columbia, for instance, loggers spent the workweek at job sites in tents and bunkhouses reminiscent of the old bachelor camps and only returned to the town, their home, and families on the weekends. This allowed logging operations to chase the cut while providing some semblance of community stability. Other companies simply moved their towns as production demanded. Between its founding in 1924 and its folding in 1930, the Oregon-American Lumber Company's Camp McGregor relocated to three different forest tracts in western Oregon. Because the town consisted of little more than single-room homes, moving the town was a relatively easy task, which only involved putting physical structures on railroad cars and transporting them to the next site. While Camp McGregor only moved once about every two years, operations in the eastern Cascades moved more frequently. Because the forests of the eastern slope are not nearly as dense, forest tracts could easily be logged off in a single season, forcing mobile company towns to move once, twice, or even three times in the course of a season. All the physical structures of the north-central Oregon town of Shevlin had been built directly on railroad flat cars, making the town a sort of rolling village that could follow the cut anywhere that track had been laid.[18]

Despite the industry's trend toward austerity and mobility within the region, a few workingmen's paradises did take root in the Northwest's forests. In Weyerhaeuser's towns of Snoqualmie Falls and Vail, built in 1917 and 1927 respectively, workers and their families enjoyed a high standard of living. Both towns had running water and electricity. Houses were spacious and consisted of five or even six rooms. The movie theatre in Snoqualmie Falls, in fact, rivaled anything found in nearby Seattle. It boasted a 370 seat auditorium and the biggest movie screen in Washington State.[19]

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[17] See Carlson, *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest*, 199-207; Edward J. Kamholz, Jim Blain, and Gregory Kamholz, *The Oregon-American Lumber Company: Ain't No More* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2003); Clark I. Cross, "Factors Influencing the Abandonment of Lumber Mill Towns in the Puget Sound Region," (MA thesis, University of Washington, 1946). Perhaps the only work that has systematically attempted to document these towns is Kenneth A. Erickson, *Lumber Ghosts: A Travel Guide to the Historic Lumber Towns of the Pacific Northwest* (Boulder: Preuett Publishing, 1994).

[18] On Lake Cowichan, see Lake Cowichan Women's Auxiliary, interview by Sara Diamond, 1979, transcript, 55, F-67-1-0-0-31, Women's Labour History Project, Archives and Records Management Department, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC; Sara Diamond, "A Union Man's Wife: The Ladies' Auxiliary Movement in the IWA, the Lake Cowichan Experience," in Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, eds., *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia* (Victoria: Camosun College Press, 1984), 287-296. On Camp McGregor, see McGregor to Schopflin, October 10, 1925, McGregor to Schopflin, October 12, 1925, McGregor to Schopflin, February 5, 1926, Davidson to Schopflin, March 24, 1926, Greenman to Wilson, January 13, 1928, folder 1, box 3, Oregon-American Lumber Company Records, Special Collections, University of Oregon; Kamholz, et al., *The Oregon-American Lumber Company*. On Shevlin, see Ronald L. Gregory, *Life in Railroad Logging Camps of the Shevlin-Hixon Company, 1916-1950* (Corvallis: Oregon State University, 2001).

[19] Weyerhaeuser Lumber Company, "Over the Bridge to the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company Snoqualmie Falls Branch," n.d. box 4, folder 27, Norman Thomas Collection, Special Collections, Washington State Historical Society.

But Longview was without question the crown jewel of the Northwest's company town system. It had been founded on the Washington bank of the Columbia River in 1924 by the Missouri timber firm, the Long-Bell Logging Company. George S. Long, the company's founder and eventual town's namesake, spared no expense nor overlooked any detail when conceiving and building Longview. He hired the design firm of Hare & Hare to come up with the town's layout and prestigious architecture firms in Seattle and Portland to make plans for houses and community buildings. In the months before construction began, the design team met in Long's hometown of St. Louis and agonized over every single aspect of the town's planning, from the width of the streets, to the layout of the sewer and water systems, to which trees should line thoroughfares. The final plans reflected the garden city design philosophies of Frederick Law Olmstead, the nineteenth-century urban planner who advocated city beautification through parks and clear lines of demarcation between living and industrial spaces. The design team placed Long-Bell's two sawmills—which, when they were built, would be the largest milling complex in the world—on the outskirts of town, where smoke and dust pollution would be least likely to offend. The rest of the town was organized in a series of concentric circles. Hare & Hare proposed a large park for the town's center, which would be surrounded by a library, recreation hall, YMCA, and the Hotel Monticello. An ardent Christian, Long also insisted that the church be a central architectural feature of the town's civic space and, in fact, donated $100,000 of his personal money to its construction. Retail space filled the next ring. Long appeared determined not to repeat the mistakes of Pullman and refused to operate any of the town's shops or grocers through the company, instead leasing those spaces to merchants. Workers' homes were next. Each would have five rooms, a generous lawn, and be equipped with the most modern amenities like flushing toilets and electric appliances. Finally, Long and his designers planned for farms and agriculture on the outskirts of the city. And, as a last matter, found room for a large, eighteen-hole golf course.[20]

Looking at the trade journals, it would be easy to think places like Vail, Snoqualmie Falls, and Longview were representative of the Northwest company town system. Both Weyerhaeuser and Long-Bell went to great lengths to peddle their projects to anyone who would listen. Much like his town, Long's publicity campaign was the most ostentatious. Long-Bell advertised its town, saying "the grass is always green and there are flowers nearly the year round, the latitude the same as Southern France."[21] Long explained that his city's "scientifically planned manufacturing, commercial and residential districts"

[20] On Longview's design and building, see John M. McClelland, Jr., *R.A. Long's Planned City: The Story of Longview* (Longview: Longview Publishing, Co., 1976); Lenore K. Bradley, *Robert Alexander Long: A Lumberman of the Gilded Age* (Durham: Forest History Society, 1989). On the garden city movement in company town design, see Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise*, 101-28; William T. Booth, "Design for a Lumber Town by Bebb and Gould, Architects," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 82, 4 (October 1991): 132-39.

[21] Longview advertisement, *The Timberman*, November 1924, p.125.

were designed to produce a "very stable class of labor."[22] Operators and trade journalists liked propagandizing the Northwest's workingmen's paradises because they showed how far the industry had come from the days of the old bachelor camps, when loggers slept on lice-infested bed rolls in moldy bunkhouses. In parading their modern towns before the public, operators assured social reformers that times had changed, that their philanthropic natures had been lent to a more harmonious industrial order.[23]

Despite their ubiquitous representation in trade journals and company publications, however, places like Longview and Snoqualmie Falls were exceedingly rare in the Northwest woods. To understand why, it is again important to think in terms of economic geography. Next to the US Forest Service and railroads, Weyerhaeuser and Long-Bell held more forest land than any other single entity in the Northwest. At the same time, both companies operated the region's largest sawmills. They could therefore be assured of more-or-less constant operations for decades to come and could justify investment in the types of amenities Couack dismissed as extravagant. Those investments are not evidence of Weyerhaeuser's and Long-Bell's largesse or philanthropic natures, though executives from both companies liked to claim they were. Rather, in the language of early twentieth-century welfare capitalism, an investment in lavish company towns was an investment in worker productivity, worker loyalty, and a hedge against unionization.[24] Companies not as well capitalized as Weyerhaeuser and Long-Bell shared similar concerns, but they had to walk a finer line between extravagance and practicality. For workers living under the thumb of these companies, life was decidedly different.

Northwest Company Towns and Welfare Capitalism

Company housing is the best place to begin understanding how welfare capitalism in more austere camps walked this fine line. Housing was the one element that Northwest timber operators agreed was necessary for recruiting a stable, family-oriented workforce. Yet, looking at most company town homes, you wouldn't know housing registered high on the list of concerns. During the Commission on Industrial Relations in 1914, an IWW organizer named Fred Thompson famously compared bachelor loggers' living quarters to horse stables, and concluded that company livestock actually lived more comfortably. Had Thompson seen family living quarters, he might have broadened his indictment of camp life to include married workers. Housing varied from town to town, but most family structures

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[22] "Long-Bell on the Cowlitz," *West Coast Lumberman,* January 1925, p.40.

[23] Similarly, the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen (4L) got in on this act. Highlighting camp improvements allowed the company union to justify its existence and make the case that it was doing something on behalf of the workers whose interests it purported to represent. See, for instance, Thorfinn Tharaldsen, "How Sanitation Has Been Improved," *Four-L Bulletin*, December 1913, p.13. For more on the 4Ls propaganda campaign, see Erik Loomis, "The Battle for the Body: Work and Environment in the Pacific Northwest Lumber Industry, 1800-1940" (PhD Dissertation, University of New Mexico, 2008), 210-260.

[24] For timber ownership patterns, see Robert E. Ficken, *The Forested Land: A History of Lumbering in Western Washington* (Durham: Forest History Society, 1987); Cox, *The Lumberman's Frontier*.

shared a dilapidated quality. They'd been built for mobility, not comfort. Scrap wood and tar paper were the most common building materials. More often than not, homes were not water tight. It is easy to imagine the hardship and discomfort this caused families in the rainy Northwest. Looking inside you would not have seen much: a wood floor, perhaps some old crates serving as chairs and tables, maybe a mattress, though beds made of straw were not uncommon. Homes were as small as they were sparse. Most only had two or three rooms, which made for cramped living conditions. Lee Maker from Shevlin explained that the houses he grew up in were little two-room shacks that measured 15 x 30 feet. "My brother slept in a bed out in the kitchen, a little folding bed," Maker remembered, "and my sister and my folds and I slept in the other room."[25] The only redeeming quality of company town housing was that rents were low. Companies typically charged only three to five dollars a month.[26]

Needless to say, most of these homes did not have services. Small wood burning stoves provided families with heat, light, and a cooking source and water came from the small streams in the forest. Camp residents for the most part silently coped with a lack of electricity and other modern conveniences, but we might imagine they were a bit more vocal about the nonexistence of sewage systems. In Blubber Bay, on British Columbia's Texada Island, the only bathing facility available to the town's bachelors was a large, out-door shower. In a stunning lack of foresight, the town's designers had placed this shower area right next to the single men's latrine and human waste seeped up from the ground, meaning that the men were in the ironic position of cleaning themselves while standing in pools of excrement.[27]

Looking at the homes in which loggers and their families lived begins to help us see why company town cultures became so intertwined with nature. The small and mobile houses had, by design, been placed as close as possible to the timber scheduled to be cut, meaning that most families' backyards consisted of acres and acres of forest. Moreover, daily chores included gathering firewood from those nearby forests and running down to the nearby creeks to fetch water. In other words, there were no clear dividing lines between the built environment and the natural environment in Northwest company towns. Moreover, because houses were so small, spending waking hours indoors was neither practical nor desirable. Lois Gumpert, one of Lee Maker's neighbors in Shevlin, remembered that there was "a lot of outdoor activity" in town "because our houses were so small so everybody played outdoors."[28] In short, the limited structure of Northwestern woods welfare capitalism served to make the boundaries separating the human and non-human worlds extremely porous or altogether nonexistent.

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[25] Transcript, Lee Maker interview, March 14, 1995, by Ronald L. Gregory in Ronald L. Gregory, *Shevlin-Hixon Oral History Project: Life in Railroad Logging Camps of Central Oregon, 1916-1950* (Bend: Central Oregon Community College, 1996), 81.

[26] Allen, *Company Towns in the American West*, 89; Mackie, *Island Timber*, 210; Carlson, *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest*, 54.

[27] Andy Parnaby, "'We'll hang all policemen from a sour apple tree!': Class, Law, and the Politics of State Power in the Blubber Bay Strike of 1938-39," (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1995), 34.

[28] Transcript, Lois Gumpert interview, March 14, 1995, by Ronald L. Gregory, in Gregory, *Shevlin-Hixon Oral History Project*, 101.

Like housing, the austere quality of recreation in company towns also put residents into contact with nature. Although company-sponsored recreation had become central to early twentieth-century welfare capitalism, families living in mobile camps rarely had the benefit of lavish facilities like bowling alleys or community centers. A few towns had movie theaters, because as a 1920 *Camp & Mill News* article noted, they "amuse and educate at the same time with the least exertion and at the smallest expense."[29] Some companies sponsored bridge clubs and pinochle tournaments for the simple reason that they required nothing more than a deck of cards. About the only recreational activity that companies consistently provided was baseball. Employers believed that the game served the larger purpose of industrial harmony by reinforcing codes of conduct, discipline, and a spirit of teamwork. For fervent nativists, America's pastime also served to distance immigrants from their native cultures and to instill a sense of patriotism. Northwest timber companies no doubt embraced baseball for all these reasons, and for the additional fact that marking-out a diamond in a small clearing and throwing some bases on the ground could be done cheaply.[30]

With the limited opportunities for amusement provided by the company, most camp residents looked to the outdoors. Anna M. Lind, a cookhouse waitress in a Northern California camp, described impromptu community gatherings held around large campfires. "On rainy Saturday nights one of the men would build a roaring fire…one of the wives would go to the cookhouse and ask the cook to furnish hot coffee and a bake sheet of goodies. The family women would bring some favorite dishes themselves." When not relaxing around the campfire, Lind and her friends "enjoyed hiking among the tall beautiful redwoods. Besides the new logging grades cut in the virgin timber, there were game trails to follow." In the summers, Lind and her friends walked to nearby creeks to swim and picnic. In winters, when deep snow made leisurely walks difficult, Lind had the blacksmith shop make her up a pair of skis, on which she glided through the forests.[31]

Other services and welfare programs common to twentieth-century company towns outside of the region were similarly minimal or absent in the company towns of the Northwest woods. Staff doctors

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[29] "The Use of Leisure," *Camp & Mill News*, March 1920, p.15. An article in the *Timberman* echoed this idea that even the most cost conscious company town operator could provide movies by simply covering a canvas "with several coats of white calcimine with just a trifle of blue in it." "Equipment for Camp Movies," *The Timberman*, December 1923, p.160. Also see "Camp & Mill Service Bureau Bulletin and Motion Picture News," *Camp & Mill News*; December 1919, p.1.

[30] It is actually difficult to separate baseball from the history of welfare capitalism. See Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism*. Workers seem to have embraced baseball as eagerly as employers, though often for their own reasons. Besides providing relaxing time outside with friends, workers who played on the company's travelling team in Potlatch, Idaho were given the more desirable morning shift at the mill so they could be out on the practice field in the afternoon. And, when the team travelled for away games, those same workers were given paid time off. See Keith C. Petersen, *Company Town: Potlatch, Idaho, and the Potlatch Lumber Company* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1987), 129-30. In Washington State, the Valley League, the minor league network which included many company teams, was in fact so popular that it got coverage in the region's major newspapers. See, for instance, "Timber Loop Has 2 Games Sunday," *Seattle Post-Intellegencer*, April 26, 1935, p. 16.

[31] Anna M. Lind, "Women in Early Logging Camps: A Personal Reminiscence," *Journal of Forest History* 19, 3 (July 1975): 131, 133.

were almost unheard of and medical coverage was rare. Instead, most residents relied on doctors companies had hired to visit town on a monthly basis. More immediate medical needs had to wait for the next train out of town, which might not leave for a day or two, or more if the tracks were snowed in or washed out by one of the frequent mudslides. Company stores loom large in popular perceptions of company-town life, but they simply did not exist in most Northwest camps. In the towns with stores, goods were limited. For instance, the small 14 x 16 foot store in Mowich, Oregon was typical, where only kerosene, dried beans, soap, and a few canned goods lined the shelves.[32] Spartan as they might have been, loggers still went into debt at company stores. This did not necessarily represent a return to Pullman's brand of paternalism, where the prices charged at the company store had been a major grievance of workers, but rather reflected the difficulty of shipping goods to such remote places. Fruit was difficult to keep fresh over the long distances required to reach most towns. Similarly, eggs and dairy tended to spoil before they reached most towns. As we'll see, residents solved these problems by growing their own food in gardens and raising their own animals in pens. For those items that could not be grown or raised, companies encouraged residents to make use of the mail order catalogues that had become popular in 1920s.[33]

Companies may have done little to see to residents' day-to-day needs, but they took the matter of religion a bit more seriously. Companies typically contracted with itinerant ministers known as "sky pilots," after a Presbyterian minister in Maine's woods declared it his life's mission to "pilot men to the skies." These itinerant preachers often visited a town once or twice a month and delivered religious services, performed religious rights, led children's Sunday Schools and, when necessary, performed funerals. Sky pilots themselves frequently lamented the fact that company town residents did not enthusiastically embrace religion. But sky pilots were nevertheless popular figures in company towns for no other reason than they provided residents with a link to the outside world. George "Pastor of the Pines" Redden was perhaps the most famous. He travelled a huge circuit, ministering to logging towns in a 22,000 square mile region in the Columbia River Gorge.[34]

As the presence of sky pilots suggests, though Northwest lumber companies may have dismissed welfare capitalism's emphasis on amenities to cajole workers, they maintained a concern for moral order. Itinerant preachers were only a single element in this strategy. Though prohibition had made alcohol illegal in the US, most companies still felt compelled to issue additional rules banning drinking on company property. Single men in camp were also prohibited from dating single women, and the bachelors' quarters were typically placed as far away as possible from single women's quarters.

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[32] Carlson, *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest,* 104.

[33] *Ibid*., 104-110

[34] George Redden, *From Bootblack to Pastor of the Pines and Twenty-two Thousand Miles through the Pines of the Northwest with the Lumber-Jack* (Bend, 1932). Also see Frank A. Reed, *Lumberjack Sky Pilot* (Old Forge, NY: North Country Books, 1965).

Similarly, gambling was frowned upon. George Long, perhaps the most ardent supporter of Christian moral order in the Northwest forest industry, had even gone so far as to ban playing cards in Longview: cards only led to gambling, and gambling was immoral. When one of the town's residents, Lola Gowdy, wanted to start a women's bridge club, she had to write to Long personally and explain that no gambling would take place. The women would only play for modest prizes.[35]

In addition to rules governing morality, companies attempted to enforce order by supplying camp residents with reading material that amounted to little more than propaganda. Alongside the 4L's publications, the *Camp & Mill News* was the most widely circulated. Its stores stressed the virtue of thrift and importance of sobriety. Most articles, however, highlighted harmonious relations between employers and employees and stressed that understanding and accommodation could be had without the outside influence of unions. Workers and bosses, went a typical article, "are not enemies but rather that each is striving for the same end, that one is generally as honorable and as much of a gentlemen as the other and that it pays to compare notes and to be open and above board with one another far better than to watch each other's motives with suspicion from hostile camps."[36]

There is little reason to suspect that this propaganda campaign had much of an effect on the people who lived in company towns. Welfare capitalism had, after all, been premised on a culture of dependency in which workers and their families would remain loyal to the boss because he provided not only the wages but the necessities of day-to-day life. In the Northwest timber industry, companies' refusal or inability to provide those necessities meant that this culture of dependency never emerged and residents never fully ceded their loyalties to the companies—a few pieces of propaganda printed in newspapers could not overcome that hurdle.

In a final estimation, then, mobile towns proved to both blessing and curse to companies. They allowed for more geographic flexibility, but that flexibility came with a social cost.[37] Mobility meant increased geographic and social isolation and a movement away from water, electricity, and sewage networks that might have made it possible to provide basic utilities. Moreover, it made getting goods like fresh produce or critical personnel like doctors difficult. On the other hand, isolation meant that companies didn't necessarily have to provide these things. When the only way to enter and leave town was a company-controlled railroad, when all that surrounded you was endless forest, and when you were paid wages so low that you couldn't get a house elsewhere, even if you wanted to, where else would you

[35] McClelland, *R.A. Long's Planned City*, 83.

[36] "Moderation," *Camp & Mill News*, October 1920, p.4. For an interesting discussion of this propaganda campaign, see Richard A. Rajala, "Bill and the Boss: Labor Protest, Technological Change, and the Transformation of the West Coast Logging Camp, 1890-1930," *Journal of Forest History* 33, 4 (October 1989): 175.

[37] It also came with a financial cost. Moving a town cut into time that could otherwise be spent cutting timber, and used up resources. In 1926, for instance, Camp McGregor's superintendent estimated that moving cost the company roughly 4% of its seasonal profits. See McGregor to Schopflin, February 6, 1926, Oregon-American Lumber Company Records.

have gone? In earlier nineteenth-century company towns, employers limited worker choice and mobility through debt peonage. That wasn't necessary in the Northwest's company towns—geography had seen to it.

GARBAGE, GARDENS, AND FORESTS: SPACES OF SUBSISTENCE

How did workers and their families adapt to this world? We might begin to answer this question by looking at garbage. Those of us living in modern cities rarely think about garbage. Once it's out on the curb on pick-up day, it's out of site and out of mind. People living in company towns did not have this privilege of omission as garbage collection was one of those extravagances employers preferred not to provide. It was far easier to just leave garbage piles on the forest floor. Moreover, since most companies planned on picking up stakes and moving, there seemed to be no particularly pressing need to attend to trash. Most company town residents simply threw their food scraps and other waste into what were commonly referred to as "slop holes," pits covered by wooden planks to prevent forest creatures from rooting around. But slop holes did very little to put garbage out of site. The planks did a fine job of keeping out rodents, but did little to prevent smells. Nor did they deter bugs and bees, especially in the warmer summer months. These were only minor annoyances. The large black bears that frequently came to root around in the garbage were another matter. Residents frequently recalled being woken up in the middle of the night by rummaging black bears, or being greeted by a 200 pound bear when they stepped outside their door in the morning. As a group, the people who lived in company towns tended to be a sturdy lot—the type of life demanded it. But it is easy to imagine even the most hardened logger shuttering at the site of a large black bear less than 20 yards outside his front door.[38]

Garbage presented problems. But it also presented opportunities. As frightful a sight as they may have been, bears wandering into town were easy to shoot. Ted Goodwin, an itinerant preacher serving the company towns of the Columbia Basin, explained that many camp residents "made almost pets of black bears," feeding them "garbage and surplus plate scrapings" until the time they grew fat. Though black bear meat tended to be gammy, Goodwin explained, bears were still "attractive for that fat. Oldtimers declared it the finest shortening for frying doughnuts."[39]

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[38] See Maker interview, 154-6; Gregory, *Life in the Railroad Logging Camps*, 24. Interestingly, garbage left on the forest floor is some of the only evidence we have for abandoned towns that are otherwise invisible in the written record and garbage has been useful to archeologists looking for lost towns. See HARD Work Camps Team, "Work Camps: Historic Context and Archaeological Research Design," Cultural and Community Studies Office, Division of Environmental Analysis, California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, 2007; Greg C. Burtchard, Dennis R. Werth, and Sandra L. Snyder, "Clackamas Wild and Scenic River Cultural Resource Inventory Project," Report to US Forest Service, Mt. Hood National Forest, International Archaeological Research Institute, Inc., Honolulu, 1993; Christian J. Miss, Lorela Hudson, and Sharon Boswell, "Data Recovery Excavations and Documentation of Manley-Moore Lumber Company Logging Sites, Pierce County, Washington," Report to US Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Northwest Archaeological Associates, Inc., Seattle, WA, 2000.

[39] Ted Goodwin, *Stories of Western Loggers* (Chehalis, WA: Loggers World, Inc.: 1977), 86.

Like the bears, garbage also provided a meal for many of the animals that had intentionally been brought into town and kept as livestock. Chickens were particularly popular because eggs were difficult to transport over the bumpy logging railroads. A few families also kept hogs. Like rural children across the country, tending to this livestock was a daily chore for children in the Northwest's company towns. Herb Maker, who grew up in Shevlin, remembered feeding his town's hogs "all the slop from the cookhouse." Pigs quickly grew on this dietary regime (as we've already seen, loggers tended to eat high caloric meals) and, like the bears, were slaughtered when they were fat enough.[40]

On the long list of difficulties faced by the residents of Northwest company towns, garbage probably ranked somewhere near the bottom. But garbage can still tell us a lot. Besides reminding us again of the porous boundary between human and non-human worlds, it gives us a glimpse into strategies of subsistence and survival. Because employers provided so little, camp residents often had to make due by looking to nature and by seizing whatever opportunities and resources they could from the environment. In other words, like the bears that rooted through garbage, camp residents became creative and resourceful and dependent upon the landscape.

Alongside livestock, gardening was perhaps the most popular subsistence strategy. It allowed families to supplement their incomes and deal with the unpredictability of food deliveries. We do not have any exact figures on just how widespread gardening was, but we do know that as part of his study on Pacific Coast Asian labor, Charles Smith remembered never finding a company town home without a garden. In fact, he could map the ethnic distribution of a town by simply looking at the vegetables growing outside peoples' homes. Nearly every resident grew corn, tomatoes, and squash, but Italian families seemed to favor herbs and beans more than others. Eastern European immigrants' gardens, on the other hand, commonly contained beets and cabbage, while Asian gardens were noticeable for their "different Japanese vegetables."[41] Looking at Smith's descriptions, we might further surmise that gardens not only provided subsistence but a connection to home for the many ethnic and immigrant workers.

Further evidence for the ubiquity of gardens comes from camp newspapers. Recipes printed in the *Camp & Mill News* frequently listed fresh ingredients like tomatoes and root vegetables—ingredients that were typically unavailable in company stores. At the same time, recipes reflected seasonality. Recipes printed in the summer months relied on fresh garden vegetables and forest berries, while recipes in the fall focused on uses for squash and wild mushrooms. Gardening invariably led to canning, and company town residents seemed to have canned just about everything. In just about every reminiscence of camp life we can find descriptions of how to can fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, and just about

[40] Herb maker interview, 160.
[41] "Eatonville Lumber Company," folder 1, box 30, William C. Smith Papers, Special Collections, University of Oregon.

anything else that would grow. Camp residents also canned game, including deer, grouse, pheasants, elk, and even the bears they'd shot in town limits.[42]

Gardening and canning were important for several reasons. A company town resident who lived in Lincoln County, Oregon named Ruth Manary, called the fresh fruits and vegetables that came from her camps gardens "gourmet food in our backyard."[43] As Manary's comment suggests, they provided residents with fresh produce that would have otherwise been unavailable given the difficulty of shipping goods to company towns. At the same time, canning allowed residents access to vegetables out of season during the winter months. We must also consider the caloric requirements necessary for work in the woods. Quite simply, if you didn't eat, you couldn't work. "Clearing a place among their stumps for a small garden…was regarded as a necessity," remembered Goodwin.[44] At the same time, gardens provided camp residents with a degree of autonomy from both the company and the cyclical nature of timber work. By growing vegetables in their backyards, camp residents could avoid going into debt at the company store and families found they could rely on the food from their gardens during slack times when employers cut back on shifts or reduced working-hours.[45]

Gardens were only a single, and perhaps not even the most important spaces of subsistence. Residents also took advantage of the literally thousands of acres of forest that surrounded their towns. Understanding how timber workers and their families interacted with the forest space forces us to confront the complexity of forest ecology as well the more nuanced meanings of space and place. As we've already seen in previous chapters, the forests surrounding company towns had been upended by industrial logging, and acres upon acres of forestland had been reduced to clear cuts. Because of the comments of observers, both past and present, we have been conditioned to think of these industrial forests as dead space. Thornton Munger of the US Forest Service asserted a typical view of clear cuts in 1927 when he wrote that they are "usually devoid of living trees…and of the few larger trees which were culled and left standing if not all have been killed by broadcast burning."[46] There is little doubt that clear cutting was damaging and disruptive. It upset delicate forest ecosystems, had a long-term effect on Northwest salmon and steelhead habitat from which the region has yet to recover, and dislocated many forest animals.

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[42] "Department for Women," *Camp & Mill Newsi*, June 1921, p.6, July 1921, p.6, September 1921, p.6, and November 1921, p.6. Also see Mackie, *Island Timber*, 264-5.

[43] Ruth Manary, "Reminiscence: Ruth Manary on Life at a Lincoln County Logging Camp in the 1920s," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 92, 1 (Spring 1991): 81.

[44] Goodwin, *Stories of Western Loggers*¸39.

[45] Gardening seems to be a common strategy for both subsistence and autonomy in many company towns. See Montrie, *Making a Living*, 80-81; White, *Company Towns*, 168.

[46] Munger as quoted in Nancy Langston, *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares: The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1995), 116.

But there are a few important things to keep in mind before fully committing to this way of thinking. First, this sort of ecological view unwittingly brings with it an assumption that the only useful forest is an untouched forest. Here, it is helpful to think about the longer history of forest use in the Northwest. Long before the first whites came to the region, anthropologists and Native American historians have shown that native peoples used fire to clear forests to encourage new plant growth. The record we have of this practice is found in the journals of the region's first white settlers and trappers, who described massive forest burns in the fall, followed in the spring by foraging in the new growth that had taken root.[47] This should force us to abandon the idea that the Northwest's forests ever existed as virginal and moreover, see that a changed forest is not a useless forest.

Second, despite what the name may imply, clear cuts are anything but clear. The logging process left a great deal behind: stumps, rotting logs, and large piles of waste known as "slash." Because all this represented a significant fire hazard, companies usually tended to slash with controlled burns. Forest clearing followed by controlled burning encouraged new plants to take root in the forest. "They'd burn the slash," one Vancouver Island company town resident remembered, "and the next year you'd never know there'd been a fire gone over it…you'd see the young trees growing up—they seeded themselves."[48] In some, though certainly not all ways, logging practices approximated what natives had been doing in the forests for centuries. Clear cuts, then, were not nature destroyed, but rather nature changed, and because of this change, timber workers and their families would experience cut over lands as productive space and come to attach significant subsistence and cultural value to industrial forest space.

Like natives who foraged in the berry thickets that took root in fired forests, the large thickets of blackberries and salmon berries that took root in a clear cut after a burn were particularly favored among company town loggers and their families. Forest berries tend to need a great deal of light to grow and therefore languish in thick forests. With the trees removed, berries grew in abundance, their thorny thickets springing up almost overnight in the sun-filled clear cuts. On the weekends, Melda Buchanan of Comox, British Columbia organized large berry-gathering parties wherein residents of town who went through the clear cuts filled large twelve-gallon milk buckets with berries then returned home and turned

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[47] See Helen H. Norton, Robert Boyd, and Eugen Hunn, "The Klikitat Trail of South-central Washington;" Robert Boyd, "Strategies of Indian Burning in the Willamette Valley;" and "Nancy J. Turner, "Time to Burn: Traditional Use of Fire to Enhance Resource Production by Aboriginal Peoples in British Columbia;" all in *Indians, Fire, and the Land in the Pacific Northwest* (Corvallis: Oregon State University, 1999).

[48] Eva Bailey, as quoted in Mackie, *Island Timber*, 265. Forest ecologists seem to support this idea. John Parminter has argued that for twenty years after a slash burning, forests enter "a highly diverse shrub stage which supports much wildlife. Shrub and herb cover later decline as the tree canopy develops and closes." John Parminter, "Fire History and Effects on Vegetation in Three Biogeoclimatic Zones of British Columbia," in *Fire and the Environment: Ecological and Cultural Perspectives* (Knoxville: US Department of the Interior, Parks Service, 1990), 263.

them into pies and preserves. Buchanan was particularly fond of blackberries. Every summer when they came in, she fondly remembered, "it was one of the big treats of our life."[49]

New deciduous growth also attracted game to clear cuts, which provided hunting opportunities. Pheasants and rabbits discovered that berry thickets provided ideal cover from predators. Any camp resident with a shotgun and the requisite fortitude needed to flush game from thorny blackberry bushes was easily rewarded. Company town residents remembered stepping out their front doors and quickly shooting their limit of pheasants or rabbits. Grouse provided a far easier meal, as they tended to sit on stumps out in the open. Grouse were "scarcer than the devil years ago when the forest was here," remembered Joe Cliffe of Vancouver Island, "but as soon as we cut the forest there were tens of thousands." They were so abundant that they even flew into open windows back at camp.[50] Deer also found a new home in the transitional forest. The small blacktail deer of the Northwest are generally considered a difficult quarry. They run small, only about the size of a large dog. They are also quick and blend in well with their surroundings. Deer typically see a hunter long before the hunters sees them, making them near impossible to hunt. But small blacktail wandering into clear cuts to graze on fresh deciduous growth became easy targets. In October of 1920 alone, the *Camp & Mill News* reported over 75 deer had been taken by residents in Bordeaux, Washington.[51]

Companies often encouraged camp residents to keep gardens and hunt for food in the forests. Many companies sponsored garden growing competitions and rewarded cash prizes to the best produce of the season. At the same time, company newspapers lauded the achievements of hunters who had killed the biggest buck of the season. Without question, all this reflected a larger sense of community that companies were trying to instill in their towns. But the supply manifest from Comox, British Columbia reveals additional reasons why companies regarded these activities as important. An early resupply manifest from not long after the town was founded in 1910 is truly extensive. It lists, among other things, 40 sacks of potatoes, 1 sack of carrots, 1 sack of lemons, 10 cases of rhubarb, 36 cases of pears, and 12 cases of plums. Eight years later, the company had stopped shipping in fresh fruits and vegetables and only purchased durable goods like coffee, sugar, and molasses. By 1925, the company was relying on far less, only keeping up shipments of sugar and vinegar, likely because camp residents needed those for

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[49] Melda Buchanan, as quoted in *ibid*. There are two types of blackberries that grow in the Northwest, the native Evergreen blackberry and the introduced Himalayan blackberry. Buchanan was likely speaking of the Himalayan blackberry. They were brought to the region by white settlers in the 1880s and since then have gained a reputation as one of the worst invasive species in the region. They grow quickly in well-lit open spaces, like clear cuts. Framers, in the past as well as today, have an especially contentious relationship with the Himalayan blackberry. Anyone who grew up on a Northwestern farm will tell you about hours and hours spent cutting through thorny blackberry bushes, only to have them grow back in a week. They may frustrate farmers, but timber-working communities nevertheless seemed to appreciate them. See Washington State, *Himalayan Blackberry* (Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, 2003).

It's worth pointing out that blackberries are an invasive species, first introduced to the Pacific Northwest by white settlers in 1885.

[50] Joe Cliffe, as quoted in *ibid*.

[51] "Bordeaux News," *Camp & Mill News*, October 1920, p.15.

preserving and canning.[52] In short, companies found gardening and forest foraging to be good for the bottom line. Moreover, what Chad Montrie has observed for West Virginia coal companies probably holds true for Northwestern timber companies: companies encouraged gardening because it "enabled them to keep wage rates down and yet still make a claim to benevolence."[53]

COUGARS, BEES, AND BOOTLEGGING: SPACE OF ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

But this shouldn't suggest that camp residents merely toed the company line when entering the forests or sought to please companies when they planted vegetables or hunted deer. Quite to the contrary, forest space became important to company town residents because it provided not only an escape from the industrial workday but made them less reliant on the companies. At the same time, the forests also provided camp residents with more direct economic opportunities that they further used to assert their independence and define their cultures and identities outside of company control.

Clear cut forests were again crucial to these economic endeavors. The deer and small game attracted to clear cuts in turn attracted cougars. Since whites had first entered the Northwest forests, cougars had been regarded as a nuisance at best and a danger at worst. They killed livestock and chased off game. In an effort to eradicate the predators, Oregon, Washington, and the provincial British Columbian government offered a bounty on cougars up until the 1950s. Cecil "Cougar" Smith of the logging town of Oyster River, British Columbia was perhaps the most famous cougar hunter and he certainly earned his nickname. Smith estimated that between 1900 and 1940 he killed over one thousand cougars. For each cat he collected $40 from the government for the bounty, sold the skins to taxidermists for $10, and occasionally sold the skulls to museums and collectors for another $5.[54]

Alongside cougar hunting, camp residents collected cascara bark to earn extra money. Like berry picking and hunting in cleared forests, cascara harvesting goes back thousands of years to when native peoples cultivated the plant for its root, which was mashed up and eaten. Undoubtedly a few camp people enjoyed cooking up cascara roots, but they were also drawn to the plant for another important reason. Pharmacists in nearby towns paid camp residents for cascara, because when the bark is ground up and turned into a paste it becomes a powerful laxative. Leo Lind from Newhalem, Oregon remembered, "we ranged far and wide to find it. It didn't bring in very much money, but enough to buy coffee and flour."[55]

Beekeeping was yet another common economic activity that depended on the cleared forests. After building a hive out of scrap lumber and introducing a queen, which could be ordered through anyone of the major mail order catalogues, bees pollinated the wildflowers that had taken root in open

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[52] Canadian Pacific Railway Company Manifest, Aug 4, 1910; Sept 8, 1918, Sept. 21, 1925,
[53] Montrie, *Making a Living*, 78.
[54] Mackie, *Island Timber*, 271.
[55] Leo Lind, "Tales of a Logging Railroad Brakeman," *Journal of Forest History* 21, 4 (October 1977): 221.

meadow clear cuts and produced rich varieties of honey that residents sold in local towns.[56] Companies encouraged cougar hunting and cascara hunting for many of the same reasons they encouraged gardening and forest foraging. But they tended to draw the line at beekeeping. Unlike those other activities, bees presented a health risk. Bees attracted to the garbage and food waste in town annoyed residents and stung children and pets. An exchange of letters between an executive at the Oregon-American lumber company and the superintendent of Camp McGregor illustrates the problem. One of the camp's residents—last name, White—had been keeping bees in a clear cut outside of town. In 1927, the smoker White used to keep his bees under control got out of hand and started a small fire. The company ordered him to stop, but White merely moved to another clear cut. Now, his bees were beginning to enter the camp and "run amok and when thoroughly aroused have been known by their stings to kill animals," and the company once again ordered White to stop, this time threatening him with job loss. For his part, White responded that his were "nice peaceable bees" and never injured anyone "unless the other person starts the argument."[57]

Companies took an even harder line against another market-based activity that was common out in the woods: bootlegging. As we've already seen, alcohol was just about universally banned in company towns. That said, it was almost universally available thanks to the efforts of timber workers who drew in extra money from moonshining. The forest was again critical to such illicit activity and bootlegging actually required a fairly refined understanding of the environment. The first thing that was necessary was good forest cover. Whereas loggers and their families sought open space for hunting and foraging, this time they looked for denser trees that would hide the still and disguise the fires they needed to boil the mash. Even so, the still had to be placed fairly close to a water source to cool the condensate. And finally, bootlegging loggers had to find the right type of water to make the mash in the first place—water just a bit too alkaline or just a bit acidic and the yeast would not produce.

Given the illicit nature of bootlegging, it is difficult to determine just how many timber workers and families operated illegal stills behind the backs of their employers. But if anecdotal evidence is any indication, liquor was as easy to find as water on a rainy Pacific Northwest day. People who worked in town groceries remembered a run on sugar—the central ingredient in making a mash for distilling—the moment prohibition was announced and children recalled tripping over barrels of liquor hidden out in the woods. Ernest Teagle, a longtime resident of McCleary, wrote that "when the nation went dry, McCleary went wet." Teagle remembered that every family in his town either made moonshine or could buy it from

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[56] Loggers and their families not only kept bees to get honey, but also foraged honey from the forest. Explained one history, "Loggers or huners would spot a 'bee tree,' usually a hollow cedar in which an escaped swarm of bees had made their hive. A bee tree could be identified by bear claw scratches in the trunk. When fallen across an appropriate stump, the cedar tree would then split allowing the honeycomb, with some hazard, to be collected in washtubs." D.E. Isenor, W.N. McInnis, E.G. Stephens, and D.E. Watson, eds., *Land of Plenty: A History of the Comox District* (Campbell River: Ptarmigan Press, 1987), 43.

[57] Davidson to McGregor, February 23, 1928, folder 2, box 4, Oregon-American Records.

someone they knew who did. The town's many Italian families—likely the Pellegrinis among them—were known to keep barrels of homemade wine stashed in their sellers.[58]

Just as it's difficult to estimate the prevalence of bootlegging, it's difficult to determine just how much money timber-working families were able to earn through activities like cougar hunting and cascara bark collecting. Again, though, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest these actives were not insignificant. Angelo Pellegrini, for instance, remembered that his family took in enough money from cascara harvesting that they were able to go months without dipping into the official wages paid out by McCleary. Similarly, residents in Shevlin recalled a few camp residents who were able to earn enough money from bootlegging that they quit working in logging altogether. Even if these stories are isolated, such activates nevertheless brought with them a real psychic value. The knowledge that their communities were dependent on the landscape rather than the company gave loggers and their families a sense of freedom and independence.[59]

RIVERS: SPACES OF ENVIRONMENTALISM

Timber workers and their families often seemed to value nature for subsistence and survival above all else. We can see this by looking at the often flagrant attitude camp residents took towards game laws. Gladys Thulin remembered that people in Vancouver Island's Comox Valley cared little for official hunting seasons or bag limits. "As long as there were deer in the woods," she said, "we didn't have to go hungry."[60] The same thing was true for fishing. Game wardens frequently complained that loggers and sawmill workers showed little respect for laws intended to protect salmon runs, which by the opening decades of the twentieth century were starting their slow decline. In the 1920s, literally hundreds of citations were handed out to people in logging communities for fishing without a license, fishing out of season, fishing in closed waters, using prohibited devices like gill nets, and illegally snagging at fish ladders. In 1924, an Oregon State game warden named Charles Shoemaker complained that workers in at a pulp and paper plant along the Willamette River were casting lines out of the factory window and taking more than their limit of fish. "Hundreds of fish every week are carried from your mill in lunch baskets and, gunny sacks and otherwise," Shoemaker complained to the plant's owners, "and the patrol service is practically helpless to prevent it."[61]

Though Shoemaker did not know it, he had perhaps taken his life into his hands by drawing attention to the pulp workers' illegal activity. In the isolated worlds of timber camps and company towns, game wardens were generally a rare site and when they did show up, they were greeted with threats and

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[58] Teagle, *Out of the Woods*, 35.
[59] Pellegrini, *An Immigrant's Journey*, 32; Herb Maker interview, 148.
[60] Thulin, as quoted in Mackie, *Island Timber*, 271.
[61] Shoemaker, as quoted in Lipin, *Workers and the Wild*, 65.

violence. A resident at Shevlin recalled that a game warden who rode on horseback out to the forests surrounding Bend to check out rumors of deer poaching had the horn of his saddle shot off by a hunter clearly upset at his presence. We have no way of knowing if the hunter only meant to scare the game warden, in which case his aim was impeccable, or if he meant more serious harm and therefore missed his target.[62]

Game wardens and middle-class sportsman often took stories like this as evidence that working people did not respect nature and cared little for the health of the game and resources they were ostensibly exploiting. An editorial in the journal of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, the *Oregon Sportsman*, put the issue bluntly. According to the editorial's author, the decline of fish stocks and hunting opportunities was a direct result of "careless, shiftless" rural and working-class people who "believe they have inherent rights…as far as the game, the streams, and the forests are concerned." The article continued by juxtaposing rural peoples' attitudes with more responsible, urban middle-class habits. The "average business man in the city who goes hunting and fishing…loves outdoor life and is wide awake to protect our forests, our streams and our game."[63] The problem for the editors of the *Oregon Sportsman*, as well as game wardens like Shoemaker, was that working peoples' interest in nature only extended to what they could take, and their land-use practices should no evidence of respect and reverence for nature.

There were, however, unacknowledged class politics embedded in the views of the people who wrote in magazines like the *Oregon Sportsman*. As Karl Jacoby has shown in his history of conservation policy, game laws did not necessarily reflect of middle-class peoples' concern and reverence for nature but were rather an effort to preserve the outdoors for upper- and middle-class recreationists who didn't want their experiences sullied by working people. Though rural folks often flouted game laws and disagreed with middle-class sportsman about how nature should be used, they were nevertheless guided by an environmentalist ethic, what Jacoby calls a "moral ecology," that emerged in opposition to elite conservationist discourses but nevertheless attached value to nature beyond subsistence and commodity values.[64]

Looking at Northwestern timber workers' fishing practices is the ideal place to see how this moral ecology played out. Fishing was just as popular an outdoor activity for company town residents as hunting, forest foraging, and gardening. This, of course, makes perfect sense. The Northwest is, after all, defined as much by its forests as its rivers, as much by its trees and its salmon.[65] But no species of game is perhaps as politicized as the Northwest's iconic fish and no other activity as laden with class

[62] Herb Maker interview, 258-9.
[63] "Menace to Forests and Game," *Oregon Sportsman*, September 1914, 1.
[64] Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, 3.
[65] The journalist Timothy Egan has even gone so far as to say, "The Pacific Northwest is simply this: wherever the salmon can get to." Timothy Egan, *The Good Rain: Across Time and Terrain in the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 22.

distinctions as sport fishing. Sport fishing for the region's salmon had gained popularity and cultural importance in the early twentieth century, when elite urban men were becoming troubled over the perceived feminization of bourgeois manhood. By returning to nature and waging battle with a fierce wild salmon, upper- and middle-class men could reclaim a sense of primal manhood that had been lost during the age of urbanization. In this view, fish were valued for sport, not subsistence and any fisherman who cared more about filling his bag limit than the thrill of the chase was not a true sportsman, a label that seemed to clearly apply to the rural and working-class people who primarily fished to put food on the table.[66]

The descriptions of Northwest working-class angling culture offered by an immigrant sawmill worker in Oregon's Willamette Valley named Frederick Bracher seems to support these ideas. "We were all 'pot fisherman,'" Bracher said of him and his fishing buddies, a reference to the fact that they cared more about filling the pots on their stoves than the thrill of the fight. On the Sandy River, Bracher recalled "wading out into the stream" and dipping nets into the water for smelt. "Almost every dip brought up some smelt, and in less than an hour we would have all we and our numerous relatives could possibly use." One day his father brought home a thirty-six pound salmon, which was promptly "cut up—a piece for Aunt Mary and her six children, a small piece for Uncle John, a piece for Aunt Soph—until it was all accounted for." Besides an apparent fixation on fish as a food source, Bracher gives us some sense of the way in which fishing exposed class divides. After a fishing trip to southern Oregon's famed North Umpqua River where Bracher observed middle-class men more concerned with style than fish, he remarked that he wanted "no part of such effete pastimes."[67]

But a closer reading of Bracher's story reveals that he had more than subsistence in mind when he picked up rod and reel. For Bracher, fishing was as much about putting food on the table as enjoying the outdoors. "My friends and I loved living out of doors, in the mountains or woods," he wrote, "where fishing was a simple, natural pleasure." At the same time, Bracher appeared to be guided by an ethical code of conduct that did not exactly put him in the camp of middle-class sportsman, but nevertheless revealed he saw some inherent value in nature. Bracher, for instance, dismissed hatchery fish because they were "too synthetic," did not put up a good fight, and felt out of place in the Northwest's wild rivers. At the same time, he was not interested in "killing for killing's sake," and rather "caught only what we wanted to eat."[68]

We can also learn a lot about the ways in which timber workers and their families approached fish by looking at the methods they used to catch and land their quarries. Though Bracher commented on

[66] Joseph E. Taylor, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1999), 167-8.
[67] Frederick Bracher, "Fishing in Untroubled Waters," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 93, 3 (Fall 1992): 295, 293.
[68] Bracher, "Fishing in Untroubled Waters," 299, 302.

many effective methods for taking fish, he noted that he often enjoyed fishing "Zane Grey style," a reference to the early twentieth-century author who popularized fly fishing in the West. "My all-time best trout," Bracher remembered "was a seventeen-inch cutthroat [trout], caught on a fly after a long cast across a pool on the North Fork of the Umpqua River." Like Bracher, another Oregonian named Eileen Stroud also enjoyed fly fishing. As a young girl, she often accompanied her father, a sawmill worker, on his fishing trips to the Yaquina River near the families' home in Toledo. Stroud became so enamored with fly fishing that at just six years old she began tying flies and selling them to the local residents in town. In her twenties she married and moved to San Diego where she opened a fly shop with her husband and she became the first woman to join the San Diego Fly Fisherman's Club (which changed its name to the fly fishers club after she joined), where she continued to work on river conservation.[69]

The fact that Bracher and Stroud and likely many more timber workers enjoyed fly fishing can again tell us a lot about the way in which the working-class residents of the Northwest's company towns understood nature. Fly fishing has typically been regarded as a purely upper- and middle-class method of taking fish.[70] Unlike fishing with bait, anglers casting a fly are using feathers and furs tied on a hook to attract and fool fish. And, as anyone who has ever tried it knows, fooling a fish—a creature with a brain the approximate size of a pea—is damn difficult. Accordingly, fly fishing is a far less productive way to catch fish. But, among its purveyors, it is regarded as a far more enjoyable. Because it places emphasis on the manner of fishing, rather than the ultimate reward, fly fishing has been unfairly maligned as elitist: something practiced by only those who have the comfort and status to not have to worry about putting food on the table. The fact that Bracher and Stroud enjoyed fishing "Zane Grey style" suggests that they were as much interested in the pursuit as the outcome.

In other words, working-class experience in nature went beyond pragmatic subsistence and economic concerns. Middle-class outdoor enthusiasts did not have a monopoly on respect for nature and an environmental code of conduct. People like Bracher and Stroud may have valued fish as food, but their relationship with fish specifically, and nature more broadly, was much more complex. Because of the limited nature of welfare capitalism in the company town system, residents relied on the forests and the streams to put food on the table and contend with the low wages and uncertain employment in the industry. But just because subsistence and survival depended on hunting, gardening, forest foraging, and fishing, that doesn't mean workers and their families had no deeper relationship with the environment. They may have used the forests and rivers as sources of food and additional income, but they also valued these spaces for the independence they provided from the company, the sense of community that fishing and hunting trips created, and a simple closeness to nature. In fact, we may even conclude that the

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[69] Jeff Ristine, "Eileen Stroud; angler known for generosity, experience in fly-tying," *San Diego U-T*, March 10, 2009.
[70] For instance, see Taylor, *Making Salmon*, 181.

workers and families living among the tall trees, deep in the recess of the forest, cared more deeply about the land than the upper- and middle-class people who were so critical of them. These forests and rivers, after all, were their homes.

AN ETHIC OF PLACE

If such working-class views towards nature existed in isolation or only extended to fish, they would not mean all that much. But these comments fed into a larger discourse about the meaning of place. Like many residents of the Northwest's company towns, Ruth Manary's life could not be separated from the forests that surrounded her Lincoln County, Oregon home. In the spring she picked berries and in the fall foraged mushrooms. In her free time, she enjoyed long walks through the woods and walking the nearby beaches, searching for clams and oysters. Yet, for all of her fond descriptions of live among the forests, she lamented that "these were sad days, too." Manary watched "regretfully as the magnificent living trees—with 'heart,' circulation, a life of their own—cracked to earth, their feather greenery dragged through the dust or mud." She continued, "to think of all the small animals, birds, scattered and scared, forced to find their way to new homes farther away to escape this menace—man—was depressing indeed."[71]

Manary's story reveals that company town residents' activities in the forests not only created a deep attachment to nature but also put them into a position to observe the effects that industrial logging was having on the places they'd come to enjoy and love. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, timber worker communities had become critically dependent on nature and there was a growing sense that their lives and fates were intimately tied to the health of the forests. The toll industrial logging was having on the surrounding forests pushed them to consider how their communities would change as the forests changed. As workers organized, and came together in unions and radical political institutions, this nascent environmental ethic would more fully bloom, and workers and their families would increasingly tie the longevity of their social worlds to the physical environment and move to protect their communities, their bodies—and what they saw as their forests—from the ravages of capitalism.

Company towns would, in time, come to shape workers' lives in other important ways as well. In addition to learning about the forests, trees and environments in his tiny town of McCleary, Pellegrini remembered that he also learned about the "skirmishes in the class struggle." During the summers, when not attending high school, he had worked in McCleary's sawmill and encountered the harsh world of industrial labor and obstinate foremen. But, talking to the other residents of the community, he heard how workers protested such conditions. He learned about the Haymarket Strike and the Pullman Strike and, closer to home, the Everett Massacre. When IWW members were arrested and accused of inciting

[71] Manary, "Life at a Lincoln County Logging Camp," 58.

violence during an Armistice Day parade in Centralia, Washington in 1919, Pellegrini joined the protest marches that took place at the trial. From his father and fellow Italian immigrants in town he learned about Sacco and Vincetti, two Italian immigrants wrongly accused of a murder in Boston, most likely sentenced to death because they espoused anarchism. While Pellegrini later wrote that he was "indignant…of the gross judicial injustice" of the case, he was also inspired by the working-class "conscience" that "had been outraged and come to the aid of the two humble immigrants."[72]

Although Pellegrini left McCleary and the residents of the company towns, he likely still encountered sawyers on the streets in his new home of Seattle. Pellegrini certainly once again encountered timber workers and their wives when, in 1935, seeing the suffering caused by the Depression all around him, and remembering the stories he had learned as a boy of how workers stood up to exploitation and degradation, he joined the Communist Party. Thus, just as the environmental geography of McCleary shaped Pellegrini's life-long passion for nature and the environment, so too did it push him into working-class political radicalism.

[72] Pellegrini, *American Dream*, 152.

PART 2

POWER

The Depression hit the Northwest timber industry especially hard. Throughout the 1920s, the industry had become almost wholly dependent on sales to the building industries, and when construction ground to a near halt in the wake of the crash, production in the Northwest woods plummeted. In 1929, Washington and Oregon had produced roughly 12 billion board feet of lumber. In 1931, the two states produced about 6 billion board feet. And in 1933, just over 3 billion board feet. The industry's workers bore the brunt of the economic decline. Exact unemployment data is hard to come by or conflicting, but several sources say that most timber-working communities experienced unemployment rates in the 30% range. Some towns, especially in the Douglas fir region, which was hit especially hard, reported unemployment rates as high as 50%. Wages also fell precipitously. In Oregon, the industry paid out $51 million in wages in 1929. In 1933, the industry only paid out $11 million. Even those lucky enough to still have a job found that the work was unreliable and that a paycheck wasn't guaranteed. Bill McKenna, a sawmill worker in Coos Bay, Oregon, explained: "most of the people would work for a few weeks and they'd be off for a while. And then also at that time there was a lot of work without pay, sort of the promise that eventually you would get paid. In our particular sawmill, this happened a couple of times. We'd get an order, open up and cut the order, and then close down."[1]

As elsewhere, Northwestern timber workers responded by mobilizing. In northern Washington and British Columbia, woodworkers looked to the Communist's nascent timber workers' unions. In 1931, the American and Canadian sections of the Party founded two woodworkers' affiliates, the Lumber Workers Industrial Union (British Columbia) and the National Lumber Workers Union (Washington State). Both these unions grew rather fast, largely through the efforts of homegrown radicals and organizers who'd been reared in the woods and company towns in the 1920s. In 1934, the Lumber Workers Industrial Union would successfully shut down all of Vancouver Island's logging camps in what was, at that time, the largest strike ever in British Columbia's timber industry. Others came to unionization and radical politics through the Communist Party's mass political demonstrations and unemployed organizations. Things were a bit different in southern Washington and Oregon, where workers tended to have a conservative reputation and where the Communist Party was far less visible. Still, these workers organized their own independent unions and in several instances led their own strikes without the formal backing of organized labor. In 1934, these independent unions started affiliating with

[1] Bill McKenna, as quoted in William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998, revised 2006), 80. For production figures in Washington and Oregon, see Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, *Production of Lumber in Oregon and Washington, 1869-1948*, Forest Survey Report no. 100 (Division of Forest Economics, Portland, December 1949), tables 3 and 4. For unemployment figures and wage data, see Unemployment Insurance Commission of the State of Oregon, *Report and Recommendations* (Salem: State of Oregon, 1935), 69.

the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The Communist unions in the north and the AFL unions in the south joined together in a massive, region-wide strike in 1935. The strike eventually led to the founding of a Congress of Industrial Organization woodworker's affiliate in 1937, the International Woodworkers of America (IWA).

The second part of this dissertation explores the IWA's history in the Northwest woods, looking closely at the movements that led to its founding, its growth and contractual campaigns, and its forestry politics. In one sense, then, the Depression marks a major turning point in this dissertation, when workers and their communities emerged from the woods and mills and took to the picket lines. Still, there are important continuities in the story. Immigrant workers, steeped in cultures of radicalism, many of whom came to the Northwest during the mass industrial migrations of the 1910s and 1920s, organized the earliest timber worker unions and went on to lead the IWA. The cultures of solidarity and independence forged through work shaped the industrial union movement as well. Workers already saw themselves united and had a collective disdain for their employers; industrial unionism merely gave this culture a new name and clearer focus. The communities that'd taken shape in company towns in the 1930s also continued to be important. Early organizing drives drew support from workers' family members and, in many ways the union movement was just an extension of company town communities. Finally, the IWA gave timber workers a new way to articulate their vision of place. In the preceding decades, timber workers had come to see the forests as both work spaces and cultural spaces. They recognized that their economic fates rested on continued production and, at the same time, believed in preserving the forest for recreational opportunity. The IWA more formally articulated this philosophy—what I call working-class environmentalism—first in debates over New Deal-style conservationism, then in efforts to expand wilderness areas in the 1950s.

Though the IWA struggled to gain members in its early years and faced attacks from employers and rival AFL woodworker locals that refused to join the CIO, by 1950 the IWA would count more than 100,000 members in both the American Northwest and British Columbia, making it the largest ever union in the lumber industry, the largest union on the Pacific Coast, and among the CIO's largest unions. The union significantly reshaped industrial relations in the Northwest woods, as well as the industry's economic geographies by forcing employers into region-wide master agreements that set standard wage rates and work rules that discouraged industrial flight. The IWA also played an important role in environmental politics. In 1946, the union proposed national legislation that would've put severe restrictions on harvesting and made the lumber industry more socially and economically sustainable. In 1953, it worked with middle-class environmentalists to try to expand the boundaries of Washington's Olympic National Park. In 1956 it again worked with environmental organizations to try to expand Oregon's Three Sister's Wilderness. And in 1958, it supported efforts to pass national legislation that

would make it easier for environmentalists to expand wilderness areas. Pinpointing the exact cause of the IWA's popularity among the Northwest's timber workers is difficult, mostly because workers had several reasons for joining the union. Many joined for the same reasons that most workers in the past as well as the present join unions: the IWA offered workers more control of job sites, better wages, shorter hours, and safer working conditions. Others, or at least those in northern Washington and British Columbia, where the Communist Party controlled most locals and district councils, were drawn to the IWA through radial politics. But whatever their reasons for joining, the IWA ultimately became important to timber workers because it gave them a way to more forcefully protect their communities, control their jobsites, and advocate for the forests. In the IWA, industrial unionism met and melded with timber workers' ethic of place.

The chapters that follow narrate this history in more detail. Chapter 4 begins by discussing the early industrial movement in the Northwest woods; chapter 5 examines the IWA's growth, contractual campaigns, and major strikes; and chapter 6 looks more closely at the IWA's forestry politics and wilderness campaigns in the postwar era.

CHAPTER 4

"A BAKING POWDER IN THE MASSES"
COMMUNITY AND UNIONISM IN THE EARLY DEPRESSION

It was September 14, 1931 and Harold Pritchett was standing before a meeting of angry shingle weavers and sawyers. All of the men, Pritchett included, worked at the Canadian Western Lumber Company's large sawmills in Coquitlam, British Columbia, about twenty miles west of Vancouver on the northern bank of the Fraser River. What the men simply referred to as the Fraser Mills was the largest sawmill complex in British Columbia and the third largest in the world. Timber cut throughout the province came here, from the massive Douglas firs felled on the rainy hillsides of the upper coast to the slim pines taken from the arid interior. Before the Depression, the management ran the saws non-stop and ignored routine maintenance and even the most basic safety precautions. Many of the men at the meeting had the scars and missing fingers to prove it. The danger was bad enough, but now layoffs had become routine as Canadian Western struggled to cope with the poor Depression-era lumber market. Just last year, the company had dismissed nearly a third of its workforce. Men fortunate enough to still have their jobs nevertheless found that the work had become unreliable. Some weeks they'd pick up three or four shifts at the mills. Then they'd go several weeks without working a single hour. Wages had been steadily declining, as well. A year ago, the company cut the pay of all of the mills' workers by 25 cents/hour, then a few months later, by another 30 cents/hour. Now, Canadian Western had just announced their intention to cut wages yet again, this time by 10 cents/hour. The workers were meeting to decide how to respond.[1]

Workers stood up at the meeting and listed all the indignities they'd suffered under Canadian Western's management. Men talked about the low wages and unpredictability of the work. Many wondered why, if the mill was still turning a profit, the company's managers had to cut wages. "The company can make so much money, why the hell can't we get a little of it?" asked one worker. Others talked about paternalistic foremen. One sawyer explained, "if a foreman didn't like a man it did not matter if he was a hard working man, he used to fire him and put his friend there." Several at the meeting recalled an incident a year earlier, when a foreman arrived at the plant hung-over and grumpy and fired his entire crew. Most workers, though, complained about life in the town. While Coquitlam was, in a strictly legal sense, an independent municipality, the Maillardville neighborhood, where most of the workers lived, was a company town. Canadian Western called it a "model industrial village" that cultivated "harmony" between workers and employers, but most of the men employed at the Fraser Mills

[1] "Minutes of the Strike Committee, Fraser Mills," September 16, 17, and 18, 1931, IWA District 1/Harold Pritchett Collection, file 10-11, Special Collections, University of British Columbia; Jeanne Meyers Williams, "Ethnicity and Class Conflict at Maillardville/Fraser Mills: The Strike of 1931," (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1982), 23-44; Fred Wilson, "A Woodworker's Story: Harold Pritchett recalls IWA's militant history," *Pacific Tribune*, April 29, 1977, pp. 12-3.

thought otherwise. Although the homes in Maillardville were pleasant enough, the company charged exorbitant rents and still paid a portion of wages in scrip. Workers complained that at the same time the company was cutting wages it was also raising the rates on utilities. At the end of the meeting, the committee formally articulated its demands: a 10% increase on all wages, overtime pay, an end to the scrip system, and a closed shop. The next day Pritchett presented the demands to H.J. Mackin, the plant's general manger. The day after that, he reported back to the committee that Mackin "simply said no." On September 16, 1931 the workers at Fraser Mills voted 251 to 71 in favor of a strike. By 6:00 a.m. the next morning, the entire complex was surrounded by a picket line and not a single saw would turn inside the Fraser Mills for the next two months.[2]

The moment the strike began, Mackin told the press that the workers at Fraser Mills were being "manipulated by a handful of Communists." Although, in a few months' time, British Columbia's Communists would be playing a role in the strike, on the eve of the walkout, this was a purely community-led action. Though there'd been a small shingle weavers union at Fraser Mills in the early-1920s, it'd fallen into decline, and by the early-1930s not a single worker in Fraser Mills was affiliated with a union. Rather, the strike was rooted in longer histories of community formation in Maillardville and a culture of solidarity that'd taken shape in the preceding decades. Like other company towns in the Northwest timber industry, Maillardville was a stable place that few people left. Of the roughly 500 men working at the plant in 1931, 20% had been working for the company for at least ten years and another 60% had been at the company steadily for five years. Over 60% of the plant's workers were married and another 20% were unmarried but lived in a single-family home. This would be important when the strike started. It meant that any worker who decided to scab would be crossing his father, brother, or uncle on the picket line. Maillardville was an ethnically-diverse place and perhaps Mackin was hoping that divisions between immigrant communities would undermine the strike. More than 22% of the plant's workers were English Canadian and nearly 18% were French Canadian. Chinese workers made up 10% of the workforce; Japanese workers made up 8%; and Norwegians, Finns, Swedes, and East Indians made up 5%, 4.7%, and 4.4%, respectively. But Maillardville's ethnic workers were not segregated from the larger community. Rather, immigrants lived next door to native-born workers and sent their children to the same company school. Chinese men worked alongside French-Canadians and everyone earned the same low wages. Maillardville's workers saw themselves as part of a broader working-class community that had a common interest in challenging employers to maintain a descent standard of living in the town.[3]

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[2] Quotes in Williams, "Ethnicity and Class Conflict at Maillardville/Fraser Mills," 101, 102, 104.

[3] Quote from "Minutes of the Strike Committee, Fraser Mills," September 21, 1931; demographic data from Williams, "Ethnicity and Class Conflict at Maillardville/Fraser Mills," 23-44.

It's therefore little surprise that the Strike Committee's meeting minutes reported no instances of scabbing over the course of the two-month strike. Likewise, the strong community in Maillardville did much to sustain the strike in the first few weeks. The moment the men walked out of the plant, the wives and mothers of workers established a relief kitchen. A day later, the Strike Committee elected a group of delegates to travel to nearby Vancouver and collect donations. One striker, according to strike meeting minutes, "liberated" cattle from a nearby government farm. Families with gardens donated produce to the strike kitchen. Community solidarity made it difficult for Canadian Western managers to break the strike. A few weeks in, the company offered wage increases only to white workers, not the plant's Asian workers, which the committee summarily dismissed. In late September, the company convinced the local priest to deny religious services to the strike's French-Canadian Catholics. The local priest Father Teck had long used the pulpit to criticize unionism and he'd denounced the strike as "radical revenge." When the strike began, Teck refused to give absolution to strikers, saying they could not receive God's forgiveness until they went back to work. "Father Teck is a good priest," one striker remarked, "and we do what he tells us—on Sunday." Indeed, not a single French-Canadian Catholic crossed the picket and workers responded by rounding up their Model T's on Sundays and driving the plant's Catholic families to a nearby town where a more sympathetic clergyman delivered religious rites.[4]

Unable to break the strike on their own, Canadian Western's management called on the provincial government to respond. In early October, several large contingents of Mounties arrived in Maillardville. They were joined by the local police force and busloads of scabs. On October 18th, strikers holding the picket line hurled rocks at scabs trying to enter the plant and injured a foreman. In response, policemen and Mounties started attacking the strikers, trying to forcefully disperse the picketers. For several days in late-October, Mounties fired tear gas into the crowds and attacked picketers with their batons. Some of the violence is recorded in the Strike Committee's meeting minutes. On October 17th, "Mrs. Taboue was hit by a police stick." On October 18th, "Bollock Coutier had [a] head injury."[5] Violence continued steadily for the next few weeks. Mass arrests also became commonplace. The largest arrest came on October 19th when, the local press reported, the police singled out ten men believed to be the strike's leaders. "Police had picked the men among the crowd whom they wished to arrest," the *British Columbian* reported, "and the whole procedure was methodically arranged." The ten men picked up, including strike leader Harold Pritchett, were charged with "unlawful assembly," "intent to carry out…interference with the operations of the Canadian Western Lumber Company at Fraser Mills," "throwing sticks and stones and causing damage to property," and finally, causing "persons in the

[4] Quotes from Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada: The Life and Times of an Industrial Union* (Vancouver: IWA Canada, 2000), 42; for community support networks during the strike see "Minutes of the Strike Committee, Fraser Mills," September through October, 1931; Williams, "Ethnicity and Class Conflict at Maillardville/Fraser Mills," 94-110.

[5] "Minutes of the Strike Committee, Fraser Mills," October 17 and 18, 1931.

neighborhood of such assembly to fear on reasonable grounds that the persons so assembled would disturb the peace tumultuously."[6]

Arne Johnson, a member of the Canadian Communist Party and an organizer for its Lumber Workers Industrial Union (LWIU) had been watching the Fraser Mills strike unfold. After the October arrests, he started sending carloads of people from Vancouver's Unemployed Workingmen's Association into Maillardville to bolster the picket lines. Other party members in nearby towns held raffles and dances to raise money for the Fraser Mills strike fund. Later, Johnson approached Pritchett and several members of the Strike Committee and asked them of they'd be interested in formally joining the union. In late November, roughly 70% of Fraser Mills' workers signed up to the LWIU and 50% of those also took out Communist Party membership cards, Pritchett included. In the weeks afterwards, support from the LWIU and Communist Party continued to pour into Maillardville. In mid-November, Johnson successfully organized LWIU sympathy strikes at two inland British Columbia Canadian Western subsidiaries.[7]

In November, another Canadian Western subsidiary closed due to the deteriorating Depression-era lumber market. Combined with the sympathy strikes, this put pressure on Fraser Mills' managers to get their plant running again. In mid-November, the company offered a settlement. It'd issue an across-the-board wage increase, agree to meet with a "workers' committee," and promise not to discriminate against the strike's leaders. The company did not offer formal union recognition, a closed shop, or abolishment of the scrip system. Hearing of the settlement, many in Malliardville announced that they were willing to stay out until the company met their full demands. But after close to two months with no pay, more workers were willing to accept the agreement. In early-December, the workers at Fraser Mills voted to return to work, but just by the narrowest of margins. Although the final settlement wasn't a complete victory for the strikers, the fact that they'd won a wage increase when workers across the Northwest timber industry were having their wages cut is certainly significant. Without a doubt, the LWIU and the Communist Party played a role in getting Fraser Mills' workers that wage increase. In addition to organizing the sympathy strike, those institutions, as one striker later remembered, provided "organization" and "experienced forces."[8] In another sense, though, the wage increase had been won by the larger community and the rank-and-file workers. They initiated the strike, they kept it going in its early months, and they battled Mounties and mill security guards on the picket lines. As historian Jeanne Meyers writes, "the network born of residential, familial, and class bonds sustained communal survival

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[6] As quoted in Williams, "Ethnicity and Class Conflict at Maillardville/Fraser Mills," 74.
[7] *Ibid*., 68-94; Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 43.
[8] As quoted in Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 43.

during the long strike."[9] One of the strikers offered a simpler, but no less astute analysis. Remembering the 1931 Fraser Mills strike, he said, "in this struggle, many good men and women were involved."[10]

This chapter explores the industrial union movement in the Northwest woods from the start of the Depression to the founding of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) in 1937. The Fraser Mills strike is a fitting place to start because it illustrates this chapter's chief argument: communities were central to the development of industrial unionism in the Northwest timber industry. The chronology of the Fraser Mills strike is important to pay attention to. The workers at Fraser Mills organized and struck the plant on their own, well before they had formal union recognition, and relied, to a great extent, on community and kinship networks to sustain the strike. Arne Johnson and the Communist Party's LWIU offered crucial support and helped formalize the strike, but ultimately working-class radicalism at the Fraser Mills was an outgrowth of community relationships. This pattern was repeated throughout the industry in the early-1930s. Timber-working communities that'd taken shape in the 1910s and 1920s were tight-knit and rooted in a culture of working-class solidarity. When the Depression hit, people in these communities relied on one another for support, which in many ways strengthened this working-class culture. And when employers started responding to the Depression-era lumber market with layoffs, wage-cuts, and work speed-ups, these communities responded, often before they had formal union representation, by protesting, and sometimes striking.[11]

While unionism in the lumber industry pivoted on community, I do not want to overstate my argument. Although workers in several communities like Maillardville did indeed organize on their own accord and run independent strikes, working-class anger and protest in other communities could be a bit more subtle and less visible. Nor do I intend to suggest that unions and political institutions were unimportant. Quite to the contrary, unions and politics mattered in the Northwest woods and shaped the industrial union movement in important ways. In the early-1930s, timber workers in northern Washington and British Columbia affiliated with unions run by the Communist Party. Workers in southern Washington and Oregon, on the other hand, turned to unions run by the American Federation of Labor (AFL). A region wide strike in 1935 brought these two movements together, and timber workers from both the Communist Party and AFL would work together to create the IWA in 1937. However, the IWA would be plagued by a factional dispute for the first decade of its existence, and this factionalism

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[9] Williams, "Ethnicity and Class Conflict at Mailladville/Fraser Mills," 113.

[10] As quoted in Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 43.

[11] Most histories of organizing in the Northwest woods in the early-1930s overemphasize the agency of Communist Party leaders and organizers and/or the AFL; my argument here, instead, places communities and rank-and-file activism at the center of Depression-era organizing. See Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 34-48; Andrew Parnaby, "What's Law Got do Do With It?: The IWA and the Politics of State Power in British Columbia, 1935-1939," *Labour/Le Travail* 44 (Fall 1999): 9-45; Stephen Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy: The IWA in Canada, 1937-1957," (PhD Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1989); Jerry Lembcke and William Tattam, *One Union in Wood: A Political History of the International Woodworkers of America* (Vancouver: Harbour Publishing, 1984); Vernon H. Jensen, *Lumber and Labor* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1945), 114-63.

very much had its roots in these early patterns of unionization. Still, the social and cultural foundation of industrial unionism in the Northwest woods, and eventually the IWA, could be found in these communities, which formed in earlier decades and which were strengthened during the Depression.

COMMUNITY AND COMPANY TOWNS IN THE DEPRESSION

The Depression hit the lumber industry especially hard. Throughout the 1920s, the industry had become almost entirely dependent on sales to the construction industry, and when building projects stopped after the stock market crashed in 1929, everyone stopped buying lumber. Though the lumber prices fell precipitously between 1919 and 1931, operators actually increased the amount they produced. Most companies had expended a significant amount of capital expanding their operations in the late-1920s, and when prices fell in 1929, they ran their mills at full capacity to try and pay back their creditors, which only exacerbated the crisis. By 1932, the price of lumber had fallen so low that most operators, no matter how much they produced, couldn't remain solvent. Lumber companies across North America started closing their doors. In 1925, the U.S. lumber industry produced 41 billion board feet, but in 1932, it produced just 10 billion board feet. In 1929, Washington and Oregon had together produced 12 billion board feet, whereas in 1933 the two states only turned out 3 billion board feet. On the other side of the border, British Columbian lumbermen produced 3 billion board feet in 1929, but by 1932 they produced less than 2 billion board feet. By 1933, less than twenty percent of the Northwest's lumber companies that'd been operational in 1929 were still functioning.[12]

The way workers experienced the Depression depended a lot on where they lived. Although most companies responded to the crash by immediately laying-off large percentages of their workforce, others tried fairly hard to keep their workers employed. In the north central Oregon town of Shevlin, the company maintained a skeleton crew throughout most of the Depression and kept men working by giving them odd jobs to do around camp, like painting houses or repairing buildings. Other companies transitioned to four- or six-hour shifts in an effort to spread the work around. It was rare, but a few companies stopped charging rents or forgave utility bills. Many companies looked at the money they were spending on building upkeep, schools, worker housing, and welfare programs and got out of the business of company towns altogether. In early-1932, Henry McCleary sold his holdings to the Simpson timber company, including the town that bore his name. After taking ownership of McCleary, Simpson turned the town into an independent municipality, though Simpson Company board members continued to serve in positions of municipal leadership up through the 1960s. And, of course, many companies just folded, and along with them, their towns. In 1933, the Bordeaux Lumber Company stopped operating in

[12] U.S. Forest Service, *Lumber Production, 1869-1934* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1936); John B. Woods, "The Forestry Situation in the U.S. Today and a Simple Workable Remedy," *Journal of Forestry* 28 (November 1930): 930; W.B. Greeley, "The West Coast Problem of Stabilizing Lumber Production," *Journal of Forestry* 28 (February 1930):196.

the Northwest, closed its towns of Bordeaux and Mason, and sold all its landholdings to Washington State. A year later, the Pacific States Logging Company, which had liquidated its last forests in the overproduction rush in the early years of the Depression, closed and along with it, the town of Selleck. Company failure was doubly hard for workers because it meant they'd not only lost their job, but their home and community as well.[13]

Loggers and sawyers lucky enough to be working at a company that made it through the Depression nevertheless had to contend with significantly smaller paychecks, unsteady work, and the constant threat of lay-offs. Between 1929 and 1933, employment in Oregon's lumber industry dropped 60%, from 32,532 to 13,007. Annual wages paid out in the state's industry dropped 70%, from $51 million to $11 million. Minimum wages also fell. In January of 1930, the Oregon and American Lumber Company out of Vernonia was starting hook tenders at $9.60 a day. Ten months later, hook tenders were starting at $4.60 a day. Work also became unreliable. "There wasn't any sawmills that were steady at all," remembered Bill McKenna, a timber worker from Coos Bay, Oregon, "most of the people would work for a few weeks and they'd be off for a while." Work didn't necessarily guarantee a paycheck, either. Most employers were barely solvent and often chose repaying creditors over meeting their payrolls. Victor West, another Coos Bay sawmill worker remembered that in the 1930s his paychecks were "bouncing all over the place."[14]

Loggers also had to contend with several new technologies that employers adopted to try and streamline production. In the early-1930s, several companies started replacing their large, expensive, and labor-intensive steam donkeys and overhead yarding systems with fleets of Caterpillar tractors. What workers called "Cat logging" was just as fast as overhead yarding systems and more importantly, at least from employers' perspective, it required far fewer workers. Diesel trucks also became more affordable in the 1930s and several operators stopped building railroad spurs and instead started using trucks to transport cut timbers to the mills. One of the most important technological developments that reshaped work in the woods came in the early-1930s, when the managers at Bloedel, Stewart, and Welch invited representatives from a small German engine manufacturer called Stihl to to test out a gas-powered saw their engineers had been developing. The firm's managers and Stihl's engineers continued to collaborate throughout the remainder of the decade and by the late-1930s, Stihl had been awarded several patents and

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[13] Transcript, Lee Maker interview, March 14, 1995, by Ronald L. Gregory, in Ronald L. Gregory, *Shevlin-Hixon Oral History Project: Live in Railroad Logging Camps of Central Oregon, 1916-1950* (Bend: Central Oregon Community College, 1996), 81; Linda Carlson, *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 164-70.

[14] Quotes in William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998, revised 2006), 82, 83. On unemployment figures and wage rates, see Dexter M. Keezer, "Production, Employment, Wages, and Prices in Douglas-fir Lumber Industry," *Monthly Labor Review* 53 (October 1941): 849-61; Unemployment Insurance Commission of the State of Oregon, *Report and Recommendations* (Salem: State of Oregon, 1935), 54; on wage rates in the O-A Lumber Company see Wage Data, folder 2, box 3, Oregon-American Lumber Company Records, Special Collections, University of Oregon.

was marketing its new "Timberhog" chainsaw to operators in the Douglas fir forest. In 1936, the *BC Lumber Worker* advised IWA members to stay away from the saws, warning that a single man with a chainsaw could do the work of eight fellers using hand tools.[15]

As jobs became more and more scarce, several timber workers left their camps and looked for employment elsewhere. A fortunate few were able to get jobs in New Deal make-work programs. Young timber workers were especially drawn to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), largely because they could channel their experience working in the woods to the Corps' projects. Founded in 1933 and operated by the U.S. Forest Service, the CCC constructed logging roads, campgrounds, and fire lookouts, fought fires, and replanted trees throughout the rural Northwest. Likewise, the Civil Works Administration (CWA) undertook many projects in the region. In southern Oregon alone, the CWA employed more than 500 people, many of whom came from rural logging communities in the area. Canadian make-work programs weren't as large, but several British Columbian loggers got jobs cutting timber for construction of relief camps built by the provincial Department of Public Works. Workers who couldn't get jobs in government programs tried their luck in cities, though most quickly returned. After Curt Beckham lost his job in a Coos Bay sawmill, he headed for Portland. He worked as a gas station attendant for a few months before getting laid off, then as a hosiery salesman, before getting laid-off again. Not having eaten in days, and with only seventy-three cents in his pocket, Beckham grabbed a train back to Coos Bay. The town was struggling, just like everywhere else, but at least there "you weren't alone."[16]

Indeed, many workers like Beckham learned that surviving the Depression was easier if you could draw on the community and kinship networks of home. The communities that'd taken shape in company towns in the 1910s and 1920s became stronger in many ways in the 1930s as workers looked to one another for support and took care of one another, just as they always had. Ted Goodwin, an itinerant preacher who delivered religious services to company towns in southern Washington, recalled an old chewing tobacco tin in the church in Ryderwood where people dropped in whatever coins they could part with to help out their neighbors. Residents in Longview started a relief fund and encouraged workers who still had jobs to donate $1 a month. Julia Bertram, the wife of a sawmill worker in a company town

[15] "Mechanical Saw May Throw Many Men Out of Work," *BC Lumber Worker*, October 21, 1936, p.1. On IWA's response to chainsaws, also see "Power Saw," *Timber Worker*, September 16, 1939, p.1; "Power Saw Introduction Raises New Problem for IWA," *Timber Worker*, September 16, 1939, p.1. On chainsaw's development, see Ellis Lucia, "A Lesson from Nature: Joe Cox and His Revolutionary Saw Chain," *Journal of Forest History* 25 (July 1981): 158-65. On Cat logging and truck logging, see Richard A. Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest: Production: Science, and Regulation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 32-40.

[16] Curt Beckham, *Gyppo Logging Days* (Myrtle Point, OR: Hillside Book Company, 1978), 10. Though most CCC enrollees were young men from cities, young rural workers also played a role in the Corps. See Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 85. For an overview of the CCC, see Neil Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). On British Columbian public works projects in rural logging communities, see Richard A. Rajala, *Up-Coast: Forests and Industry on British Columbia's North Coast, 1870-2005* (Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2006), 93.

just south of Portland remembered going to more affluent neighborhoods in the city and asking for food or clothes for children, then distributing what'd she'd scourged, begged, borrowed, and in a few instances, stolen, to unemployed families back in camp.[17]

Camp life could also be easier in the Depression because workers continued to turn to the forest for subsistence. "If there was going to be a depression," wrote Sam Churchill, a logger from Oregon, "the camp was about as comfortable a place to sit one out as you can imagine…we were virtually surrounded by foods that nature provided."[18] Workers like Churchill continued to fill their tables with game they'd hunted, fish they'd caught, and berries and mushrooms they'd plucked from forest clearings, and there was never a shortage of wood for heating and cooking fuel. While stories of unemployment, short hours, and lost wages are commonplace in the Northwest woods during the 1930s, there are no reports of people going hungry. Cliff Thorwald, an Oregon logger recalled one time during the Depression when his family had a deer waiting to be dressed sitting in the bathtub, several large salmon waiting to be cleaned, a stringer of trout that needed to be gutted, and several gunny sacks full of clams. "You can imagine all the work," he said, "cut up and can, cut up and can." There was no reason to go hungry, Thorwald said, "if you could get around, or if you had friends who could get around." Dow Beckham, also from southern Oregon, agreed that the forest helped many workers make it through the Depression. "Here," he said, "the depression hardly touched people as far as eating is concerned," adding, people in camp "had a big garden; they had deer; they had fish…but the money part, they didn't have."[19]

Not that workers like Beckham necessarily needed money so long as they remained in camp. Instead, a barter economy became commonplace in most Northwest company towns. Ernest Teagle, who lived in the Washington company town of McCleary most of his life, remembered that in the 1930s trading became a way for people to see to their day-to-day needs. Loggers willing to poach deer and fish traded with other residents who had excess flour, salt, and sugar. Moonshiners became particularly prosperous because everyone was willing to trade for whiskey. Families with gardens traded potatoes and produce. Just as they'd done in the 1920s, families in the 1930s kept bees and sold the honey in town, collected bounties on cougars, and harvested cascara root for pharmacists. Several families picked sorrel and ferns for florists. Beckham remembered that ferns sold for "two cents a bunch of fifty-five." After a half-cent was deducted for shipping, "you'd get a dollar and a half for a hundred bunches." Picking ferns

[17] Ted Goodwin, *Stories of Western Loggers* (Chehalis, WA: Loggers World, Inc., 1977), 92; John M. McClelland, *R.A. Long's Planned City: The Story of Longview* (Longview: Longview Publishing Company, 1976), 201; Julian Ruutila (nee Bertram) in Sandy Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union: An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruuttila* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 60-1; Carlson, *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest*, 165-6.
[18] Sam Churchill, *Don't Call Me Ma* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 191-2.
[19] Thorwald and Beckham quotes in Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 91, 88.

was nothing like felling multi-ton Douglas firs, Beckham said, and for many men in camp it was "degrading for them to say, 'I've got to go undercut some fern today,'" but it was better than nothing.[20]

Although bartering, hunting, and gardening dulled some of the harder edges of the Depression, there was still only so much workers could take. As the Depression continued, wage cuts increased, layoffs became routine, and several employers adopted speed-up systems that workers interpreted as a violation of their right to control workplaces. Many probably shared the view of Julia Bertram, who said that by the early 1930s timber workers and their families "got sick and tired of being slaves."[21] Workers in the Northwest woods, like workers elsewhere in the 1930s, started organizing. Two movements developed. In British Columbia and northern Washington, workers looked to the Communist Party's nascent timber workers unions and mass political organizations. In southern Washington and Oregon, workers organized independent unions and then affiliated with the AFL. Although these movements had different ideological underpinnings they both relied upon, and were very much an extension of, the communities that'd been built in the 1920s and had now been strengthened through the mutuality and collective suffering of the Depression.

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND NORTHERN WASHINGTON: THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Though it's not a perfect line of demarcation, the Communist Party was most active in the woods north of the Washington counties that bordered the Columbia River. This geography of radicalism was shaped, mostly, by two factors. The first is a longer history of immigration. Industries in northern Washington and British Columbia tended to draw more radical immigrant workers from eastern Europe and Scandinavia, many of whom belonged to leftist political organizations or had experience in the radical trade unions of their homeland. The second reason is there were more established traditions of working-class radicalism in this part of the country. The Knights of Labor, a militant though virulently anti-Chinese union had been active in Washington and Vancouver Island mining districts in the 1880s and 1890s. The Socialist Party also had a large presence in Washington and British Columbia throughout the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There was also a tradition of radical timber worker unionism in this part of the region. The Shingle Weavers Union was among the largest unions in Progressive Era Washington and British Columbia. It was an independent union at first, and later affiliated with the AFL. Over the course of its roughly thirty-year existence it led several large, high-profile strikes in Everett and the Seattle neighborhood of Ballard. Historians have exaggerated the influence of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), but it was still an important union for timber workers and it, too, led several high-profile strikes in 1911, 1912, and 1917, as well as many of its

[20] As quoted in *ibid*., 90. Ernest Teagle, *Out of the Woods: The Story of McCleary* (Montesano, WA: Simpson Logging Company, 1956), 21; Carlson, *Company Towns of the Pacific Northwest*, 166-7.

[21] Bertram in Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union*, 51.

infamous "free speech fights" in places like Spokane (1909) and Aberdeen, Washington (1911), and Vancouver, British Columbia (1912).[22]

It's tempting to draw a direct line between Communist Party organizing in the 1930s and Progressive Era radicalism. But this temptation should be avoided, largely because many of the Northwest's Progressive Era radical institutions were no longer effectively functioning by the end of the 1920s. Many fell victim to state-sponsored repression during the Red Scare of the early 1920s, others were driven apart by factionalism or in-fighting. More often, it was some combination of both. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Socialist Party fractured several times, most notably when the pro-Bolshevik faction split off to found what would become the Communist Party. By the end of the 1920s, Washington State's Socialist Party counted only eighteen members. The Shingle Weavers' Union was largely broken after a major strike in Everett in 1916. Afterwards, its members regrouped and affiliated with the AFL and it became a far more conservative organization. The IWW probably suffered the most. Several times in the 1920s, the Northwestern IWW had its offices raided and many of its leaders jailed. It was also disrupted by factionalism and after the Russian Revolution, several IWW leaders and members joined the nascent Communist Party while another IWW wing became virulently anti-Communist. The IWW was an institutionally loose organization, so exact membership figures are hard to come by. But, at the height of its power it probably represented somewhere around 4,000 and 6,000 timber workers throughout Washington and British Columbia. By 1925, it only had about 800 members in the Northwest, most of whom were located in Grays Harbor. IWW members attempted to regroup in up-coast British Columbia under the auspices of a new organization, the One Big Union (OBU). The OBU did organize several lumber camps in northern British Columbia, though it never spread to the industry's major mills in Vancouver and large logging operations on Vancouver Island. At least in British Columbia, the decline of organized labor can be seen in the number of reported strikes. In 1920, the provincial government counted 68 strikes involving more than 200 workers. In 1929, it counted only seven.[23]

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[22] For the way patterns of immigration shaped cultures of radicalism in northern Washington and British Columbia, see Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 1-17; Paul Phillips, *No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia* (Vancouver: B.C. Federation of Labour, 1967), 25-46. On the history of radical unions and working-class politics in this part of the region, see Jeffrey A. Johnson, *"They Are All Red Out Here": Socialist Politics in the Pacific Northwest, 1895-1925* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008). On the IWW in the Northwest Lumber Industry see Erik Loomis, "The Battle for the Body: Work and Environment in the Pacific Northwest Lumber Industry, 1800-1940" (PhD Dissertation, University of New Mexico, 2008); Robert L. Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods: The I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest* (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1967); Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the IWW* (New York: Quadangle/The New York Times Books, 1969), 433-74.

[23] On IWW's decline, see Loomis, "The Battle for the Body," 166-260; Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods*, 185-230. On the IWW in Grays Harbor, see Aaron A. Goings, "Red Harbor: Class, Violence, and Community in Grays Harbor, Washington" (PhD Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 2011). On the OBU see David Jay Bercuson, *Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of One Big Union* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978). Strike statistics in BC from Williams, "Ethnicity and Class Conflict at Maillardville/Fraser Mills," 24.

The largest union in the Northwest woods throughout the 1920s was the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen (4L), though calling it a union is a stretch. It described itself as a "voluntary association of employers and employees of the logging and lumbering industry in the Pacific Northwest, supported and controlled jointly by men and management" and claimed to be "neither a trade union nor a company union, but an employee-representation organization."[24] In practice, the 4L was very much a company union and membership was anything but voluntary; most employers made membership a condition of employment. The 4L grew out of World War I. When the U.S. entered the war in 1917 it wasn't producing enough lumber to meet wartime demands. Late in the year, Army Colonel Brice P. Disque established the War Department's Spruce Production Division, which used soldiers to fill wartime lumber contracts. Then, after the war, Disque stayed on in the Northwest and organized the 4L to address what he called the industry's "labor troubles." The 4L was organized on the "twin principles of conference and cooperation." In theory, this meant that workers with grievances could meet with employers to discuss their issues and come to an accord. And the 4L, at least in the early-1920s, had some tangible benefits for workers. It established minimum wage rates, mandated the eight hour day, and did much to improve sanitary conditions in bachelor camps. But by the mid-1920s, it'd reversed most of these policies and by the late-1920s, 4L camps were back to ten-hour days and minimum wage rates were being ignored. Not surprisingly, workers never spoke very enthusiastically about the 4L and many believed it was just a way to funnel off their wages. "We have a monthly check-off of 45 cents" a logger from Idaho explained, "but none of us ever hear of a meeting or any activity. It is just that much more out of our pockets and wages are low enough…the organization has never benefited me and most of the workers here distrust it."[25]

The Northwest contingents of the Communist Party did make it through the 1920s, but just barely. The American and Canadian Party affiliates had both been established after the Socialist Party split in response to the Russian Revolution. Although the Canadian and American Communist Parties weren't immune to the radical repression of the 1920s, they survived, in part, because they were diffuse and Party loyalists were often hard to identify. Following official party policies established by the Communist International (Comintern) in Moscow, party members "bored from within," that is, joined mainstream political parties and labor unions and, keeping their membership largely secret, attempted to shift the politics of these organizations leftward. This changed in 1929 when the Comintern announced a new direction. When the Depression struck, policy makers in Moscow declared that global capitalism

[24] War Department, Headquarters Spruce Division, Bureau of Aircraft Production, "General Orders No. 1, Spruce Division," July 9th, 1918, folder 6, box 1, Brice P. Disque Papers, coll. 115, Special Collections, University of Oregon.

[25] As quoted in Charlotte Todes, *Labor and Lumber* (New York: International Publishers, 1931), 148. On the 4L see Loomis, "The Battle for the Body," 210-60; Harold M Hyman, *Soldiers and Spruce: Origins of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen* (Los Angeles: Institute of Industrial Relations, 1963); Robert L. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer: The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (December 1960): 434-51.

was on the verge of an acute economic and political crisis and the Comintern began calling on its affiliates to create independent and militant unions and political organizations to prepare the working-class for what it believed would be the impending revolution. In terms of membership figures, the Communist Parties of the American Northwest and British Columbia remained relatively small organizations. But party activists were nevertheless determined and resourceful, which helped ensure the party had a reach beyond its limited membership.[26]

Throughout the Northwest during the Depression-era the Communist Party was most visible in its unemployed organizing. In British Columbia, party activists established the Unemployed Workingmen's Association, which led several high-profile marches in Vancouver and Victoria in the early-1930s. In the U.S., party members organized the Unemployed Councils. Throughout the early-1930s, Washington's Unemployed Councils could be seen leading marches through the streets of Northwest cities like Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, and Bellingham. An unemployed march in Aberdeen on February 12, 1931 was typical of such events. "In spite of rain" party organizers reported, "no less than three thousand" unemployed workers marched through downtown Aberdeen, holding signs that read "Work or Wages" and "Defend the Soviet Union." This "mighty demonstration" closed off the intersection at the corner of Heron and G streets, in front of city hall, while speakers loudly derided the policies of the "capitalist class" that exacerbated the problems of the unemployed. In Washington State, the Unemployed Councils were likely more responsible for the Communist Party's growth in the early years of the Depression than any single other factor.[27]

Several timber workers who would become leaders in the industrial union movement in the Northwest woods and be important figures in the IWA were introduced to radicalism through Communist Party unemployed organizing. Karley Larsen who, in the late-1940s, would lead the IWA's northern Washington District Council and later be tried under the anti-Communist Smith Act trials, was one of those workers. Larsen was born in Denmark and immigrated to Washington with his family sometime around 1910. In the 1920s, he got a job at the Lyman Timber Company not too far outside Olympia. Until the Depression, Larsen had fairly steady employment at Lyman, but like many timber workers he found himself out of work after the crash and headed into Olympia sometime in the early-1930s. Larsen first heard about the Communist Party when he was approached by an organizer and asked to participate

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[26] For a good general history of the "Third Period" Communism in the US, see Randi Storch, *Red Chicago: American Communism at is Grassroots, 1928-1935* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

[27] *Grays Harbor Worker*, vol. 1, no.1, reel 138, delo 2494, Files of the Communist Party of the USA in the Comintern Archives, the Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University (hereafter CPUSA papers). On membership figures for the Communist Party's District 12 (which included Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, but was mostly centered in Washington), see "Party Registration—1931," reel 189, delo 2494, "Registration of New Members—1933," reel 254, delo 3288, "Analysis of New Members—1933," reel 254, delo 3288, CPUSA papers. On the Party's Unemployed Councils in Washington, see Terry R. Willis, "Unemployed Citizens of Seattle, 1900-1933: Hulet Wells, Seattle Labor, and the Struggle for Economic Security," (PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1997), 228-82; Eugene V. Dennett, *Agitprop: The Life of an American Working-Class Radical* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990).

in an unemployed march in downtown Olympia in 1932. A year later, in 1933, Larsen led a raid on an Anacortes, Washington grocery store where he and other members of the Communist Party seized the food and distributed it to unemployed workers.[28]

Though Unemployed Councils were quite visible in Washington's and British Columbia's largest cities, they didn't have much of a presence in smaller rural communities and company towns. Workers in these places were instead introduced to the Communist Party through its woodworker affiliates, the National Lumber Workers Union (NLWU) in the U.S. and the LWIU in British Columbia, both founded in 1929. Both the NLWU and LWIU hoped to organize the Northwest's timber workers into "one big industrial union." The list of demands that the NLWU published at its founding convention in Seattle speak to the Communist Party's vision of how it would attempt to reshape industrial relations in the Northwest woods. The demands included, "a minimum wage of $6.00 a day for all workers in the industry, with double time for overtime; a 5-day, 35-hour week with a full week's wage." As well as "free employment service under workers' control; full pay for loss of time caused by shutdowns due to defective machinery, repairs and other such causes; an annual vacation of not less than two weeks with full wages; the elimination of the speed-up system." And, "free access to all working class newspapers and literature at all times; installation of safety devices in the camps and mills to protect health and life; compensation laws providing full wages when a worker is injured by accident." And last, "immediate release of class war prisoners." The LWIU passed an almost identical set of organizing principles at its founding convention.[29]

The NLWU and LWIU certainly had radical rhetoric, but they didn't create an insurgent mood in woodworking-communities. Rather, they gave workers' existing angers and frustration focus and support. Throughout the early-1930s, several timber workers complained about wage cuts and speed-ups and were often willing to strike without the guidance of a formal union. The main thing the NLWU and LWIU did was reach out to these movements. Indeed, NLWU and LWIU reports filed in the early-1930s show very little evidence of direct organizing. Instead, what both unions tended to do was find independent workers' committees or strikes already underway and lend institutional support, organizers, literature, or offer to help bolster picket lines. This had been the case at Fraser Mills in 1931, when the strike was already well underway and Arne Johnson reached out to Harold Pritchett and offered the Strike Committee the assistance of the LWIU. The situation was much the same at Clear Lake, Washington when, in 1931, the NLWU called up Party members to support the pickets of an ongoing strike that'd started in response to a speed-up. The same was true at a 1932 strike in Anacortes, where workers, protesting a wage-cut, spontaneously walked out. Two days after the walkout, NLWU organizers arrived

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[28] Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 36.
[29] As quoted in Todes, *Labor and Lumber*, 188-9.

and helped the strike's leaders prevent a back-to-work movement. Or, as the organizer put in his report, "oust fakers."[30]

Even if Party organizers didn't create radicalism in the lumber industry they still played a very important role in the region's history of industrial unionism by connecting these isolated struggles and making them part of a larger movement. One of those organizers was Ernie Dalskog, a Finnish émigré who'd been working in Vancouver Island logging camps since the early-1920s. Dalskog joined the party in 1931 and his role in a 1934 organizing drive demonstrates the crucial role played by organizers in linking radicalized communities. In the spring of 1934, Dalskog and fellow LWIU organizer Jack Brown rented a boat and headed for the northern part of the island "to get to the camps where roads were inaccessible" where they signed "at least three dozen" loggers up to the LWIU. From there, they traveled down the coast to some of the camps outside Campbell River and had a "productive" meeting. Brown stayed in Campbell River to continue organizing while Dalskog jumped in car with another organizer and headed to Brown Bay, where they arrived "just in time" to talk to loggers after they were done eating dinner. A few days later Dalskog met up with Arne Johnson and the pair tried to go to Englewood but were blocked from camp by the superintendent. The men started to return to Campbell River but "didn't get the speeder" and had to hike several miles into town. "I just had ordinary oxfords," Dalskog recalled, and "had a hell of a time keeping up." By the end of the organizing drive, Dalskog said he was "completely all in," and "hadn't slept for two nights." Still, he'd visited nearly every major camp on the island and signed up several workers to the Party. Myrtle Bergren, the wife of a logger who lived on Vancouver Island, explained that men like Dalskog were central to connecting the towns. They "did all they could to spread the word of unionism," she wrote, and "increased the feeling of solidarity amongst the union-conscious."[31]

The fact that organizers like Dalskog came from timber-working communities was important. They knew how to speak to timber workers and their families and understood what messages would resonate with workers. More often than not, they focused on bread-and-butter issues, like wages, and working-conditions, and far less on the Party's revolutionary message. This created an interesting back-and-forth between organizers, who stressed the pragmatic benefits of industrial unionism, and the Party's leadership, who wanted organizers to do more "agit-prop work." In one organizing report, Communist leaders in Washington complained that organizers were "very leary [sic.] to bring out the face of the Party." In another, a Party leader accused an NLWU organizer of promoting "sectarianism, tendencies of isolation" and delivering messages that were "drifting away from the party." Yet another complained that

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[30] Plan of Action for Northwest District, 1929, reel 189, delo 2494; *Northwest Worker*, reel 224, delo 2907; D.O. District #12 to Org. Commission, June 22, 1933, reel 254, delo 3288, CPUSA Papers.

[31] Transcript, intervie with Ernie Dalskog by Clay Perry, October 29, 1979, folder 5, box 275, Records of the International Woodworkers of America, Special Collections, University of Oregon, pp. 21, 42, 48, 56, 60. Myrtle Bergren, *Tough Timber: The Loggers of B.C.—Their Story* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1967, 82-3.

NLWU organizers "have not sufficiently come forward as the political leaders of the workers." Organizers fired back that the Party's revolutionary rhetoric was "too complicated…and consequently you are driving the masses away from you." Said one NLWU organizer, "comrades should give *practical* advices to those who may be looking for one." He encouraged leaders to abandon "leftist slogans" and instead focus on "immediate economic demands."[32] Dalskog would've agreed. In recounting his experiences during the Vancouver Island organizing drive, he remembered that anytime he started speaking about capitalism's inherent contradictions, the coming revolution, or offered a Marxist-inspired analysis of wage rates, workers called him "goofy."[33] Perhaps LWIU organizer J.M. Clarke put it best. Writing to the Canadian Party's headquarters, Clarke complained that the literature he was being asked to spread in the camps was worthless. "What in the hell is the need of trying to persist and subjecting yourself to unlimited hardships in the face of Goddamn driveling shit like this?" he asked, continuing by characterizing official Party literature as "words, words, words; oceans of empty verbosity; miles of trollop; reams of junk; hours of scatter-brained blah that in no way indicates the slightest understanding of conditions as they actually exist in the country among the rank-and-file workers."[34]

By most accounts, workers responded well to the more pragmatic message of unionism being delivered by organizers like Clarke, and communities did a great deal to assist organizers as they travelled from camp to camp. Workers or their family members often ushered organizers into a town under the cover of night and hid them in their company homes, out of view of employers. Because organizers didn't like to rely on official Party literature, organizing efforts in the Northwest came to rely on more homegrown literature. After the 1931 Fraser Mills strike, the LWIU started publishing the *BC Lumber Worker*. In Washington, organizers relied on the Seattle Communist Party's, *Voice of Action*. Radical literature discovered in camp usually became fuel for the camp stoves, so workers devised clever ways of hiding union papers from their employers. Bundles of paper were placed inside candy boxes or in packages disguised with women's handwriting. Others hid bundles of the papers in loose floor boards or left copies in workers' lavatories, where camp superintendents rarely went. Community members working in camp offices grabbed the literature out of the weekly mail before it could be discovered by employers. Communities also used these papers to develop a communication network and talk to one another across camps. Letters published in the papers reported which camps were hiring, which

[32] D.O. District #12 to Organizing Commission, June 22, 1933, District Organizing Bulleting, December 12, 1933, reel 254, delo 3288, M. Raport to Organizational Commission, Centrla Committee, December 2, 1933, reel 254, delo 3288; Finnish Bureau to Polbouro of the C.C, CPUSA, December 2, 1932, reel 214, delo 2736; anonymous to editor of *Rodo Shimbun*, 1932, reel 214, delo 2768, CPUSA Papers.
[33] Transcript, Dalskog interview by Perry, 48.
[34] As quoted in Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 43.

employers paid the best wages, and how to use aliases to avoid the blacklist. Articles told workers where organizing was occurring and how to contact organizers.[35]

It's difficult to determine with any precision the size or strength of the NLWU and LWIU. Both were fairly loose organizations and didn't do a good job of keeping track of membership figures. In 1933, the *Voice of Action* reported that the NLWU had 2,500 members.[36] Party papers were notorious for inflating membership numbers, but this figure seems reasonable enough. Membership figures for the LWIU are a bit more elusive, though the union said it'd organized most of Vancouver Island as well as the major sawmills in and around Vancouver. Strikes aren't necessarily a good gauge of the NLWU and LWIU's influence, either. As has been shown, the unions did more to support existing strikes; reading organizing reports it's not always clear what strikes the unions organized and which ones they merely took credit for. However, in 1934, the LWIU did successfully lead a massive strike on Vancouver Island that shut down most of the Island's operations for nearly a month and netted a 50 cents/hour wage increase for LWIU members. Even here, though, as historian Gordon Hak points out, "the outbreak and spread of the strike had been neither initiated nor expected by the leaders of the LWIU."[37] The ultimate significance of early organizing drives, though, isn't read in strikes or membership statistics. Rather, it's that they connected the disparate radicalisms fomenting in logging communities and company towns and helped workers understand that their growing frustrations were part of a larger movement. As one IWA member said in an official history of the union published in the 1990s, the early organizing drives in northern Washington and British Columbia "permanently established confidence among the loggers in their ability to fight back."[38] The political character of unionism would be different in southern Washington and Oregon. Still, some of these same patterns would be repeated.

Oregon and Southern Washington: Anti-Bedaux Activism, Federal Unions, and the AFL

Piecing together the history of union organizing in Oregon and southern Washington during the early Depression years is much more difficult, largely because there's little historic documentation to go on. Prior to 1934, most organizing efforts in the woods of Oregon and southern Washington were independently run and consequently, left no records. The Portland-area press makes scant mention of strikes in Oregon lumber in the early-1930s, and the handful of strikes that the papers mention are usually described as "independent job actions." Since the Communist Party's influence more-or-less stopped in the Washington counties lining the Columbia River, radical newspapers from Washington focused mostly on issues and strikes in the northern part of the region and make only passing mention of organizing

[35] Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 82-3; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 25-6.
[36] *Voice of Action*, December 19, 1933, p.1.
[37] Gordon Hak, "Red Wages: Communists and the 1934 Vancouver Island Loggers Strike," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 80 (July 1989): 84.
[38] Clay Perry, "A History of the IWA," *Lumber Worker*, October 3, 1991, p.4.

efforts in Oregon. Likewise, the Party's internal memos and correspondences are focused on Washington and British Columbia and describe few organizing campaigns or strikes in Oregon. The Communist Party did briefly issue an Oregon newsletter, the *Portland Worker*, but only three issues exist in the Party's archive and it's not clear how many editions were printed. Oral histories and memoirs written by Oregon timber workers that discuss unions and working-class radicalism are also largely silent about the years before 1934. It's therefore little surprise that most histories of timber worker organizing in the Northwest tend to skip over Oregon in the early-1930s or deal with organizing efforts in this part of the region only obliquely.[39]

Still, trying to understand organizing efforts in Oregon and southern Washington in the early Depression is important for two reasons. First, it would mostly be leaders from the Portland area who would lead the anti-communist faction of the IWA. Understanding the political history of the IWA, therefore, depends, in part, on understanding the historical development of unionism in Oregon and why it was that workers there tended to distrust Communists. Second, the evidence we do have of organizing efforts in the early Depression years speak to the importance of community in the union movement and supports the larger contention that labor unionism in the Northwest woods was very much an extension of community dynamics that'd taken shape in earlier years.

The major reason that there's no evidence for timber workers' unions in Oregon and southern Washington in the early-1930s is, quite simply, that there were largely no timber workers' unions in Oregon and southern Washington in the early-1930s. Much of this, Jerry Lembcke and William Tattam argue in their history of the IWA, has to do with immigration patterns. While the lumber industry in Washington and British Columbia drew immigrants who "brought with them a more advanced political attitude from their experience with industrial unions and socialist movements in England and the Scandinavian countries," Oregon's lumber industry drew fewer immigrants and more workers from conservative agrarian communities who had "little industrial or socialist experience." Consequently, the authors conclude, "the conditions for radicalism and industrial unionism were absent" in Oregon.[40] Census data support Lembcke and Tattam's assertion. In 1920, 57% of Washington's timber workers were either foreign-born or the child of a foreign-born parent. Only 35% of Oregon's timber workers were foreign-born or the child of a foreign-born parent. Likewise, in 1920, close to 17% of Washington's

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[39] For the *Portland Worker* see reel 224, delo 2907, CPUSA Papers. For histories of early Depression-era organizing in the Oregon woods, which tend to skip over the years between 1929 and 1934, see Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 146-7; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 19-20; William M. Tattam, "Sawmill Workers and Radicalism: Portland, Oregon, 1929-1941," (MA Thesis, University of Oregon, 1970); Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 151-61.

[40] Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 11.

timber workers came from a Scandinavian country while only 7% of Oregon's timber workers came from a Scandinavian country.[41]

The more immediate reasons there were no timber workers' unions in Oregon in the early-1930s, though, had to do with the AFL's dominance in Portland, in particular, and the whole of Oregon throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Since it came to Oregon not long after its founding in 1887, the AFL had become powerful in Oregon, and especially in Portland. As elsewhere, Oregon's AFL said that immigrants diluted the labor movement's prestige and it tended to only reach out to skilled white male workers. So while Oregon AFL had strong building trades unions, a strong teamsters union, and several powerful craft unions, it ignored industries worked by unskilled immigrants, like lumber. Portland's AFL also tended to shy away from radicalism. It looked down on the Knights of Labor in the late-nineteenth century, was highly critical of the IWW in the early twentieth century, and especially wearisome of the Communist Party in the 1930s. AFL leaders said that unions should stay out of politics, and especially radical politics, and instead endorsed what they called "pure and simple unionism." This gave working-class politics in Oregon a far more conservative tenor. "Nowhere else in the North Pacific Region," writes historian Carlos Schwantes, "were labor leaders such models of restraint and caution as in Portland."[42]

Throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Portland-area AFL was fairly effective at stopping the march of more radical working-class institutions into Oregon. The AFL's response to the Socialist Party's Unemployed Citizen League (UCL) shows how, in part, Oregon's conservative labor leaders worked to keep the far left out of Portland. The Northwest chapter of the UCL had been founded in 1931 by Carl Branin, an affiliate of the Seattle Labor College. It was the Socialist Party's equivalent of the Communist Party's Unemployed Councils and it, too, called on state and local governments to provide relief and work for the needy. The first attempt to bring the UCL to Portland came on February 10, 1931, when Socialist Party activists organized a six-hundred person march on Portland's city hall and demanded that Mayor George Baker immediately pass policies authorizing "free streetcar rides for the unemployed and their families" and allow "the use of city property and vacant buildings for housing the unemployed who could not afford to pay rent." While, in terms of turnout, the UCL march was a success, immediately afterwards the AFL initiated an attack on the UCL and effectively discredited it among the city's working-class. "Keep your faith in America, don't let America down," said an article published in the AFL's *Oregon Labor Press* in response to the march. It continued, associating the UCL with anti-Americanism. "If America should go Red? What would you do? Now is

[41] Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0*. 1920 Sample. [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

[42] Carlos Schwantes, *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism, and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1914* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 16.

the time to take some serious thought of this matter." At the same time, the AFL prohibited UCL members from speaking at their meetings and continued to malign the organization to politicians and workers.[43]

But just because workers in southern Washington and Oregon didn't have an organization willing to represent them or draw from the same radical heritage as their counterparts in northern Washington and British Columbia, this doesn't mean they were any less docile when it came to confronting Depression-era unemployment and working conditions. Speed-ups often provided the major motivation for workers to join together, even if it was without the formal representation of a union. When the Depression hit and lumber prices fell, most lumbermen started running their saws at full capacity in order to keep their operations profitable in the face of a declining market. In order to squeeze more efficiency out of their workforces, lumber mills throughout the Northwest started adopting what was known as the Bedaux System. Essentially, the Bedaux system set production quotas then rewarded or punished workers if they failed to meet or exceed the quotas. A Weyerhaeuser plant manager in southern Washington described the plan by saying it "permitted more direct central management intervention in the evaluation, and incentive of labor." In practice, the Bedaux plan amounted to a formalized speed-up. Managers set unrealistic production quotas and then fired workers unable to keep up. Still, as one worker from an Oregon mill explained, the Bedaux system united workers in their disdain for the bosses. "Everybody that was around there was very bitter against the idea of having somebody standing over them, looking down their necks, that never saw a sawmill in their life," he said, "as a matter of fact, they don't know a one by four from a one by six. They had to ask you. Still they asked you, and made a time study of your job."[44]

Between 1930 and 1933, the Portland-area labor press made mention, if only briefly, of several "anti-Bedaux" struggles taking place in Columbia River Valley sawmills in northern Oregon and southern Washington. An AFL study conducted in 1930 (not published until 1938) provides some insight into how and why Oregon's workers opposed the Bedaux system. Several workers complained that the system put older or inexperienced workers at a disadvantage. "An efficiency system like this," the report noted, "weeds out the men who are not capable of doing a little more than a day's work." The report found that often times workers resisted by consciously slowing down and collectively agreeing that no one in the mill would meet the production quota. "The Bedaux system is just cause for a strike," a sawmill worker from southern Washington told the AFL's investigators, "the men have gotten together and plan a

[43] Quotes in Lembck and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 27. On the UCL in the Northwest, see Willis, "Unemployed Citizens of Seattle."

[44] Quotes from Jeremy R. Egolf, "The Limits of Shop Floor Struggle: Workers Vs. The Bedaux System at Willapa Harbor Lumber Mills, 1933-35," *Labor History* 26 (July 1985): 200, 201. For more on the Bedaux System, see Alfred J. Van Tassel, *Mechanization and the Lumber Industry* (Philadelphia, 1939), 10.

walkout in protest against the unfairness of the rotten Bedaux system."[45] The anti-Bedaux struggles would be, for many of the future leaders of the IWA, their first introduction to labor radicalism. One of those was Francis Murnane. Murnane had been born in 1914 in Boston and followed his family to the Oregon logging camp of Vasetz in the late-1920s. An Irish Catholic, Murnane attended seminary school for a time before dropping out in 1932 and getting a job in the large Plylock plywood plant on Portland's south end. In 1934, he helped organize an independent plywood and veneer vorkers' union that struck the plant over a speed up later that year. When the IWA was founded in 1937, Murnane became president of the union's Portland local.[46]

The AFL started reaching out to southern Washington and Oregon anti-Bedaux activists in 1933, partly because, as one historian of the lumber industry has noted, "their din became too deafening to ignore."[47] More than that, though, the AFL wanted to make sure these would-be radials didn't instead turn to the Communist Party. The AFL placed Oregon's timber workers in a newly organized union, the Sawmill and Timber Workers' Union (STWU). The STWU was what the AFL called a federal union. Instead of falling under the jurisdiction of a larger international union, federal unions were issued charters directly by the AFL's national offices. Although union dues were lower in federal unions, members were not allowed to send delegates to conventions, nor did they receive much in the way of organizational or institutional support. The STWU, writes one historian, was less a union and more a "storage vessel."[48] Not surprisingly, Oregon's timber workers were not all that enthusiastic about the STWU. "You just paid your dues and paid your per capita tax," a sawmill worker's wife from Portland explained, "but it was [a union] without any democracy." In the first year of its existence the STWU did remarkably little in Oregon. It didn't lead a single strike, win a single pay-increase in any plant, or do all that much to protest the Bedaux system. Most workers thought of the STWU as a company union and many compared it to the 4L.[49]

The 1934 Longshoremen's strike, however, changed many timber workers' attitude towards the STWU, as well as the course of unionism, both in the lumber industry and throughout the entire Northwest. In the summer of 1934, the International Longshoremen's Union, led by the charismatic Harry Bridges, struck the entire Pacific Coast and won joint-control of hiring halls, the thirty-hour work week, wage increases, and union bargaining rights. After the strike, longshoremen started to actively reach out to timber workers and encouraged them to join the STWU. Many lumber towns were also port towns and several families that had a son or brother working the timber had another working the docks.

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[45] Geoffrey C. Brown, "The Bedaux System," *American Federationist*45 (1938): 942-49.

[46] Frances J. Murnane Obituary, *The Oregonian*, April 11, 1968, p.17; also see Murnane's account of organizing in the early Depression: "Plylock Men Still Fighting," *Labor Newdealer*, Septermber 1, 1939, p.2.

[47] Robert A. Christie, *Empire in Wood: A History of the Carpenters Union* (Cornell: ILR Press, 1956, reprint 2011), 289.

[48] Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union*, 52.

[49] Bertram in *ibid*., 52.

Brothers talked to brothers, and fathers talked to sons, encouraging union membership. As William Robbins has shown in his history of Coos Bay, after the 1934 strike, several longshoreman started actively organizing for the STWU in southern Oregon and a few even left the docks to commit themselves full time to the cause of a timber workers' union.[50] The strike did more than just create a new cadre of organizers. It also reshaped timber workers' understanding of what unionism could be. Julia Bertram, the wife of a sawmill worker who lived in a company town just south of Portland, remembered that "the 1934 strike of the longshoremen was sort of a mainspring for everyone else that wanted to organize in the industrial type of unions." She continued, saying "after the longshoremen won their strike and different people knew longshoremen and saw how much better off they were, I think people began to think." After she heard about the strike, Bertram immediately went to her husband and told him, "this isn't the ordinary craft union. This is industrial war. It's the real thing and we belong to it…You gotta get in and join the [STWU] and help to organize the workers at this mill and I'll help you."[51]

Even if the longshoremen's strike breathed some much needed enthusiasm into the STWU, the AFL still proved reticent to extend organizers or funds to locals in Oregon. Instead, Oregon's workers carried on the tradition of organizing themselves, drawing on community and kinship support networks. Bertram explained that after her husband joined the STWU, "I set about getting other people to join." Both she and Butch "used to go around to people's houses and talk to them about the desirability of doing what the longshoremen had done and organizing." Bertram recalls that the message was well received, mostly because workers were frustrated with the Depression and the longshoremen had seemingly shown them a way. "We didn't have any job security," she said. "If the foreman in the mill or the boss or the superintendent took a dislike to you, they could fire you and there was nothing you could do about it." Ultimately, what Bertram discovered was that there was a common feeling among her town's residents: employer paternalism, wage-cuts, and the constant threat of layoff were "degrading." She continued, "you can get driven down just so low and then you begin to rebel." The community's collective feelings of frustration, she said in conclusion "was sort of like a baking powder in the masses."[52]

The exact size of the STWU in southern Washington and Oregon is, just like the Communist unions to the north, a bit of a mystery. In all likelihood, the STWU probably never attracted more than a few thousand members. But similar to the industrial union movement in northern Washington and British Columbia, the real importance of early organizing efforts in the years before 1935 is that it established a nucleus of union activists where none had previously existed. Organizing and anti-Bedaux activism in Oregon had another consequence. It created a different culture of unionism. As historian Jermey Egolf has written, anti-Bedaux activists framed class conflict as a struggle for the restoration of accustomed

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[50] Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 145-6.
[51] Bertram in Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union*, 51.
[52] *Ibid.*, 51, 52.

ways of work and cooperative working relationships. "While the anti-Bedaux activists shared a principled opposition to speedup and dictatorship by the boss," he writes, "only a few considered opposition to capitalism itself as a logical conclusion to draw from their experience."[53] What this meant for the future of the IWA is that Oregon locals tended to be a bit more conservative and distrust Communists a bit more, and this dispute would eventually evolve into a large factional dispute and power struggle that would complicate the union's organizational campaigns. There's a bit of irony in all this. Timber workers in all parts of the region believed unionism was, first and foremost, an effective way to respond to Depression-era conditions and reclaim some dignity for their communities. Later, IWA members, on both the left and the right, would continue to talk in similar tones about the importance of unionism in the late-1930s and through the 1940s. Likewise, members of both factions believed that unions should have a broad social vision and specifically said that the IWA had to be at the forefront of conservation politics. The two factions didn't disagree on what unionism should be. Rather, they disagreed on its somewhat more esoteric underpinnings.

THE 1935 STRIKE AND THE FOUNDING OF THE IWA

Several important events changed the course of unionism in the Northwest woods in 1935. Early in the year, Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which legally conferred on workers in industry the right to elect representatives of their own choosing and bargain collectively with employers. After the NLRA's passage, John L. Lewis and Syndey Hillman founded the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), an insurgent wing of the AFL specifically intended to reach out to previously ignored unskilled workers in industry and bring them into organized labor's fold. Partly to head-off the CIO's growth in the Northwest, that same year the AFL ended its policy of only issuing federal union charters to STWU locals and started accepting them in the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (UBCJ). The Communist Party also announced a policy shift in 1935. With the rise of European Fascism, the Comintern said that Party members could no longer afford to be sequestered in isolated, independent institutions and it called on its affiliates to build partnerships with progressive mainstream organizations. Although the British Columbian LWIU remained an independent union until 1936, immediately after the Cominterm announced the new policy the NLWU disbanded and encouraged its members to join the STWU. Writing in the Seattle Communist Party's *Voice of Action*, the NLWU's James Murphy instructed left-leaning timber workers that their job was now to "make the AFL more militant despite the AFL administration" and "promote concrete demands such as fights against wage cuts, rising pay for rising prices, a reduction in hours without reduction in pay, elimination of the speed-up, [and] real social insurance and unemployment relief." The movement to realize the

[53] Eglof, "The Limits of Shop Floor Struggle," 195.

demands as laid out by Murphy gained momentum throughout the early months of 1935 and it culminated with what, to that point, was the largest strike in the history of the Northwest timber industry.[54]

The 1935 strike would be important on several levels. First, it united the industrial union movement in the Northwest woods and brought Communists, AFL members, and anti-Bedaux activists together. When timber workers throughout the Northwest started calling for uniform wage rates and working conditions in the spring of 1935, it was the first time timber workers were speaking in a unified voice. Although British Columbian woodworkers did not participate in the 1935 strike, they nevertheless followed the action closely and, a year later, they too would join with the STWU. Second, the strike brought tens-of-thousands of new members into the Northwestern woods' industrial union movement. When the strike began, there were only a few thousand organized timber workers in the Northwest. By the end of the strike, the STWU would count close to 30,000 members. Third, the strike established local-control of the industrial union movement in the Northwest woods. When the strike started, the STWU was being led by AFL officers far removed from conditions in the region who had little care or concern for timber-working communities. By the end of the strike, the industrial movement would be led by many of the same homegrown radicals who'd been working to build the union movement in the preceding years. It'd be these leaders who'd go on to found the IWA in 1937.

Immediately after the NLWU disbanded and its members started calling for a more militant union from inside STWU locals, the Carpenters and Joiners sent an executive board member named Abe Muir to the Northwest to quell what was beginning to look like an insurgency. Muir knew next to nothing about life in the Northwest woods or what it was like to work in the region's logging camps and mills. He'd spent most of his professional life as a craft union bureaucrat and had been conditioned to avoid strikes at all costs. So, in late April of 1935, when several STWU locals issued a call for a new region-wide working agreement that came with union recognition, a six-hour day and five-day week, overtime and holiday pay, seniority rights, worker-controlled hiring halls, and a seventy-five cents/hour minimum—and set a strike deadline of May 6th if employers did not agree—Muir nevertheless told the press that he did not believe a strike likely to occur.[55]

Rank-and-file workers disagreed. Even before the May 6th deadline passed, loggers and sawyers across the region started walking off the job. On May 3rd, the *Tacoma News Tribune* reported that 300 workers in Olympia and 1,000 workers in Portland had already struck. A day later, it reported that 5,000 workers across Oregon and Washington were already on the picket lines. In order to stem the tide of walkouts, Muir travelled to Longview, Washington, where he hoped to negotiate a local agreement that

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[54] *Voice of Action,* February 23, 1935, p.3. On the NLRA and CIO's birth, see Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO: 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). On the Comintern's "Popular Front" policy, see Storch, *Red Chicago*, and Neuveld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 48-9.

[55] "Lumber Workers for Strike Action May 6," *Voice of Action*, April 19, 1935, p. 1, 6; "Labor Leaders Hope for Peaceful Settlement as Timber Strike Nears," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* April 28, 1935, p.3.

could then be applied across the region. Longview was a fiercely anti-union company town and its workforce had a reputation for conservatism. When Muir announced on May 9th that he'd negotiated a settlement that far fell short of the strikers' initial demands, he nontheless expected Longview's workers to endorse the agreement. To Muir's surprise, Longview's workers rejected the agreement by an eight-to-one margin and joined the strike. Nor did the agreement do much to dissuade workers already on the picket lines, many of whom referred to the Longview plan as the "sell-out" or "Muir Compromise."[56]

Afterwards, the strike picked up significant momentum and tens-of-thousands of timber workers across the region laid down their tools and joined the strike. The STWU's rank-and-file organizers did a great deal to build the strike in its early days, many of them quickly travelling to mills and logging camps throughout the region and convincing workers to sign-up to the STWU and join the strike. Communists and former NLWU members established "roving committees" that travelled, often great distances, from camp to camp, talking to workers and speaking out against Muir's "compromise propaganda." Several workers were convinced. Others needed a bit more prodding. At a northern Oregon logging camp, a worker who refused to join the strike was hauled up a spar tree that held a large hornet's nest. The rest of the men in camp took turns throwing rocks at the nest until the reluctant logger agreed to sign an STWU card. Longshoremen, again, played a key role in assisting the strikers. They continued to organize for the STWU and, after Longview's workers walked out, made it known they'd not load any lumber produced by scabs. And, the labor press reported, several workers in sawmills and camps throughout the region just spontaneously laid down their tools. By May 11th, Seattle's newspapers were reporting that workers in all but one of the city's 12 sawmills had joined the strike. All logging operations in Grays Harbor had been shut down. Thousands more workers in Portland, Olympia, Bellingham, Anacortes, Astoria, and Eureka joined the strike. On May 17th, the *Seattle Post-Intellegencer* reported that more than 20,000 workers in Washington and Oregon were on strike—the Communist Party's *Voice of Action* put that number at 30,000. In late May, the West Coast Lumbermen's Association issued a report that stated production in the Douglas fir region had fallen off by more than 52%.[57]

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[56] "Olympia Lumber Workers on Strike," *Tacoma News Tribune*, May 3, 1935, p.10; "Mill Strike is Called Monday," *Tacoma News Tribune,* May 4, 1935, p.1; "Lumbermen Hold Parleys," *Seattle Post-Intellegencer*, May 3, 1935, p.3; "Bureaucrats At Longview Parley Try to Spike Strike," *Voice of Action*, May 3, 1995, p.1. Noted on report to the Communist Party's Northwest headquarters: "The officials selected Longview as their headquarters for the whole strike, precisely in order to keep the Longview mills, which are the largest in the World, from common out and since this is also a company town, to be protected against the Reds." Anonymous to Stachel, May 13, 1935, reel 297, delo 3873, CPUSA papers.

[57] "Many Mills Close After 15,000 Strike," *Seattle Post-Intellegencer*, May 7, 1935, p.1; "17,000 Idle In Mill Strike," *Seattle Post-Intellegencer*, May 8, 1935, p.1; "30,000 Out As Lumber Strike Spreads!," *Voice of Action*, May 10, 1935, p.1; "N.W. Lumber Cut Off 52 Per Cent," *Tacoma News Tribune,* May 17, 1935, p.2; "Lumber Strike Causes Huge Loss in Output," *Seattle PI*, May 18, 1935, p.17. For rank-and-file activism in strike, see District Buro to all sections, April 19, 1935, reel 297, delo 3872; N.S. to Org. Commission, C.C., April 24, 1935, reel 297, delo 3873, CPUSA Papers; "Lumber Strikers In Revolt Over Sell-Out Plan," *Voice of Action*, May 31, 1935, p.1. For further analysis of newspaper coverage of the 1935 strike, see Selden C. Menefee, "An Experimental Study of Strike Propaganda," *Social Forces* 16 (May 1938): 574-82.

The continued walkouts must've frustrated Muir, who was still trying to bring a quick and peaceful end to the conflict. In late May, Muir ordered workers at the largest mills in Portland and Seattle back to work. On June 3rd, Muir then ordered Longview's workers back to their jobs. Most workers refused. Then, in early June, Norman Lange, president of the Grays Harbor STWU, sent truckloads of STWU members to Portland and Longview to block any weary workers from reentering the mills. Muir responded to this challenge to his leadership by expelling Lange from the STWU and suspending the charters of the Grays Harbor locals. Lange's dismissal galvanized strikers throughout the region. Over the course of the next few weeks, several STWU locals passed resolutions demanding that Muir step down or voted to remove Muir as their official bargaining agent. On June 6th, delegates from seventeen STWU locals from across the region met in Aberdeen to officially decide what to do about Muir's continued efforts to undermine the strike's militancy. At the end of the meeting, delegates officially voted to no longer abide by Muir's leadership and instead established the Northwest Joint Strike Committee to act as the official bargaining agent of the STWU. By July 1st, forty more STWU locals had voted to join the Committee.[58]

The strike was now in rank-and-file control, but with Muir gone, employers started taking a harder line against the STWU and increasingly met picketers with violence. The first violent showdown came on June 21st, when vigilantes attacked picketers at the Holmes-Eureka mill in northern California, killing three strikers and sending six more to the hospital. In early June, Washington Governor Clarence Martin called up the National Guard and ordered them to "be held in readiness" to protect the state's mills. Then, on June 23rd, Martin ordered the Guard to disperse picketers at Seattle and Tacoma's mills and strikers were attacked in what the *Seattle Post-Intellegencer* described as a "barrage of tear gas." The scene was similar in Tacoma, where the press reported that the city was "under virtual martial law." For two more days, troops tear gassed picketers in Longview and Portland. Later, on July 8th, a march led by the Young Communist League in Aberdeen in support of the strike was halted by the Guard and gassed. In mid-July, the normally conservative Washington State Labor Council issued an emergency resolution, condemning the leaders of the National Guard as "overstuffed armchair generals" who display their "native egoism by pushing about, clubbing, jabbing with bayonets and unjustly arresting the common

[58] "Big Strike At Forks Of Road," *Tacoma News Tribune,* June 3, 1935, p.1; "Radicals Blamed In Lumber Strife," *Seattle Post-Intellegencer*, June 5, 1935, p.1; "Delegates Meet in Aberdeen to Form N.W. Strike Committee; Longview Mills Down," *Voice of Action*, June 6, 1935, p.1; "Hopes for Early Lumber Strike Settlement Wane," *Seattle Post Intellegencer*, June 6, 1935, p.1; "Strike Vote Was Not Authorized By the Workers who Walked Out," *Tacoma Labor Advocate*, June 7, 1935, p.1.

producers of wealth." The Guard, the resolution concluded, "does not contribute to the welfare of the majority of the citizens of the state to an extent that justifies its existence."[59]

Despite the protests of organized labor, Governor Martin kept the Guard in place and continued to order pickets forcefully dispersed and mills and logging camps reopened with scabs. By late July, the strike had largely collapsed and STWU members began returning to work. Employers unilaterally implemented the agreement Muir had negotiated in Longview: fifty cents/hour minimum, forty-hour work week, and no closed shop or union recognition. Afterwards, a few brief strikes broke out when employers refused to rehire strike leaders, and in Grays Harbor, strikers stayed out until August, when they were forced back to work by binding arbitration issued by Washington National Guard Brigadier General Carlos Pennington. Though they returned to work with a slight wage increase, several STWU members regarded the strike as a failure, and though it'd largely been the National Guard that'd forced them back to work, most blamed Muir for undermining the strike's militancy and sewing discord in the STWU's ranks. The relationship between Muir and the STWU was further strained in the weeks and months after the strike ended and reinforced many timber workers' belief that industrial unionism would falter under the leadership of the Carpenters. In late-1935, Muir tried to reorganize the union in order to exert more control over the locals that opposed his leadership. He continued to expel leaders that challenged him.[60]

Muir's efforts at opposing rank-and-file control, however, were complicated in April of 1936, when the British Columbian LWIU finally disbanded and its locals voted to affiliate with the STWU. Harold Pritchett, the shingle weaver who led the strike at Fraser Mills five years earlier, was elected to head British Columbia's STWU district council. Pritchett, who'd been a member of the Communist Party since the 1931 strike, started coordinating with STWU Communists in Washington to organize an anti-Muir faction within the union. On June 16th, members of the faction met in Centralia, Washington to formalize a plan of action and decided to organize an independent union, the Federation of Woodworkers. A month later, this decision was ratified by the rest of the Northwest's STWU locals. The convention's delegates still hoped to work within the UBCJ, the larger AFL union that still had jurisdiction over them, and simply hoped to establish a union outside Muir's control. As the newly organized Federation quickly found out, though, the problem wasn't just Muir, but the larger UBCJ culture that looked down upon unskilled timber workers. The UBCJ continued to offer the Federation little in the way of organizing

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[59] "Guardsmen Held Ready," *Tacoma News Tribune*, May 23, 1935, p.6; "Aid Sought To Rout Lumber Mill Pickets," *Seattle Post-Intellegencer*, May 23, 1935, p.1; "300 State Troops in Tacoma," *Seattle Post-Intellegencer*, June 24, 1935, p.8; "Longivew Police Rout Rioters," *Seattle Post-Intellegencer*, July 6, 1935, p1; "Police Clash With Pickets," July 6, 1935, p.2; "Gas Barrage Disperses Strikers," *Tacoma News Tribune*, July 6, 1935, p.1; "Labor Convention Considers Ban on Militia," *Tacoma News Tribune*, July 9, 1935, p.10; "State Labor Condemns Armed Strike Breaking," *Washington State Labor News*, July 12, 1935, p.1.

[60] "Mill Men Voting On New Plan," *Tacoma News Tribune*, August 3, 1935, p.1; "Back To Mills Again," *Tacoma News Tribune,"* August 5, 1935, p.1; "Mill Workers Re-Strike Over Discrimination," *Voice of Action*, August 23, 1935, p.1; "Union Wins 60 Cents per Hr. Minimum," *Voice of Action*, August 23, 1935, p.3. On Muir's ongoing contentions relationship with the STWU, see Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood,* 40-3.

support of funds. The last straw came at the UBCJ's 1936 convention, when Federation representatives were not allowed to be seated in the delegation.[61]

Then, in mid-1937, the Federation's leaders got word that the CIO would be willing to issue the woodworkers a charter. The CIO had originally been founded under the AFL's auspices, but continued conflicts between AFL and CIO leaders over organizing strategies and directions led the AFL to expel CIO unions in 1936. Now struggling for its survival, the CIO—which changed its name to the Congress of Industrial Organizations after the split—looked to the roughly 30,000 dues-paying Federation members to bolster its organizational strength on the West Coast. For the Northwest's timber workers, CIO affiliation looked to be a step in the right direction towards building a progressive union. The CIO openly embraced unskilled and immigrant workers, had a broad social vision, and had a commitment to union members as well as the working-class more generally. Perhaps most importantly, it would be local leaders who would be allowed to run a CIO timber workers' union.[62]

On July 17, 1937, the Federation representatives met in Tacoma to formally decide the matter of affiliation. Delegates voted 16,754 to 5,306 to join the CIO. In a subsequent vote, delegates chose a new name for their union: the International Woodworkers of America. And, in a final vote, Harold Pritchett, was named the union's first president. Delegates at the convention spoke about what a CIO charter meant. They said that now woodworkers would have control of the industrial union movement in the Northwest woods. They'd no longer be ostracized by professional labor bureaucrats and they could build a union movement that reflected the tradition of community organizing and mobilization that'd started in the earlier years of the Depression. Perhaps what the IWA meant to its members was best captured by a chorus of loggers from Oregon who, at the end of the convention, stood before the delegates and sang, "We've gone CIO boys, we've gone CIO. The Carpenters and Joiners have always tried to corner all our dough. But we'll stick together, for rank-and-file control."[63]

However, the optimism in these words shouldn't overshadow some of the divisions in the IWA that were beginning to form at its founding convention. The voting pattern on the issue of CIO affiliation is important to note. Nearly all of the anti-CIO votes came from delegates aligned with the Columbia River District Council, and it was the first sign of a schism that would significantly shape the political history of the IWA. The geographic boundaries of factionalism reflected the longer history of Depression-era organizing in the Northwest woods. The northern Washington and British Columbian district councils, which had initially been organized by Communists, voted for CIO affiliation. This

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[61] Federation of Woodworkers, *Proceedings of the First General Convention of the Federation of the Woodworking Industry*, September 18-20, 1936, box 25, folder 1, IWA Papers; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 30-46; Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 50; Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 90-104.

[62] Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 44-6.

[63] Federation of Woodworkers, *Proceedings of Special Convention of the Federation of Woodworkers* (Tacoma, July 15-19, 1937), 29.

would eventually evolve into the union's Red Bloc, pro-Communist faction. The men associated with this faction were the same organizers who'd been associated with the early Depression-era organizing in northern Washington and British Columbia: Karley Larsen, Ernie Dalskog, Harold Pritchett, and Arne Johnson. On the other hand, the anti-CIO votes came from men reared in the more conservative union culture of Oregon. Though the IWA would struggle for members and legitimacy in the first few years of its existence and face immediate challenges from employers and the AFL, it would eventually grow to an organization of more than 100,000 members. It would reshape industrial relations in the Northwest lumber industry, as well, and negotiate region-wide master agreements that would stem industrial flight. And, in the postwar years it would play an active role in trying to usher in more responsible forest harvesting practices, as well as attempt to expand wilderness areas for working-class recreational access. Still, this factional dispute would be lurking in the background, complicating the union's campaigns.

To what extent these political divisions mattered to the IWA's rank-and-file, though, isn't entirely clear. What seemed most important to timber-working communities throughout the early years of Depression organizing was finding an effective way to combat low wages, unemployment, and speed-ups. When no organization was present, workers were willing to organize on their own, and when a more formal institution presented itself, whether it was the Communist Party or the AFL, workers relied on those intuitions, but still insisted on their right to control the course of unionism. Workers were attracted to the IWA because it'd been founded by homegrown activists who seemed to understand that the industrial union movement was, first and foremost, about empowering local communities and most seemed to believe that the factional disputes on the horizon were an unnecessary distraction. This was the case for Julia Bertram, the wife of a sawmill worker who did much to build the union movement in Portland in the early years of the Depression. Though Bertram identified herself as a leftist, she nevertheless wanted nothing to do with the power struggles and in-fighting that would grip the IWA in later years. "I don't believe in that sort of stuff," she told an interviewer. Instead, Bertram, probably like most IWA members, believed that unionism in the Northwest woods was about working-class communities gaining back some of the dignity they'd lost in the speed-ups and layoffs of the Depression. Unionism, she said "was to get our self-respect back." Before the IWA, "if you wanted to be sure of getting any work in the mill you had to wash the superintendent's car and make rabbit hutches for his wife and cut her grass and a whole bunch of stuff like that," she said. "We were practically serfs. In fact, I couldn't see much difference." For Bertram, the IWA meant that timber workers and their families could now take pride in their jobs and their communities. "The strikes on the waterfront, in the camps and mills and other mass production industries in the thirties all had this factor in common," she said, remembering the tumultuous years of the Depression, "we won them, and we were no longer timber beasts, sawmill stiffs, and waterfront bums. We were the people who loaded the ships and sailed them,

who made the head rigs turn and the green chains run. We were the workers of the world. Without us there would be no world."[64]

[64] Bertram in Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union*, 72, 55-6.

CHAPTER 5

"INDUSTRIAL FEUDALISM OR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY?"
BUILDING THE IWA

June 16, 1946

VICTORIA—"That's history being made right there," an anonymous IWA member told the *BC Lumber Worker's* Al Parkin as both men stood atop the steps of the capital building and looked down at the crowd of more than 3,000. The people held large banners and signs reading "The 40 Hour Work Week Means More Jobs For All," "Union Security Now!" and "IWA: Unity, Equality, Progress." The moment was historic because never before had the timber industry's workers been so united. People had come from across the province to be here, from the largest mills in the Fraser Valley to the smallest knock-and-drop operations in Knight and Bute Inlets. Others came from the big Lumbermen's Association camps in Powel River and Ladysmith while others from gyppo outfits in Kamloops and Kelowna. Men came from up-coast camps like Massett and Skidgegate, while others came from the interior mill towns like Jackman Flats and Prophet River. The IWA Women's Auxiliary sent a large contingent. Longshoremen, fishermen, miners, and farmers also joined in. Even Victoria's cabbies announced they'd not drive their taxis today—they were marching in solidarity with the timber workers.[1]

The rally in Victoria was the culmination of a general strike of timber workers that'd started a month earlier. In early spring, negotiations between the IWA and the British Columbia Lumbermen's Association (BCLA) on a province-wide master agreement stalled when employers refused to meet "the union's just demands," of "25-40-Union Security": a 25 cents/hour wage increase, 40 hour work week, and union shop agreement. The IWA issued an ultimatum: "Unless the employers consider a satisfactory settlement on or before 11 a.m., May 15, 1946, the District Executive Board declares a general strike in the woodworking industry in British Columbia."[2] Few outside the IWA took the threat seriously. British Columbian statute prohibited strikes before compulsory conciliation and, as the Minister of Labour said, "the woodworkers have behaved themselves well in recent years and I can hardly believe they would sacrifice the prestige they have built up by ignoring the legal procedure at this stage." Employers were equally unfazed. "The operators reaffirm their stand that they do not intend to bargain away their basic

[1] Al Parkin, "A History of the IWA," *BC Lumber Worker*, June 2, 1947, p.3. On the march, see Myrtle Bergren, *Tough Timber: The Loggers of B.C.—Their Story* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1966), 232-6; Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada: The Life and Times of an Industrial Union* (Vancouver: IWA Canada, 2000), 103-5; Jerry Lembcke, "The International Woodworkers of America in British Columbia, 1942-1951," *Labour/Le Travailleur* 6 (Autumn, 1980): 127-129; Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam, *One Union in Wood: A Political History of the International Woodworkers of America* (Vancouver: Harbour Publishing, 1984), 113-114.

[2] "Statement of District 1 Executive Officers," *The BC Lumber Worker*, May 7, 1946, p. 1.

freedoms by making an agreement with the IWA," a BCLA spokesman told the *Vancouver Sun*. "Well then," responded the IWA's Harold Pritchett, "the die is cast." [3]

The strike deadline passed and tens-of-thousands of timber workers began walking off the job. Reports streamed into the union's headquarters: not a saw turning in the mills along False Creek, Burrard Inlet, and the Fraser River. From locals in Lake Cowichan, Hillcrest, Honeymoon Bay, Youbou, and Nanaimo: every camp on Vancouver Island is down. They're holding the picket lines in the Queen Charlottes, up through Prince Rupert. From flying squads in the Okanagans and Kootenays: the strike is solid in the interior, even in the isolated tie camps of Blue River, east of Kamloops, where no IWA organizer has ever set foot. "In every inlet, big or little, on every island, wherever there were logging camps," wrote IWA journalist Myrtle Bergren, "the great lumbering industry of British Columbia, employing 35,000 people and producing most of Canada's lumber, ground to a halt."[4]

The provincial government responded quickly and convened an arbitration commission headed by Chief Justice Gordon McGregor Sloan. Three weeks later, Sloan returned his decision: 15 cents/hour increase, 48 hour/week maximum, and no union security concessions. "I am unable to reach the conclusion that the union will stand in any need of any form of additional 'security' or 'union shop' organization in order to permit it effectively to 'police the contract,'" Sloan wrote. A "voluntary dues check-off system" is, instead, the most "democratic way to go."[5] The BCLA quickly endorsed the settlement. IWA members were not so enthusiastic. "We are always talking about the democratic rights of the people and the virtue of majority rule," a striker explained in the *Vancouver Sun*. "As I understand it, there are now 37,000 loggers protesting the stand taken by 147 owners of the industry. Does the voice of all these people carry less weight of 147? If so, then what majority rules—people or dollars?"[6]

During the organizing drives of the early Depression years, unionism had been about workers taking control of their jobsites and communities. This striker's comments begin to reveal that by the mid-1940s, IWA members were arguing that industrial unionism was about something larger. Working-class control of logging communities and company towns still mattered, but now, by 1946, unionism had become about the entire region and whether labor or capital would determine the Northwest's economic future. IWA members began to envision place more broadly and connect local struggles to larger regional issues. As the IWA's Nigel Morgan asked in the course of an earlier 1943 strike, what's going to define the Northwest, "industrial democracy or industrial feudalism?"[7] Speaking about the march on

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[3] *Vancouver Sun*, May 8, 1946,

[4] Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 232-3. See also Harold Pritchett's account of 1946 strike in *The B.C. Lumber Worker*, August 8, 1947, p. 2; Lembcke, "The IWA in BC," 129.

[5] As quoted in Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 105.

[6] *Vancouver Sun*, June 13, 1946, p.12.

[7] CCL advertisement, "Industrial Feudalism or Industrial Democracy?" *Vancouver News Herald*, October 7, 1943, p. 8.

Victoria, Myrtle Bergren said something similar. The union may have been demanding a pay raise and shorter hours, she said, but this strike was about something much larger:

> Workers felt proud to be a part of such a powerful organization. The IWA was one of the strongest and most influential unions. Its leaders had spent years creating a movement, it was experienced, responsible and tough. It had given its great strength to the defeat of Hitler fascism, proved its capability of raising the standard of life for all lumber workers. It was in no frame of mind now to sit back and allow the operators, with all their money and power, to take back the gains they had made, to thrust the people of the lumbering communities back into the old grinding poverty they had known so well. [8]

The men and women who marched on Victoria on June 16th no doubt shared Bergren's opinion. The march started a day earlier, when 600 IWA members set off from Vancouver aboard the *Princess Elizabeth*. The *Elizabeth* pulled into the port of Nanimo in the late-morning where she was met, the local press reported, by "cheering crowds lining the streets." That afternoon 1,000 more IWA members arrived from the up-island camps and the entire contingent loaded into busses and Model-Ts and headed down the road. In Duncan, the marchers were again greeted by enthusiastic supporters and several more workers who'd come in from the interior a few days before. The march reached Victoria that evening. The loggers, their wives and families, and supporters headed for the old army barracks on the north end of town. They reportedly stayed up well into the night, "talking union." Early the next morning, the marchers left the barracks and headed down Belleville Street, where people hung out of apartment windows, clapping and cheering. Shop owners placed giant signs in their storefronts, encouraging the marchers. Families wearing buttons that read "I support the IWA" joined the march as it wound its way through the streets, the *Vancouver Sun* reported.[9]

It was a difficult message to ignore. A week later the provincial Department of Labour issued a revision of the Sloan settlement, agreeing to a union shop and compulsory dues check-off. Still, the news "was received by many rank-and-filers with some misgivings." Though the union had won on the all-important union security issue, the new settlement stayed at 15 cents/hour and only dropped hours down to 44 hours/week. Several members indicated their willingness to stay out. But rumors circulated widely that the provincial government might legislate all the strikers back to work, under a far less favorable agreement, and the union's executive board unanimously endorsed the offer. The largest strike in British Columbian labor history ended when the membership ratified the contract on June 20th.[10]

"The immediate gains were great," Al Parkin wrote in his final analysis of the strike, but "the political and organizational gains were of national significance." It was the first time since the war's end

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[8] Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 234-5.
[9] *Vancouver Sun*, June 18, 1946, p. 3; Bergren *Tough Timber*, 234
[10] Bergren, *Tough Timber,* 236; Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 105-6; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 114.

that any Canadian workers had won a wage increase, and it touched off massive strikes in the country's coal and automobile industries. The strike also brought more than 10,000 new members into the IWA, making it the largest union in British Columbia and the third largest in all of Canada. Together with the American district councils, the IWA was now the largest CIO affiliate west of the Rocky Mountains. Yet, the most important part of the 1946 agreement was that it covered the entire British Columbian lumber industry, marking the first time in the Northwest's history that timber workers on both sides of the border were operating under industry-wide contracts. This was an important development. Capital moves. And nowhere has capital moved with more alacrity than in the Northwest timber industry. Industrial flight and reconsolidation made organizing the woods difficult, and at times impossible. Industry-wide contracts changed that and created a new spatial framework for expanding industrial democracy and the IWA's power.[11]

Few inside the Northwest's labor movement could've predicted this success. After its founding in 1937 the IWA was moribund, under constant attack from employers and the American Federation of Labor (AFL), and unable to grow. This chapter explores the IWA's growth between 1937 and the general strike of British Columbian timber workers in 1946. Historians who've looked at the IWA's history in this period have tended to focus on internal disputes over communism and made the union's organizational growth a side story, framing it as the logical consequence of New Deal labor legislation. The IWA did ultimately rely on legal mechanisms, but the view that the union's ascendency was preordained by the New Deal is too simplistic. It ignores how the industry's economic geographies complicated labor law, and how workers manipulated the region's geography to make those laws work. Here, I focus more on the union's organizational campaigns, placing the debates between communists and anti-communists in the background, and forefront the way IWA members interpreted the economic structure of the industry and how they used unionism to shape those structures in ways that would benefit workers and empower their union. These campaigns were very much an extension of earlier union activism, when timber workers believed that unionism was important because it gave them more control of their communities. IWA members continued to make the same argument between 1937 and 1946, now on a broader, regional scale.[12]

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[11] Al Parkin, "A History of the IWA," *The B.C. Lumber Worker*, June 2, 1947, p. 3; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 114.

[12] For the IWA's historiography, see Lembcke, "The IWA in BC;" Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*; Wlater Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement, 1935-1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); Irving Abella, *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour*; Vernon H. Jensen, *Lumber and Labor* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1945); Irving Bernstein, *Turbulent Years* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970); Andrew Parnaby, "'What's Law Got To Do With It?:' The IWA and the Politics of State Power in British Columbia, 1935-1939," *Labour/Le Travail* 44 (Fall 1999): 9-45 and "'We'll hang all policemen from a sour apple tree!:' Class, Law, and the Politics of State Power in the Blubber Bay Strike of 1938-1939," (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1995); Stephen Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy: The IWA in Canada, 1937-1957," (PhD Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1989).

August 11, 1937

PORTLAND—It's hard to say when the men arriving for the morning shift at the IWA-controlled mills noticed the strange silence. Normally, the morning men were greeted by the distinctive whine of saws as the night crew prepared for the shift change. No doubt many of the men walking up to the gate in the early hours of the morning were still waking up, oblivious to anything out of the ordinary. Surely a few more were nursing hangovers and welcomed the calm, at least at first. Only when they finally noticed the silence did they begin to speculate. The industry had yet to fully recover from the Depression. Was this another market-induced shutdown? Maybe the sprinklers were down or a drive gear had jumped a tooth, both common occurrences. Speculating about tragedy was bad luck, but the possibility that the saws had stopped to clear a body from the line likely entered men's minds.

Very few probably predicted the exact cause of the stoppage, which they only saw when they finally reached the gates: the Portland AFL's Building Trades Council had surrounded the mills with pickets and forced the owners to stop the saws. Then again, maybe the men had sensed this, but kept it to themselves out of fear it might be true. After all, a month earlier, when the dissident woodworkers seceded from the AFL, embittered craft unionists made no secret that this moment was coming. "Now let me tell you this—and this is no threat," said the Carpenters' president Frank Duffy, "go out of the Brotherhood and we will give you the sweetest fight you ever had in your lives."[13]

The IWA's leaders quickly condemned the pickets as an illegal labor action and announced they'd do everything in their power to keep the mills turning with CIO labor. But many viewed these as the brash pronouncements of an inexperienced union. The IWA was young, it was untested, and it lacked the resources—and, many assumed, the mettle—to take on the AFL in what could only be a bloody war of attrition. The AFL, on the other hand, was on its home turf. The Portland-area Building Trades Council was large and politically powerful. There was no love lost between the CIO and the city's large Teamsters locals. And, the Portland Central Labor Council had already sided with the AFL's Carpenters. There were questions, as well, about the IWA's Columbia River District Council (CRDC), which had jurisdiction over Portland's mills. The CRDC's leaders were the only dissenters when woodworkers voted to affiliate with the CIO. Would they use the conflict as an excuse to back out of the IWA?[14]

Whether strategic miscalculation or brashness, the IWA responded by sending in its own picketers to prevent the mills from reopening with AFL labor and, presumably, to send a message that it'd not be bullied by the trades' muscle. The standoff was peaceful at first, but even a casual passerby, with no understanding of the labor movement's complex jurisdictional landscapes, would have seen this as an *uneasy* peace. The coming trouble could be heard in the insults the pickets tossed back and forth. Rocks

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[13] As quoted in Margret Glock, *Collective Bargaining in the Pacific Northwest Lumber Industry* (Berkeley: Institute of Industrial Relations, 1955), 13.

[14] *Ibid*., 12-16; Lembcke and Tattam, 55.

hurtled by AFL men at IWA members further tested the peace. And the fistfights that broke out on the sixth day finally shattered it.[15]

Once the peace broke in Portland the conflict quickly spread throughout the region. The Carpenters immediately announced a complete boycott, telling local reporters that "we refuse to erect any lumber manufactured under the CIO banner. The Carpenters don't consider the CIO a democratic organization."[16] The Portland Trades issued a missive instructing Trades Councils throughout the region to "let your watchword be 'no CIO lumber or mill work in your district,' and let them know you mean it."[17] In Seattle, Dave Beck ordered his Teamsters to go nowhere near trucks carrying IWA-milled lumber. Longshoremen's president Harry Bridges, who'd been fighting Beck for control of inland warehouses, responded in-kind and said that from San Diego to Seattle, no CIO dock worker would load a single piece of AFL wood. Depression-era Trades, Teamsters, and Longshoremen were hardly known for their diplomatic approach to dispute resolution and the violence now marking the Portland picket lines spread rapidly. In late August, AFL men sent two IWA members to the hospital. In September, teamsters tipped over a logging truck with its IWA driver still inside. In Salem, Teamsters local secretary-treasurer Al Rosner was arrested for arson after he set an IWA mill on fire. As Al Hartung, president of the Portland IWA local would later remember, "all hell had broken loose."[18]

Employers throughout the region, even those not directly in the middle of the conflict, shut their doors. Officially, lumbermen claimed neutrality and said the shutdown was a precautionary measure aimed at protecting their property. The saws would start back up the moment they could operate on a "peaceful, uninterrupted basis." IWA members saw the situation differently. "If they had to have a union, they preferred that we were still hitched to the Carpenters and Joiners," said the wife of an IWA worker. "They wanted to force us back into the AFL. They couldn't maneuver the CIO like they did the AFL. They were terrified of the CIO."[19] Many agreed with this analysis and viewed the lockout as clear evidence of AFL-employer collusion. "The employers and trade unions are at last bedfellows," an IWA member told the *Portland Oregonian*, "if not, why the lockout?"[20]

In late-August, the IWA filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to, in Pritchett's words, "get the legal wheels turning in our direction."[21] The NLRB had been created by the

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[15] "Woodworkers in question at Inman-Poulson," *Portland Oregonian*, August 20, 1937, p.1.
[16] As quoted in Glock, *Collective Bargaining*, 14.
[17] AFL, *Report of the Proceedings of the 57th Annual Convention* (Denver, 1937), 468.
[18] As quoted in Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 56. On violence, see *Portland Oregonian*, July 27, 1937, p. 1; August 17, 1937, p.2; August 20, 1937, p. 2; September 3, 1937, p. 10. See also Jacob Joseph Weinstein, "The Jurisdictional Dispute in the Northwest Lumber Industry," (BA Thesis, Reed College, 1939), 53-4.
[19] Julia Ruuttila in Sandy Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union: An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruuttila* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 59.
[20] "Sawmill Group Hits Employers," *Portland Oregonian,* August 18, 1937, p. 12.
[21] IWA executive board meeting minutes, November 2, 1937, folder 14, box 2, International Woodworkers of America Papers, Special Collections, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

1935 National Labor Relations Act (commonly known as the Wagner Act), and was designed to provide a legal mechanism for peacefully sorting out the type of violent labor disputes that had marked the earlier years of the Depression. Most labor historians agree that the NLRB was effective, and it's widely seen as one of the most important tools that helped guarantee the CIO's ascendency in the 1930s and 1940s. The problem, as labor economist Vernon Jensen points out, is that the NLRB was designed to resolve conflicts between employers and employees. Its architects never imagined having to sort out the kind of jurisdictional battles now plaguing the Northwest and it remained to be seen if the NLRB had the legal teeth to end labor's civil war.[22]

That question was decided in late-fall, and not in the IWA's favor. In November, the NLRB conducted representational elections at the seven Portland mills where the IWA claimed jurisdiction. In each election, the IWA won by a more than 5-to-1 margin. In the closest election, at the large Inman-Poulson Mill, the IWA got more than 64% of the vote. The fact that Portland's mill hands overwhelmingly favored the CIO wasn't news to the IWA's leaders, but they nevertheless hoped that the elections would establish their legitimacy and force the AFL to back down. Those hopes were dashed when AFL leaders offered their official response: the elections "establish the Board as a subservient ally of the CIO…we will not call off the boycotts in the Portland lumbering industry."[23]

Things weren't going well on the pickets, either. By early-1938, most of Portland's IWA mill hands had been out of work for six months. The strike fund was growing thin. Men announced their intentions to cross the lines. Stalwart rank-and-filers reminded the union's leaders that they had families to feed, and with no resolution imminent, they'd have to look for work in one of the city's non-union plants. In February, the Carpenters broke one of the IWA's pickets and reopened a mill with AFL workers. Even the union's most optimistic supporters now said that the IWA had lost Portland. "Bridges came to Portland and said at a meeting, where I was," remembered one of the IWA's activists, "that he thought we would have to give up the struggle to remain in the CIO and that later we could make a comeback."[24]

And the union may have very well lost other mills if not for the action of women, who often proved more radical than men in their support of the union. "We were not about to let our husbands go through the picket lines," remembered Julia Bertram, president of the Portland IWA Women's Auxiliary. "We realized when the lockout went on and on that if we were going to win, our people would have to get fed."[25] In the fall, auxiliary members started going door-to-door throughout the city's working-class neighborhoods, raising money for the strike fund, and created a "mooching committee" that took milk

[22] Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 217-8. On the history of the CIO and NLRB, see Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO: 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 60-64, 100-126.
[23] Quoted in Glock, *Collective Bargaining,* 13. For election results see *The Oregonian*, December 10, 1937, p.1.
[24] Julia Ruuttila in Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union*, 64.
[25] Ruuttila in Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union*, 61.

from the porches of Portland's more affluent residents. Auxiliary members also replaced men on the pickets, believing that even the most hardened and criminal of Teamsters or Tradesmen wouldn't dare attack a woman. "We used to stand on the railroad tracks beyond the sidetrack and we used to scream 'Scab,'" at the AFL picketers, Bertram recalled.[26]

Such measures went a long way in bringing some hope back to the Portland campaign. And, though not decisive, the support of local politicians helped as well. In mid-1937, Oregon governor Charles Martin conducted his own election at Inman-Poulson in an attempt to put an end to the conflict. Again, workers indicated their preference for the CIO—voting 376 to 183 in favor of the IWA—and again, the AFL rebuffed the results. A few weeks later, Portland Mayor Joseph Carson announced that he'd suspend the license of any boat pilot refusing to ship lumber because of the dispute. Still, the AFL refused to call off the boycott. Even the *Portland Oregonian*, never favorable to the CIO, now turned on the AFL. "They are doing their best to terrorize workmen who are union members like themselves," the paper's editors wrote, and "by these means they are about to shut down Portland's greatest industry."[27]

In the end, it wasn't the NLRB, Governor Martin, or public opinion that brought an end to the struggle, but improving market conditions. In late 1938, the Roosevelt Recession ended and lumber prices hit their highest levels since 1929. Mill owners waiting out the dispute in the hopes of an AFL victory now said they'd run with IWA workers where the union had been certified. They also put increased pressure on the AFL to call off the pickets and end the boycott. When all men returned to work and the conflict finally ended in early 1939, the IWA controlled six of Portland's mills to the AFL's five. It wasn't a complete defeat, but neither had it been a conclusive victory.[28]

The situation was equally dire elsewhere. Though the IWA had stolen a few locals from the AFL in Oregon, and picked up a few new locals in Washington, it still represented less than one-third of the entire region's woodworkers. The fledgling union was learning a hard lesson: founding a union was one thing, establishing its power was quite another. The search for solutions began in earnest. Some pointed out the obvious, blaming employer recalcitrance and AFL hooliganism. Others blamed the "rank amateurism" of the CRDC's mishandling of the Portland case—the first signs of a growing schism within

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[26] *Ibid*., 64, 69. Women's auxiliaries were critical to the CIO's growth. For example, the Women's Emergency Brigade was critical to the UAW's success in the Flint Sit-down strike. Historians are just starting to recognize this crucial role. See, Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Mercedes Steedman, "Godless Communists and Faithful Wives, Gender Relations and the Cold War: Mine-Mill and the 1958 Strike against the International Nickel Company," and Ellen Baker, "'I Hate to Be Calling Her a Wife Now:' Women and Men in the *Salt of the Earth* Strike, 1950-1952 in Jaclyn J. Bier and Laurie Mercier, eds., *Mining Women: Gender in the Development of a Global Industry, 167-2005* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006). For two histories of the IWA Women's Auxiliary, see Sara Diamond, "A Union Man's Wife: The Ladies' Auxiliary Movement in the IWA, the Lake Cowichan Experience," in Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, eds., *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia* (Victoria: Camosun College Press, 1984, 287-296; Steven C. Beda, "'More Than a Tea Party:' The IWA Women's Auxiliary in the Pacific Northwest, 1937-1948," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 100 (Summer 2009): 134-45.

[27] Editorial, *Portland Oregonian*, September 3, 1937, p. 10; Thompson, "The Challenge of Unionization," 109.

[28] Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 58.

the union's ranks. Others attributed the IWA's failures to a lack of rank-and-file militancy. Pritchett responded to these criticisms at a 1938 executive board meeting, agreeing with most of the claims, but drawing the line at the charge of worker apathy. "They do not lack militancy," he said of the men who held the lines in Portland, "they just need some strategical move to place the operators on the defensive. We have one plan in preliminary stages. Soon you will see some results."[29]

March 4, 1940

LONGVIEW—Pritchett's plan was to move on the large Weyerhaeuser and Long-Bell plants in Longview, Washington. To many, this seemed as brash and reckless as taking on the AFL in Portland. "The open shop character of these two corporations, which are the largest and most powerful lumber monopolies in the country, have always strongly resisted union organization," Pritchett's lieutenants reminded him.[30] It was a hard point to argue. When built in the 1920s, Long-Bell's Longview mills were the biggest in the country. After Weyerhaeuser built two more mills in the town in the early-1930s, Longview became the world's largest producer of lumber. It was a fiercely anti-union company town as well. There were also significant geographic hurdles. The mills were fed by a series of satellite camps and company towns spread out across southern Washington and up the Colombia River Gorge that were difficult, if not impossible, to reach.[31]

Yet, Pritchett seemed to recognize something important about how union organizing functioned in relation to industrial geographies. Longview was an organizational keystone. Organizing the region's two largest producers would allow the union to put pressure on the several smaller operators that shipped their timbers to Weyerhaeuser and Long-Bell's mills. With those operators under control, the IWA would have the members, money, and jurisdictional legitimacy to take on the medium-sized operators. And after the medium-sized operators, the small operators and independent "gyppos" that depended on the large and medium mills would be little more than an afterthought. This was the same strategy that led to the growth of other CIO unions: Longview was to the IWA what General Motors was to the autoworkers or Goodyear was to the Rubber Workers, the first domino that needed to be tipped before the others would fall. [32]

Pritchett recognized something important about the way that industrial development had shaped the region's jurisdictional geographies, as well. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, craft unions focused their efforts on the region's smallest producers and ignored unskilled, immigrant workers

[29] IWA executive board meeting minutes, folder 14, box 3, IWA Papers.
[30] *Ibid*.
[31] On Longview's economic geography and production chain, see Godfre Chipasha Chisanga, "Technological, Organizational, and Spatial Changes in the Woods Products Industry: An Explanatory Case Study of the Lower Columbia," (PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1983).
[32] On CIO organizing, see Zieger, *The CIO*, 22-41.

in the Northwest's largest operations. This meant that places like Longview were largely organizational vacuums, worked by immigrant men with radical leanings. Not only would these workers be receptive to the IWA, but the AFL wouldn't have the power to mount an opposition. This would allow the NLRB to do what it was designed to do: certify elections, not mediate jurisdictional conflicts.

Pritchett's read of the landscape was born out by earlier organizing reports. The Carpenters maintained two small locals of skilled workers in the Weyerhaeuser and Long-Bell plants, but unskilled men in the mills talking with IWA organizers in early-1938 related their complete "lack of enthusiasm" for the craft unions.[33] Even the AFL grudgingly admitted that "a very bad organizational situation exists in Longview."[34] At the same time, the companies' logging camps and mill ponds were entirely unorganized. Booming was tough, dangerous, unskilled work done mostly by young boys or Asian immigrants, and the AFL had no interest in challenging the IWA for control of the mill ponds. The situation was similar in the logging camps, and workers in both operations would give the union a much needed foothold. "Contractual relations with boommen and logging camps," one of the union's organizers predicted, "will enable us to isolate certain groups and exert a significant amount of pressure to accomplish organization work and force our program."[35]

At least with respect to the camps, the only problem would be getting there. "The closest camp is about seven miles from the nearest road," reported Ted Doktor, who was sent into the southwestern Washington logging camps by the IWA in early-1940. "Sometimes I get a ride out, but a lot of times I walk." There was also the problem of avoiding the company's managers. "They have threatened me with [a] $100 fine for entering company property," Doktor said, but "I am going to call their bluff. The prosecuting attorney tells me that if I behave myself as a gentleman, don't destroy anything, the Weyerhaeusers would not be so foolish as to have me arrested in the camps." Despite the difficulties, Doktor nevertheless reported the IWA's message was being well received. "The boys are taking a very militant position."[36]

The remainder of the Longview campaign was driven by rank-and-file activists and, to a large extent, employer bumbling. In early March, just when the IWA was trying to get an NLRB vote scheduled, the manager of Weyerhaeuser's Longview operations relocated the "most militant and active supporters" of the union, according to the IWA press, to a single logging camp just south of Ryderwood. Then, citing low timber orders, Weyerhaeuser shut the camp down. The *Timber Worker* called this an "act of mass discrimination" and pointed out that "it is more than a coincidence that the closing down of [the camp] should coincide with the balloting now being conducted." Weyerhaeuser's move, ironically,

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[33] IWA executive board meeting minutes, February 4, 1938, folder 14, box 3, IWA Papers.
[34] *Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Oregon-Washington Council* (Portland, July 19-20, 1939), 5.
[35] IWA executive board meeting minutes, May 14-15, 1938, folder 14, box 3, IWA Papers.
[36] *Ibid.*

galvanized the rest of the workers in Longview's operations and turned them towards the IWA. A few days after Camp 5 was shut down, the IWA held a mock strike vote and signed up hundreds of new members. After most of Longview's workers indicated their preference for the IWA, and also their willingness to strike for IWA recognition, the AFL relented. "By the spring of 1940," writes labor economist Vernon Jensen, "the Carpenter affiliates were largely demoralized at both Long-Bell and Weyerhaeuser units." In mid-March, the IWA requested a single certification election for all of Longview's operations, and workers chose the IWA by a more than 3-to-1 margin.[37]

Longview helped the IWA articulate a new organizational strategy that buoyed the union's subsequent success and expansion throughout the Northwest. The Longview campaign showed that when freed from jurisdictional disputes, the NLRB could tip the scales in the IWA's favor. The IWA continued to pursue these tactics throughout 1940 and into 1941, staying one step ahead of the AFL and simplifying the certification process. In late-1940, the union won at Weyerhaeuser's Everett shingle mills. A few months later, it won at the company's giant Snoqualmie Falls logging camp. "As goes Weyerhaeuser, so goes the industry," writes historian Robert Ficken, and in mid-1941 the union won recognition in the St. Paul and Tacoma's camps, and a few months later its large mills on Commencement Bay.[38] That same year it picked up large locals in the Oregon-American Lumber Company town of Vernonia and the Crown-Willamette pulp mills in Oregon City, as well as dozens of other smaller units. It wasn't all forward progress, though, and the union's march was stunted in a few key places. In 1939 it lost a crucial vote at Westwood in the California Redwoods, and in 1940 it lost several elections in southern Oregon's Klamath River Basin. Even so, by 1941, the Washington and Oregon IWA had more than 65 functioning locals representing close to 40,000 members.[39]

Yet this success mattered little if the British Columbian IWA could not march along in lockstep. The timber industry was, is, and will likely remain a mobile trans-border industry that shifts and rapidly reconsolidates in response to changing markets. A strong union on the southern side of the 49th parallel mattered little if companies could pick up stakes and begin again in a cheaper, union-free market to the north.

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[37] "Balloting Now Being Conducted by Local 36," *Timber Worker*, March 9, 1940, p. 1, 3. Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 238. Also see "Weyerhaeuser Loggers in Strike Vote," *Timber Worker*, March 4, 1940, p.1; "Weyerhaeuser Loggers: Vote Three-to-One for IWA," *Timber Worker*, March 24, 1940, p.1.

[38] Robert A. Ficken, *The Forested Land: A History of Lumbering in Western Washington* (Durham: Forest History Society, 1987), 285.

[39] IWA, "Organizing Report," *Proceedings of the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the International Woodworkers of America*, (Everett, October 8-13, 1941), 180-3. See also NLRB Election Cards, 1939-1945, folder 139, box 14, IWA Papers.

July, 1937—May, 1939

BLUBBER BAY—The British Columbian woodworkers, however, had a much rockier road before them. The AFL was more-or-less nonexistent in the Canadian woods, but the British Columbian IWA still had a major impediment blocking its progress: the 1937 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act (ICA). The ICA was passed in direct response to conflicts like the one in Portland, by legislative assemblymen who preferred that their province's most important industry not also become beset by industrial violence. "I am convinced that as labour conditions settle themselves in the US, a definite attack will be made upon British Columbia," said Minister of Labour George Pearson, the ICA's chief architect, adding "during this attempt, industry will suffer tremendously, through strikes, unless we are prepared to meet it."[40]

Politicians like Pearson rationalized the bill by saying it was the Legislative Assembly's long-awaited response to what British Columbian radicals termed the province's "No Deal." But members of the Socialist-led Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and IWA held out little hope that the ICA would be a British Columbian Wagner Act. "Had the ICA been drafted by the most rabid opponents of trades unionism, they could not have done better," wrote one CCF politician. "The bill is an absolute negation of all the rights and privileges that trade unions have enjoyed throughout the dominion of Canada for over 70 years."[41] Nigel Morgan agreed, adding that the bill had been targeted directly at the IWA. The ICA, he wrote, "was specifically designed by its Coalition sponsors to obstruct the BC Woodworkers in use of its bargaining power to secure just wage demands, shorter hours, greater safety and better conditions on the job." It's difficult to disagree. Though the ICA gave workers a legal right to join a union of their choosing, it was problematically vague on employers' obligations to recognize those unions and it prohibited strikes until employees had conferred with a government-arbitration board. The question of whether the ICA would empower or marginalize organized labor would ultimately be decided in the course of a fourteen-month-long, ill-fated strike in a small company town called Blubber Bay. [42]

Until the spring of 1938, few timber workers had heard the name Blubber Bay. Fewer still would've been able to find it on a map. It was a small town of about 200 people located on Texada Island, isolated between the mainland and up-coast Vancouver Island. As its name suggests, Blubber Bay was founded by whalers in the late-nineteenth century, though quickly abandoned in a few years' time after too many ships ran aground on the island's rocky shoals. The Pacific Lime Company (PacLime),

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[40] Quoted in Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy," 36. On the ICA's history, see Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy," 18-65; Parnaby, "'We'll Hang All Policemen,'" 12-31.

[41] Bengough to Pritchett, November 25, 1937, folder 14, box 6, Harold Pritchett Papers.

[42] Nigel Morgan, "Labor Fights Fascist Curbs," *The BC Lumber Worker*, August 8, 1937, p.1. On the CCF critique see Benjamin Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 19-26.

which acquired the town in 1907 and ran a large lime quarry that workers called the "glory hole," as well as a sawmill that turned out timbers used to shore up the mine, would be more successful.[43]

Like most Northwest company towns, Blubber Bay was a hard place to live. It was cold. It was wet. And the sawmill workers (most of whom were white) lived in company cottages on the north end of the pit that offered only nominal protection from the frequent winds and rains. The Chinese men who worked directly in the glory hole had it worse. They lived in a crowded bunkhouse built right next to outdoor latrines that often overflowed into the living quarters. The relationship between workers and the island's managers throughout the 1930s was characterized by indifference. Complaints about the living and bathing facilities fell on deaf ears, but wages were decent. When workers joined the International Lumber Workers' Union (LWIU) in 1936, managers didn't embrace the union, but they didn't fight that hard against it, either.[44]

Hostility replaced that indifference, however, when the New York Niagara Alkali Company purchased PacLime in 1937. The acquisition symbolized the new flow of American capital into the British Columbian woods, and at Blubber Bay, as elsewhere, it would have severe consequences for workers. The first signs of trouble came when the company started ignoring long-standing safety practices. Then it began cutting hours and raising rents on company homes. Finally, in June it announced an across-the-board wage cut. With the now-defunct LWIU out of the picture, PacLime's new American managers likely believed the Blubber Bay's workers had no means of redress.[45]

The company was therefore taken by surprise, when in July workers announced that they'd joined the IWA and were striking to restore wages. What PacLime's managers didn't know was that the IWA's Arne Johnson had been chartering a boat out to Texada Island to hear workers' grievances, distribute literature, and keep "the men abreast of the situation on the mainland." Blubber Bay's workers seemed to be headed in the direction of IWA membership, but the wage cut provided the last push.[46]

The company tried to break the strike by offering to restore wages for only the white workers. The union rebuffed the settlement and said men would only return to work when the offer was equally extended to the Chinese miners. PacLime had underestimated the culture of solidarity at Blubber Bay. While relations between Chinese workers and white workers throughout the province, as elsewhere, were acrimonious to put it mildly, living in a small isolated company town hundreds of miles from nowhere made labor relations on the island different. As IWA lawyer John Stanton wrote, "close bonds of

[43] Parnaby, "'We'll Hang All Policemen," 15-24.
[44] John Stanton, *Never Say Die!: The Life and Times of a Pioneer Labour Lawyer* (Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1987), 13-28.
[45] *Ibid*.
[46] Arne Johnson, "Organizing Report," *The BC Lumber Worker*, October 3, 1937, p.4.

brotherhood and friendship united the workers and their community and, except among company officials, there was no trace of the racial bigotry that has plagued British Columbia."[47]

Six weeks later PacLime acquiesced and agreed to rescind the wage cut and recognize the IWA. The only problem was the settlement had been negotiated by the company's managers living on the island. No sooner did men start returning to the quarry than word came in from Niagara Alkali's New York board room to withdraw the agreement. The company now said it'd no longer recognize the IWA or restore wages and, in a final defiant gesture, fired the 23 men thought to be the strike's leaders. Before the union could respond, the camp shut down for the winter. When Blubber Bay reopened in the spring of 1938, PacLime announced that it'd be running with an entirely new, non-union crew fresh from the mainland.[48]

This was a clear violation of the ICA and in May, John Stanton drafted a brief to the board outlining the problems. A few weeks later, British Columbian Judge J.C. McIntosh convened an arbitration committee and issued a decision after twelve days of hearings: the company was to honor the wage agreement and reinstate the workers it'd dismissed after the winter shutdown, including the 23 men fired after the strike. Hearing the announcement, PacLime's Oswald Peele announced that the company would not now nor ever do business with an "imported, subversive, terrorist organization" and rebuffed McIntosh's settlement, telling him "you don't have a leg to stand on." Curtly summarizing the problems with the ICA, Stanton later wrote, "while McIntosh was morally right, the order was not legally binding and the company in fact had a good many legs to stand on, all of which it freely used."[49] With conciliation blocked by employer recalcitrance, the IWA called a vote. On June 2nd, Blubber Bay's workers decided by a more than 20-to-1 margin to strike.[50]

PacLime swiftly reacted to the strike vote. It evicted all workers from the company town, posted rules that any striker setting foot on company property would be detained by company police, then sent for scabs from the mainland. Several strikers testing the rules were quickly arrested. Most had been forced out of their homes before they could gather their things. In late-June, Stanton, along with CCF Legislative Assemblyman Colin Cameron, approached the company to get the strikers' property returned and were arrested. Hans Peterson and John McCuish were arrested for the ambiguous charge of obstruction. Robert Gardiner was arrested for using obscene language. If the company found an excuse to arrest any of the strikers, now assembled in a picket camp down by the wharf, they used it. Contrived and arbitrary arrests, however, were the least of the union's problems. "Attacks on workers going to and

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[47] Stanton, *Never Say Die!*, 16.
[48] *Ibid.*, 17. Also see "The History of Blubber Bay," *The BC Lumber Worker,* September 13, 1938 p. 2.
[49] Stanton, *Never Say Die!*, 18.
[50] "The History of Blubber Bay," *The BC Lumber Worker*, September 13, 1938, p. 2.

from their camp by rock-throwing scabs and club-wielding police were becoming commonplace in an effort to intimidate workers into calling of their strike," Stanton recalled.[51]

Over the course of the next few months the IWA diverted every available organizer, picket volunteer, and dollar to winning at Blubber Bay. But it's hard to say why. It was a small outfit with fewer than 200 workers. The island had no larger strategic, geographic, or jurisdictional significance and surely the union's resources would've been better used elsewhere, at any one of British Columbia's unorganized camps. The union no doubt believed that a threat to justice on the island was a threat to justice everywhere and they likely still held to that old Wobbly maxim: an injury to one is an injury to all.

The more likely reason is that the strike became the focus of British Columbia's progressive movement and quickly took on a momentum and energy that made it difficult for the union to walk away. Longshoremen and miners filled boats for the island to hold the picket lines. Members of the British Columbian CIO Fishermen's union used their boats to block the wharf and prevent shiploads of scabs from docking on the island. The radical press ran dozens of stories publicizing the strike under headlines like "Injustice and Collusion at Blubber Bay," or "A Strike for the Future of British Columbia." The strike was widely publicized as "a fight waged against the most brutal police and company tyranny known in British Columbia."[52] The enthusiasm that marked the early days of the conflict, though, waned as the strike entered its twelfth, thirteenth, and finally fourteenth months. Donations to the strike fund slowly stopped coming in and the radical press let the conflict drift from public consciousness. Meanwhile, employer violence and repression continued. Gardiner, the striker arrested on obscenity chargers, died in company police custody. Bill McDonald was beaten so severely that he was sent to the hospital, where he caught an infection and died. On September 19th, 1938 a riot broke out at the picket camp and several IWA members were arrested. The ensuing trial of the "Blubber Bay 15" drained the union of the last of its support fund and the strike was officially called off that May.[53]

Fourteen months and one of the hardest fought struggles in British Columbia's labor history and the IWA had nothing to show for its efforts. The strike also exposed the problems of the ICA and suggested that the British Columbian Woodworkers would have no help from the provincial government as they tried to put Blubber Bay behind them. Finally, during the strike the union neglected unorganized camps on the mainland. By 1940, the IWA represented fewer than 2,000 of the province's estimated 40,000 workers. As the world turned to war, it remained to be seen if the union could gain a foothold in British Columbia.[54]

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[51] Stanton, *Never Say Die!*, 19.
[52] As quoted in *ibid*. Also see Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 116-22.
[53] Stanton, *Never Say Die!*, 21.
[54] Membership figures from IWA, "Organizers Report," *Proceedings…*,1941, 183.

October 7-12, 1940

THE FOURTH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF THE IWA — As illustrated by Blubber Bay and Longview, labor legislation had set the Canadian and American IWAs on different paths. The British Columbian IWA was moribund as a result of the ICA. The American IWA, on the other hand, was growing thanks to the NLRB. The move on Longview broke the industry open and buoyed subsequent organizing drives throughout the Northwest. Success in the Northwest further opened up other regions, and by 1942 the IWA had functioning district councils in the Midwest and intermountain West. Even in the Jim Crow South's pine belt, the "stronghold of anti-labor reaction and vigilantism and the home of the open shop," according to IWA sources, the union had 22 functioning locals. In 1941 alone, the American IWA gained 18,000 new members.[55]

There were significant political and ideological divides as well. In the early-1940s, internal debates between the IWA's pro-communist Red Bloc and anti-communist White Bloc became more vitriolic. The schism had clear geographic boundaries. The union's anti-communists tended to come from southern Washington and Oregon, particularly from Portland and the IWA's Columbia River District Council, while communists tended to come from northern Washington and British Columbia. The geography of this ideological divide reflected historical patterns of industrial development and immigration in the Northwest. The Northwest's timber industry got its start in Oregon's Willamette Valley in the late-nineteenth century. These mills tended to be smaller and they drew in native-born farmers who had no experience in industrial labor or with unions. Washington and British Columbia's timber industry got off to a later start. The first mills and logging operations north of the Columbia River were large and tended to draw radical immigrants and Midwestern loggers who'd previously been part of unions. As was shown in the previous chapter, Washington and British Columbia's immigrant and radical timber workers took more to the Communist Party while Oregon's somewhat more conservative workers favored independent unions and then the AFL's craft unions.[56]

IWA leaders like Harold Pritchett, Erie Dalskog, Karley Larsen, and Hjalmar Bergren were the Red Bloc's most visible leaders. Each was an immigrant—Pritchett came from England, while Dalskog, Larsen, and Bergrent were from Scandinavian countries. And each had largely been introduced to industrial unionism through the Communist Party. Al Hartung, president of the IWA's Columbia River District Council, and Worth Lowry, who would become president of the IWA in 1941, led the White Bloc

[55] IWA, Organizing Report and Political Report, *Proceedings of the 4th Constitutional Convention of the International Woodworkers of America* (Aberdeen, October 7-12, 1940), 164-8. The IWA's role in organizing southern black timber workers is an important, yet woefully understudied aspect of labor history. An excellent initial history of the IWA in southern pine is William P. Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 89-150. Later, in the post war period, the IWA would contribute more organizers and money to the CIO's Operation Dixie than any other union. See Michael K. Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 227.

[56] Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 1-17.

faction. Hartung was born on a Wisconsin farm and came to the Northwest in 1929. He was a professional boxer for a time, then a bar tender, before getting a job as a foreman in an Oregon logging camp in the early years of the Depression. Hartung claimed to have been a member of the radical Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), but this is doubtful, since the IWW was already in steep decline by the time he came to the Northwest. Besides, one IWA member who worked under Hartung in the Oregon lumber camp described him as a "slave driving s.o.b." Like Hartung, Lowry claimed to be a member of the IWW, and there's probably more veracity to his claim. Lowry doesn't appear in any IWW records, but in the early-1920s his brother led the Portland IWW's anti-communist faction.[57]

Between 1937 and 1940, this factional dispute remained largely in the background. Pritchett had been elected the union's first president. Although he faced criticisms from White Bloc leaders and the Columbian River District Council, most rank-and-filers supported Pritchett. They might not have agreed with his politics, but the believed he was a good union strategist who did a great deal to build the union in its early years. Historian Harvey Levenstein writes that Pritchett was a "leftist leader with considerable personal appeal."[58] Pritchett denied his party affiliation for most of his life, though most IWA members and the U.S. immigration authorities knew well where he stood politically. In 1937, just before the IWA's founding convention, and again in 1938 and 1939, Pritchett had been barred entry to the United States on the grounds he was a political subversive. In each instance, U.S. Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins intervened on Pritchett's behalf, getting him temporary visas to attend official IWA functions. In 1940, Pritchett was again denied an entry visa, and this time the appeals of Perkins, as well as several other labor-friendly New Deal politicians and the national offices of the CIO didn't help. Unable to attend official union functions in the U.S., Pritchett resigned the IWA presidency in August 1940, though he remained president of British Columbia's District 1.[59]

Pritchett's ouster began a battle for control of the IWA that would define the union's internal politics for the next few years. At the union's 1941 constitutional convention, the first convention after Pritchett's resignation, White Bloc leaders successfully convinced the union's delegates to elect Worth Lowry to the union's presidency. Red Bloc delegates immediately proposed a referendum that amounted to a no-confidence vote in Lowry's presidency. Afterwards, Lowry funneled nearly all of the union's organizing money into the Columbia River District Council, leaving the northern Washington and British Columbian district councils with few organizers and no funds to conduct organizing drives. In 1943, the national offices of the CIO were called in to help resolve the factionalism. CIO organizers proposed a "unity slate" that split power between the Red and White factions, allowing Lowry to retain the

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[57] *Ibid*., 75-102. Quote on page 81.
[58] Levenstein, *Communism, Anti-Communism and the CIO*, 266.
[59] Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 75-9.

presidency and giving the vice presidency to Mickey Orton, British Columbian communist and Pritchett ally.[60]

The industry's geography was also rapidly changing. After entering the war in 1939, the British Columbian government relaxed trade barriers and opened up millions of acres of untouched Crown lands to private industry. With the continued denudation of Washington's and Oregon's forests, as well as the increased cost of doing business in the post-Wagner Act labor market, American employers recognized that taking their business to the Canadian woods had many benefits and few drawbacks, something borne out by looking at the rapid restructuring of the British Columbian lumber industry in the late-1930s and early-1940s.

In the early-1930s, Washington timber company Blodel-Donnovan merged with a Canadian company to form Blodel, Stewart & Welch. In 1938, the company entered a partnership with Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing and Canadian Western, and by 1941 the firm controlled 44% of the shares of the Associated Exporters of British Columbia, the province's leading exporter of raw timber. In 1941, Canadian Forest Products was acquired by Chicago-based International Harvester and in 1942 it bought 600 million standing board feet in the Nimpkish River Valley, making it the largest private landholder on Vancouver Island. In 1940, Rockefeller-money helped the MacMillian Lumber Company purchase several million acres of timberland and become British Columbia's largest private landholder. In the early-1930s, the British Columbian pulp and paper industry was nearly nonexistent, but expanded rapidly after companies like Oregon-based Crown-Zellerbach (formerly Crown-Willamette) and Minnesota-based Cargill established coastal pulp plants, and by 1941 British Columbia annually produced 508,000 tons of paper, more than anywhere else in the world. Likewise, the interior lumber industry was more-or-less nonexistent, with a total cutting capacity of just 2.5 million board feet per day. By 1945, thanks to American investors, interior mills were capable of producing more than 5 million board feet per day.[61]

This mattered for the future of the IWA. The union's members may have been moving in different organizational and ideological directions, but this industrial restructuring nevertheless tied them together, now more than ever before. Writing in the *BC Lumber Worker* not long after he was denied entry into the U.S. and forced to resign the IWA's presidency, Harold Pritchett called for unity, explaining:

> The Weyerhaeusers, Bloedels and McCormicks are the identical employers with which our sister and brother members south of the international border have, through organization, with the assistance of the New Deal government, established collective

[60] IWA, *Proceedings…* 1940, 1941,1942, and 1943. Also see Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 75-102.

[61] Gordon Hak, *Capital and Labour in the British Columbia Forest Industry, 934-74* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 18-41; Patrica Marchak, *Green Gold: The Forest Industry in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983), 82-112; G.W. Taylor, *Timber: History of the Forest Industry in BC* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1975); Donald MacKay, *Empire of Wood: The MacMillian Blodel Story* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1982; Walter G. Hardwick, *Geography of the Forest Industry of Costal British Columbia* (Vancouver: Tantalus Research, 1963).

> bargaining rights and entered into agreements which as far as we are concerned, are lived up to, which provided a minimum wage scale, an eight-hour day, and a forty-hour week. In view of the fact that the Canadian working people are faced with a government that had definitely proven they are not in sympathy with the problems of labour and have in conclusion continuously worked in the interests of the employer and said employer is international in scope…requires therefore that our union's struggle must out of necessity be international in scope.

Pritchett's analysis outlines the way that the ICA's failures had become a trans-border problem. The new corporate giants consolidating on the northern side of the 49th parallel were spread-out, powerful, and resistant to unionization and the ICA's impotence meant that organizing just one company like MacMillian would result in several dozen Blubber Bays. This naturally mattered for the British Columbian IWA's growth. But it mattered for American workers, as well. Good contracts won as a consequence of the Wagner Act meant little if American operators could reconsolidate on the other side of the border in order to escape the NLRB. So long as there remains a "vast differential paid to the northern workers in the lumbering industry," Pritchett concluded, "industrial flight" is going to continue to inhibit the union's growth. [62]

The delegates discussing the organizing strategy at the union's 1940 constitutional convention may have disliked Pritchett's politics, but they nevertheless seem to have shared his view that the future of industrial unionism in the Northwest woods depended on working together, despite ideological differences. The answer they arrived at was articulated in a unanimously supported referendum: "In order that the International Woodworkers of America may fulfill the role which history has given it, we must further build, consolidate and unify our organization through industry-wide contracts."[63] The delegates believed that industry-wide agreements would solve the union's problems in several ways. As Portland and Blubber Bay had shown, signing up workers to the union was easy. Getting union recognition and a first contract was not. As envisioned by the IWA, industry-wide contracts would make newly organized operators automatically subject to the terms of the agreement meaning that the union could avoid these sorts of protracted battles. "Industry-wide negotiations," said the IWA's Ted Doktor, "will be a club in our hand to organize."[64] This, in turn, would allow a way around the ICA by making union recognition a matter of workers' votes rather than the subject of a conciliation panel. And with a way around the ICA, the British Columbian IWA could normalize wage rates and "curtail the certain geographic conditions that lead to the cut-out-and-get-out production policy of the employers that promotes industrial flight."[65]

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[62] Harold Pritchett, "Our Bosses are the Same on Both Sides of the International Boarder, So Why Not Our Unions?" *The BC Lumber Worker*, August 8, 1940, p.3.
[63] Referendums, *ibid.*, 207.
[64] Ted Doktor speaking in *Proceedings…*1940, 55.
[65] IWA, Referendums, *Proceedings…*1940, 208.

The fact that the union was increasingly speaking about its organizational and contractual struggles in geographic terms is important. In the context of 1930s and 1940s labor relations, there's nothing particularly unique about the IWA's desire for industry-wide contracts. As several historians have shown, broad working agreements are as much a part of the CIO's history as Communism, interracial unionism, and rank-and-file activism, though contractual history is sometimes overshadowed by these more glamorous topics. And certainly, contracts do seem the dry stuff of labor economics or the old labor history. But looking at these contracts tells us something important about working-class agency. They show that workers were not just social, political, and legal agents, but geographic agents as well. They show the union was trying to redefine the economic terrain of organizing and bargaining and rescale industrial relations to create an industrial geography that expanded labor's power. They were trying to create what labor geographers call a "new space of engagement."[66]

September 7, 1942—October 14, 1943

NATIONAL WAR LABOR BOARD—At least in the U.S., it would be World War II, more than anything else, which facilitated an industry-wide agreement. Although World War II was extremely mechanized, the military still relied heavily on good old-fashioned lumber. Every C-62 cargo plane required 40,000 board feet. Each carrier flight deck used 140,000 board feet. In 1942 alone, the military used more than 9 million board feet for ammunition crates and more than 25 million board feet for road beds and bridges. A 1943 report by the War Manpower Commission stated that lumber was the most important strategic asset, surpassing even steel and non-ferrous metal in terms of military need. War industry had an equally voracious appetite and required billions of board feet for new factories and war worker housing. In 1942, lumber production in Oregon and Washington peaked at 36 billion board feet. More than 90% of that went directly to the war effort.[67]

Military strategists were therefore troubled by a 1942 report by the National War Labor Board (NWLB) showing that the Northwestern timber industry was producing only a fraction of its potential. The study pointed to several factors causing the problem. Despite wartime contracts the market remained chaotic and mill owners were hesitant to run at full capacity. Stands had been severely denuded in previous years and the forests were not fully capable of meeting the military's needs. Yet, the most

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[66] See K.R. Cox, "Spaces of dependence, spaces of engagement and the politics of scale, or: Looking for local politics," *Political Geography* 17 (1998): 1-23; Andrew Herod, *Labor Geographies: Workers and the Landscapes of Capitalism* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2001), 41-4.

[67] War Manpower Commission, *War Labor Reports* (Washington: Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., 1943), Vol. 1, 151 and Vol 2., 1-19. See also, *International Woodworker*, April 21, 1943, p. 1 and September 22, 1943, p.2; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 135.

pressing problem was that industry wages were not competitive and workers were fleeing the woods to take higher-paying war-industry jobs in places like Seattle and Portland.[68]

Timber workers repeatedly expressed a fondness for company town life, but the promise of excellent wages in wartime industry was often enough to pull them away. In 1942, pay in Seattle's shipyards was, on average, more than 50% higher than pay in timber operations. At the start of the war, mills throughout the region reported to the NWLB that they didn't have enough people in camp to run a full crew. A report by the Board estimated that the Northwest woods needed an additional 100,000 loggers to adequately meet wartime demand. This exodus to wartime industry reshaped company towns. During the Depression, several Northwestern logging companies transitioned from railroad logging to cheaper truck logging and built roads into their communities that, for most of the 1920s, had only been reachable by train. With workers now able to reach job sites by car, several employers ceased to run company towns. Some just abandoned their town sites. More often, companies sold houses to workers, fairly cheaply, and company towns became independent municipalities.[69]

NWLB researchers believed that low wages were preventing the Northwest timber industry from meeting wartime production demands. And indeed they were. But the NWLB never noticed that wages had been kept low so that employers could create an artificial labor shortage that would allow them to replace union workers with nonunion labor. In 1942, the West Coast Lumbermen's Association proposed using federal troops to address the labor shortage. Several IWA members old enough to remember immediately recalled how the Army's Spruce Division had been used to break the IWW back in 1917. "Operators in the Pacific Northwest have deliberately sabotaged the lumber production" wrote IWA president Worth Lowry, "so that troops would be used in the industry and labor unions destroyed."[70] When that proposal failed to gain traction, operators suggested using prisoners of war "to obtain sufficient manpower to conduct the logging business." This process never became widespread though, due to IWA opposition. "Prisoners of war should not be placed in a hazardous industry," read a referendum passed at the union's 1943 convention, "for retaliation could be given to the American prisoners by putting them to work in the German factories, which are now being bombed." Elsewhere, employers started hiring women to work the mills. By 1942, nearly all the green chain workers in Weyerhaeuser's Snoqualmie Falls sawmill were "Lumberettes," some as young as fifteen and sixteen. Although some female timber

[68] A.L. Morgan, "Report of the Western Pine Lumber Industry for the National War Labor Board," (Portland, 1942).

[69] Linda Carlson, *Company Towns in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 167. Morgan, "Report of the Western Pine Lumber Industry." While some company towns began closing in the 1940s, many more didn't close until the 1950s. When Weyerhaeuser closed its model Snoqualmie Falls camp in 1958, workers could by their houses for $100. The last company town in the Pacific Northwest was Gilchrest. It didn't close until 1986.

[70] "A New Spruce Division?," *International Woodworker*, March 10, 1943, p. 3.

workers were allowed to join IWA locals, most were paid far less than men. The IWA would not begin to advocate "equal pay for equal work" until 1945, when the IWA Women's Auxiliary pressed the issue.[71]

The labor problem may have very well tied-up lumber production for the entire war if not for radical action taken by the NWLB. The NWLB was created by executive order in 1942 to take over the NLRB's role of handling industrial disputes in critical wartime industries, including timber. On September 7th, 1942 the Board issued an order prohibiting workers currently employed in timber to leave their jobs. Everyone, even the Board's commissioners, recognized that this was drastic. "For the first time in American history the war powers of the Chief Commission for that purpose," read an NWLB ruling, "were used to 'freeze' the men to their jobs." A week later, the NWLB issued a second order, instructing the Selective Service Agency to grant deferments to all men employed in lumber production.[72]

It's not hard to imagine how rank-and-file timber workers reacted to the job freeze. One logger writing into the *Industrial Woodworker* called it "the most dangerous ideological venom to pour from the fangs of the professional labor-baiters." Another wrote that "the proposal is the trump-card of the Big Money boys," and an "utterly needless hunk of economic phonious-balonious" that's only purpose was "to maintain vast surplus wealth intact and to saddle the major part of war cost upon the consumer and labor."[73] On the other hand, according to an NWLB arbitrator, "implicit in the freeze was the need to compensate in part, at least, these workers for this unprecedented curtailment of their liberty." In late-1942, the Board appointed labor relations expert, arbitrator, and future Oregon senator Wayne Morse to head a commission tasked with creating a uniform wage scale in the lumber industry. After a month of hearings with workers and employers, in which "every argument that ingenuity could have devised" and "every repetition that astute minds could make possible," Morse returned his decision, establishing a 95 cents minimum wage in the Fir industry and 62 ½ cents minimum in pine.[74]

The IWA saw in the Morse decision the chance to push for the industry-wide agreement it'd been hoping for. In October of 1943, the union issued a dissent, saying it'd not agree to the wage scale unless the Board also issued a union security agreement. Employers quickly responded by saying they'd honor no such agreement. After months of hearings, Morse was understandably frustrated. "At least during these war times" he wrote in an exonerating statement, both employers and employees would benefit by "adopting less of a litigious attitude in their industrial relations and more of a manifestation of a willingness on both sides to lay all the facts on the table." Morse arrived at a compromise that both

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[71] Referendums, *Proceedings of the Seventh Constitutional Convention of the International Woodworkers of America* (Sacramento: August 17-21, 1943), 155.

[72] J.C. Hill and H.D. Bloch, "Report on Wage Stabilization Activities of the West Coast Lumber Commission," (N.W.L.B., March 28, 1944), 7. On the NWLB in the Northwest woods, see Jensen, *Lumber and Labor*, 273-91.

[73] "Freeze Plan Seen as "Escape" for Rich," *International Woodworker*, October 3, 1943, p.7.

[74] N.W.L.B., *News Release* B-586, April 18, 1943. The NWLB explained the wage differential by saying that employers in the pine region operated on slimier profit margins and therefore could not afford the 95 cents/hour paid in Fir.

operators and the IWA eventually agreed to: continuance of union shop agreements where they already existed and automatic union recognition without union security in future operations brought under the IWA's control.[75]

It was hardly the dreamed-of master agreement, but it was a start. And the IWA felt confident that the Morse decision established an important precedent for future industry-wide negotiations when jurisdiction reverted back to the NLRB at the war's end. "The regional negotiations and uniform agreement effected in the Fir Region and Pine Belt" read a statement by the union's executive officers, "can eventually be expanded and made to apply to those other regions such as the Redwoods."[76] Still, questions remained about the British Columbian IWA. Could it rebuild in the wake of Blubber Bay? And if not, what would this mean for workers on both sides of the border?

October 2-17, 1943

THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS—There's some 500 miles of ocean between British Columbia's Queen Charlotte Islands (known today as Haida Gwaii) and the nearest port on Vancouver Island, and it's one of the hardest stretches of water in the world to navigate. Small islands, jutting rocks, and racing tidewaters make the journey terribly dangerous, and there are few places for a small boat caught in one of the frequent storms to find shelter. It's a tougher place still to live. The archipelagic islands that make up the Charlottes are in fact steep mountains rising from the ocean floor, defined by sheer hillsides that terminate right at the water's edge. Though the temperature rarely drops below freezing, the thermometer never seems to climb much past 50 degrees and average annual rainfall exceeds 168 inches, making the islands the rainiest place in the Northern hemisphere. This topography and climate is what makes the islands' forests special, and to this day the Charlottes have more Sitka spruce than any other place in the world. Logging the Charlottes was, and remains, difficult. The steep mountains made steam donkeys and cable yarding nearly useless. Instead, workers rolled the timbers down the hillsides into the water, just like the industry's first workers back in the nineteenth century. This made the Charlottes' loggers a bit harder and a bit tougher. And in the fall of 1943, it'd be these men who'd determine the fate of the British Columbian IWA.[77]

The process of rebuilding after Blubber Bay began in earnest in 1941 when the IWA organized the small Lake Logging Company (Lake Log) on Vancouver Island, an operation that employed about 300 men. Lake Log had an unusual hiring policy. It often employed workers blacklisted at other camps. As Myrtle Bergren explained, "these boys" had experience working in the woods and, more importantly,

[75] N.W.L.B., *News Release* B-1123, November 19, 1943 and B-1600, June 23, 1944.

[76] IWA, Officers Report, *Proceedings of the Eight Constitutional Convention of the International Woodworkers of America* (Vancouver: October 24, 1944), 18.

[77] Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 205-14; Richard A. Rajala, *Up-Coast: Forests and Industry on British Columbia's North Coast, 1870-2005* (Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2006), 17-38, 115-138.

were already committed union activists. It therefore didn't take long for the IWA to organize Lake Log's camp. In June, with, in organizer Nigel Morgan's words, "all but a handful" of Lake Log's workers signed up to local 1-80, the IWA requested an ICA hearing to certify the union. Lake Log's American managers, Harold Hunter and Ralph Rounds, resisted, saying they'd not negotiate with "rabble rousing radicals." Lake Log's workers nevertheless indicated their intention to strike to win union recognition. When Morgan pointed out that striking would be illegal before an ICA panel had been convened, the men nevertheless voted 223 to 8 in favor of quitting work "individually." [78]

Just as in the Portland dispute, the IWA's women's auxiliary played a major role in the Vancouver Island organizing drive. Vancouver Island auxiliaries were extremely tight-knit. In most Island company towns, men spent the work week in satellite camps and only returned home on the weekends. Women in Lake Cowichan referred to themselves as "grass widows" because most of the week, other than company staff, few men were in town. Nevertheless, women came together and shared household duties and child care responsibilities. The Vancouver Island IWA women's auxiliary was also quite radical. Several of the women involved, like Myrtle Bergren, were members of the Communist Party. Some of that radicalism could be seen in the Auxiliary pages of the IWA's newspapers during the Vancouver Island organizing drive, where women promised they'd do whatever they could to support a strike, if necessary. "Our membership is strong," an auxiliary member from Lake Log's company town told readers in the *BC Lumber Worker*, "one lady said if her husband scabbed he could look for a new wife…We all stand ready to bring on the soup kitchen if Rounds [Lake Log's manager] forces that. We have a nice sum in our treasury, a membership of 51, and are in a 100 per cent good position to stand behind our brothers."[79]

Rank-and-file activism in operations like Lake Log clearly abetted the IWA's growth in British Columbia in the early-1940s. The wartime economy helped as well. Employers found it far easier, and far more profitable to agree to recognize the union rather than drag conflicts through ICA hearings and risk not filling military lumber contracts. After Lake Log, the IWA successfully organized logging operations in Port Alberni and Lake Cowichan, a move that brought an additional 1,000 loggers into the IWA. Port Alberni and Lake Cowichan were also Vancouver Island's largest operations and organizing both these camps allowed the union to put pressure on the island's major mills in Hillcrest and Youbou. In the mills, as well, employers appeared to be more willing to deal with the IWA than turn to ICA hearings. In just two weeks, IWA organizer Hjalmar Bergren had signed up 90% of the workers in Youbou's mill and got them union recognition two weeks later. It was "the biggest and fastest

[78] Stanton, *Never Say Die!*, 55-68; Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy," 66-73.
[79] "Auxiliary News and Notes," *BC Lumber Worker*, March 14, 1941, p.6.

organizational gin in the history of our union," he wrote. By 1942, IWA local 1-80 had most of Vancouver Island organized and had a membership of about 2,500.[80]

But even with Vancouver Island camps organized, the Queen Charlottes remained the IWA's primary target throughout the early-1940s. The roughly 900 men on the islands cut nearly all the Sitka spruce used by the allied forces. Spruce has an incredibly high strength-to-weight ratio and since the early twentieth century it's been used in military boats and aircraft. Even though steel and aluminum had replaced spruce in some vehicles, the military still demanded millions of board feet of lumber for cargo planes, light boats, and personnel carriers. Spruce stands in Washington's Olympic Peninsula had largely been depleted during World War I and the Queen Charlottes had the best and last remaining stands in the Northwest. Furthermore, the lumber coming off the islands supported scores of mills up and down the coast, making the Charlottes the union's keystone for an up-coast organizing drive. In terms of production capacity and number of workers employed, the Charlottes paled in comparison to industry giants like MacMillian. But in terms of economic significance to the wartime economy, there was no more important place.[81]

Throughout labor history, the boss has often been the best union organizer, sowing seeds of unrest where none might have otherwise existed. And on the Charlottes, workers were well radicalized by the bosses before an IWA organizer had ever set foot on the islands. Since the first wartime contracts began in 1939, the Charlottes' four operators had been steadily speeding up production. By 1941, most of the islands' men were working thirteen or fourteen hour days, seven days a week. And by 1942, they'd had enough and announced a wildcat strike. Employers agreed to raise wages, but even then more than half the islands' buckers and fellers quit. Closely watching the situation from the mainland, Harold Pritchett pointed out the obvious: though the Charlottes' lumbermen were making millions from wartime contracts, "they refused to bargain for fair wages and conditions for the men who did the killing work of production."[82]

Even if the Charlottes' exploited loggers were ready for organization, the problem of getting to the islands remained. Throughout the early-1930s, only a handful of Communist organizers ever made it out to the islands and the fact that the only reliable way to reach the Charlottes was by a company-owned steamer made it fairly easy for employers to keep radicals out of the camps. IWA organizer Arne Johnson had little success in running a drive on the islands in the union's early years. He'd tried to make

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[80] Bergren, as quoted in *Never Say Die!*, 59. Also see Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy," 69-75.

[81] Stanton, *Never Say Die!*, 55-7; Rajala, *Up-Coast*, 115-138. For life on the Charlottes, see "Morgan's Camp is Confronted by Many and Varied Problems," *The BC Lumber Worker*, April 4, 1936, p. 3; "Hanson Fires Delegate," *The BC Lumber Worker*, April 4, 1936, p.2; "Good Food and No Highball at Allison Log," *The BC Lumber Worker*, September 30, 1936, p.2; "Logger Hurt, Denied Aid," *The BC Lumber Worker*, August 4, 1937, p.1; "Loggers in Morgan Camps Fed Spoiled Meats," *The BC Lumber Worker*, July 12, 1936, p. 2.

[82] Pritchett in Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 206.

the trip in the union's small boat, the *Laur Wayne*, but had always been turned back by violent seas. After a rogue wave swamped the *Laur Wanye's* engine and nearly flipped the boat during a 1936 attempt, Johnson declared the islands out of the IWA's reach. However, in August 1940 the Vancouver IWA Women's Auxiliary raised enough money to refit the *Laur Wayne* with a new, 38-horsepower diesel engine. A few months later, a second fundraising drive allowed the union to purchase a second boat, the 40-foot *Annart*. "In a short time," writes Myrtle Bergren, the IWA's "Loggers' Navy" was "known everywhere up and down the coast, eagerly looked for by men interested in the union, and hated by many company officials as a thorn in the side of the lumber operators."[83]

The Logger's Navy finally made getting to the islands possible, but there were other problems. Most of the islands' crews worked out of floating camps built in the inlets and bays, making stealthy infiltration impossible. Managers heard the *Laur Wayne's* or *Annart's* thumping diesel engines from a ways off and had ample time to prepare. "The most hostile reception," Johnson remembered to Bergren some years later, "was at Al Denvy's camp on Bonwick Island, where the boss himself, armed with an axe handle, and very excited, threatened violence to anyone who set foot on the island." Workers were, however, far more receptive. Often Johnson found he had to do little more than pull into an inlet, sound the horn, and men would come out to the docks to sign union cards.[84]

By late 1943, Johnson and fellow organizer John McCuish had signed up every one of the Charlottes' 900 or so loggers and negotiated a uniform wage agreement with the companies. Like employers on Vancouver Island, the Charlottes' operators probably conceded on wages because they didn't want to disrupt wartime production. Even so, they drew the line at union recognition and said they'd met their obligations under the ICA by negotiating a wage agreement. Still, the islands' loggers continued to push the issue. "Why does a man and woman get married?" a Charlottes worker asked in the pages of the *BC Lumber Worker*, "To legalize it. They can live together without getting married. But they marry to make it legal."[85]

In the fall, the IWA requested an ICA hearing to "make it legal." Though the ICA had done little in places like Blubber Bay, the union was likely hoping that the wartime economy would silence operators' resistance to Board recommendations. So when an ICA panel ordered the Charlottes' operators to recognize the union in September, and the operators blatantly refused, it must've felt to the IWA like *déjà vu* all over again. "We hate to have a knock-down and drag-out fight," Nigel Morgan told reporters from the *Vancouver Sun*, but "the operators came right out and said they would not sign

[83] Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 220. On the Logger's Navy, see "Watch for the Boat," *The BC Lumber Worker*, August 29, 1936, p.6; "Gas-Boat Leaves on Frist Cruise to Coast Camps," *The BC Lumber Worker*, September 5, 1936, p. 1.

[84] Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 221. See also "Annul Meet Local 71 Maps Union Program," *The BC Lumber Worker*, July 5, 1943; "Loggers' Navy Gets Some Fuel, Needs More Gas and Diesel Oil," *The BC Lumber Worker*, April 19, 1943, p.1.

[85] "Local 1-71 Applies for Certification in QCI Camps," *The BC Lumber Worker,* May 31, 1943, p.2.

anything, right in the face of the Arbitration Board." Immediately after the ICA hearings, 92% of the Charlottes' workers voted in favor of a walkout.[86]

The strike began on October 2nd with many likely believing that the union was walking into another Blubber Bay. But suddenly, fifteen days later, the operators agreed to settle. Reports in the IWA's paper immediately credited "the unconditional surrender of the four major companies involved" to the Charlotte loggers' militancy.[87] A few days later, John Stanton received word that the settlement came about after one of the operators, Thomas Kelly, threatened to break ranks and sign with the union. He later explained his decision, telling Stanton, "you fellows will fight to the last drop of my blood."[88]

Militancy was undoubtedly important and there's little doubt that the Charlotte loggers would've fought to Kelly's last drop of blood, but as time went on it became clear that most of the islands' employers were more than willing to enter the type of knock-down and drag-out fight Morgan feared. Rather than an unconditional surrender as the union's paper had suggested, the agreement was more a strategic move orchestrated by the R.V. Stuart Research Company. Stuart began representing the 147 operators belonging to the British Columbia Lumbermen's Association (BCLA) in 1939. The ICA had made industrial relations complex, and employers increasingly looked for a more systematic approach to negotiations and arbitrations, which Stuart's firm provided. And, as historian Stephen Gray notes, the "consolidation of the industry behind Stuart," reflected operators' "fears of taking on the IWA independently." Stuart believed that the islands' workers might be willing to exchange union recognition for a no-strike pledge for the duration of the war and had encouraged Kelly to push for a separate memorandum of agreement to that effect.[89]

Stuart was driving towards a master agreement for the entire industry that would make the ICA a null factor in labor relations. The IWA's objections to the ICA are clear. But by 1943, operators had grown equally weary of forced arbitration, largely as a result of continued IWA pressure. While Blubber Bay, Chemanius, and the Queen Charlottes were the IWA's most visible campaigns, the union had also tied up the industry through several smaller strikes. A 1943 report by the provincial legislature found that since 1939, the lumber industry had been beset by more than 77 industrial disputes that affected close to 20,000 workers, amounting in the loss of more than 100,000 work-hours that otherwise would have

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[86] As quoted in Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy," 122. See also "Operators Refuse to Accept Gov't Proposals in QCI Dispute," *The BC Lumber Worker,* September 6, 1943, p.1; "IWA Restless Over Refusal of Operators to Sign Agreement," *The BC Lumber Worker*, September 20, 1943, p.1; "Anti-Labour Policy of QCI Operators is Aid to Hitler," *The BC Lumber Worker*, October 18, 1943, p. 1.

[87] "Labor Dept to Certify Aero Management Will Negotiate," *The BC Lumber Worker*, October 18, 1943, p. 3.

[88] Stanton, *Never Say Die!*, 67. Also see "Negotiations Continue for IWA Master Contract," *The BC Lumber Worker*, November 15, 1943; "10,000 Woodworkers Under Contract," *The BC Lumber Worker*, December 20, 1943, p. 7.

[89] Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy," 189.

contributed to the war effort. Moreover, the IWA still had 22 cases awaiting arbitration, which the report predicted would further undermine war production.[90]

Using the Charlottes agreement as a precedent, Stuart approached the IWA in December 1943 and asked if the union would be willing to suspend its pending 22 cases and sign an industry-wide no-strike pledge in exchange for a master agreement with the BCLA's coastal operators. The union's leaders agreed and the rank-and-file ratified the contract in early 1944. But it wasn't yet the dreamed-of industry-wide agreement. The 1944 contract only applied to coastal operations, did little to bring British Columbian wages in-line with American wages, and didn't include the safety provisions that the union had requested. The BCLA similarly rebuffed the union's proposal for a coast-wide union shop agreement. But the IWA did win one key concession that would be important in future negotiations: employers would automatically recognize the IWA in any camp where a majority of workers voted to join the union. Later in 1944, the provincial legislature passed p.c. 1003, prohibiting strikes for the duration of the war. So when the contract was reopened in 1945, the IWA wasn't in the best bargaining position. Nevertheless, they looked forward to 1946, when p.c. 1003 would expire and the contract would reopen. Workers were mobilized. Strike ballots were readied. And members donated a day's pay to the strike fund.[91]

May 15—June 20, 1946

BRITISH COLUMBIA—The 1946 British Columbian negotiations took on even more urgency after the American IWA successfully negotiated industry-wide agreements in Douglas fir and eastern pine in late-1945. As the union had predicted, the NWLB's 1943 decision provided an important precedent that allowed the IWA to expand working-agreements when jurisdiction shifted back to the NLRB in the closing years of the war. Improving market conditions helped as well, and operators looking to fill their stockpiles for the predicted postwar housing boom seemed less interested in fighting the union and more interested in keeping the saws turning.[92]

The IWA's leaders no doubt believed that improving market conditions would help leverage British Columbia's employers, as well. The problem during the 1946 negotiations, however, was going to be bringing the interior into the agreement. The interior's small operators had already indicated their unwillingness to bargain with the large BCLA employers on the coast. Moreover, wages in the interior camps were low and the working conditions awful, if not downright deplorable. "The Terrace camps are

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[90] Report of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Branch, "Number of Time-Lost Disputes in British Columbia, 1939-1943," (ICA, 1943), p. K 82.

[91] Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy," 178-209; "Organizers Report," *9th Annual Convention, BC District Council 1* (Victoria, April 20-22, 1945), 13-14.

[92] IWA, Organizational Report, *Proceedings of the Tenth Constitutional Convention of the International Woodworkers of America* (Portland: September 10-13, 1946), 76-9.

a disgrace to the twentieth century," one IWA organizer noted, "with men still packing their own bindles in 1946. There are no showers, no dry rooms, no sanitary facilities, and many men cook and eat in the same hovels."[93] Despite the fact that workers had several legitimate grievances, organizing the interior was hard. The camps were spread out, difficult to get to, and an early drive in 1944 had failed after conflicts became embroiled in dozens of ICA disputes. Preparing for the 1946 negotiations, the IWA's Ernie Dalskog said "conciliation boards will bring about no satisfactory solution and we should do away with them and settle the whole problem with one master stroke."[94]

Given the difficulties of organizing inland British Columbia, it's hard to say why the strike spread so quickly and so completely. Camps that'd never been approached by the IWA shut down completely. Flying squads in places like Terrace, the Kamloops, Cranbrook, and Blue River reported that workers took out IWA cards by the hundreds. Because interior camps paid so poorly, the IWA's goal of a 25c/hour wage increase probably attracted a great deal of support. As Myrtle Bergren explained, "the IWA had advanced a programme that met the needs of every woodworker." It's a romantic analysis, no doubt. But it's also a difficult point to ignore.[95]

The strike started on May 15th, 1946. It ended on June 20th with an industry-wide agreement covering the whole of the British Columbian lumber industry. Though the union only won partial concessions on wages and hours, it did get a union shop agreement and compulsory dues check-off. Yet, the most historically significant part of the settlement was that it made the ICA null-and-void. Like the 1944 agreement, the 1946 contract required that any unorganized workers who voted to join the IWA would automatically be working under the terms of the settlement. No longer would union certification be dragged through arbitration boards and conciliation panels. Now, the will of the workers would be determined by a simple democratic vote.

Since 1937, the IWA's goal had been to find a way around the problems of the ICA and NLRB and equalize wage rates and working-conditions on both sides of the border. Since 1940, the American IWA had adopted an organizing strategy that freed the NLRB from jurisdictional disputes and buoyed its organizational successes at Longview and beyond. The 1946 agreement was evidence that the British Columbian woodworkers could achieve organizational success in the woods as well. While American workers continued to earn better wages than their British Columbian counterparts, the 15 cents/hour increase won after the 1946 strike made the disparity far less severe. As Al Parkin remembered, wages before the strike hadn't "covered the bare necessities of life." Now, workers could provide for their families. And, shorter hours meant they saw those families more often. "For the first time loggers were

[93] "Terrace Camps Disgrace to Twentieth Century," *The BC Lumber Worker*, February 4, 1947, p. 1.
[94] Minutes of District Executive Board Meeting, March 5, 1946, folder 8, box 4, Harold Pritchett and IWA British Columbia District 1 Papers.
[95] Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 234.

able to see their wives," Parkin wrote, "and hell, some of them saw their kids for the first time in six months."[96]

1946-1948

BRITISH COLUMBIA—The 1946 strike had another consequence for IWA members, one that would not be so fondly remembered. In the years since Pritchett resigned the presidency, the union's Red Bloc communist faction had been fighting for control of the union with the anti-communist White Bloc faction. During the organizing drives of the 1940s, IWA leaders had tried to put their ideological differences aside in the interest of expanding the union's organizational power. The union's success in the 1946 strike, however, made the British Columbian communists popular throughout the IWA. Just as it'd always been, the rank-and-file seemed to care little for the politics of the men leading the union. What they wanted was good leadership capable of building a powerful union. In the leadership elections that took place after the 1946 strike, the IWA's Red Bloc faction captured three of the union's top leadership positions. Karley Larsen from Washington, Ed Laux from Oregon, and Jack Greenall from British Columbia defeated White Bloc incumbents for the positions of vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and trustee. The vote, writes Jerry Lembcke, "was quite literally a red flag to the White Bloc, touching off renewed attacks on left-wing leaders in B.C. and northern Washington."[97] Although factional struggles and leadership changes like this had been going on for years, what made this time different was that this time the White Bloc would be able to reclaim the union with help from the state and Cold War domestic politics.

In June of 1947, the U.S. Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act. Taft-Hartley aimed to restrict labor's growing power in the postwar era. In 1945, workers in several major American industries struck to try and restore wages that'd been stagnant since the start of World War II. It was the largest strike wave in American history and many politicians, even New Deal politicians sympathetic to organized labor, started to worry that unions had too much power. At the same time, the CIO had been trying to organize black workers in the south and southern Democrats designed Taft-Hartley, in part, to prevent organized labor's expansion into southern industries. Finally, Taft-Hartley reflected Cold War political concerns: politicians as well as many in the public feared that communists had become too powerful in the CIO and needed to be reined in. The Taft-Hartley Act reflected all of these concerns. It made it more difficult for unions to win certification elections by amending the National Labor Relations Act. It prohibited closed shop agreements, which unions had used to control the hiring process. It allowed states to pass right-to-work legislation that prohibited unions from negotiating security clauses that required every member of a shop to join the union. And, it's most infamous section, section 8(h), required all

[96] Al Parkin, "Labour and the British Columbia Forest Industry," *The BC Lumber Worker*, April 8, 1947, p. 3.
[97] Lembcke, "The International Woodworkers of America in British Columbia," 129.

trade union officials to sign affidavits swearing they did not belong to the Communist Party or any organization that advocated the overthrow of the U.S. government. Refusing to sign the affidavits—and a handful of radical unions did indeed refuse to sign them—would disqualify a union from NLRB oversight.[98]

At the IWA's July, 1947 executive board meeting, the union's leaders met to discuss Taft-Hartley's implications. James Falding, a member of the White Bloc who'd been serving as the union's president since 1943, immediately went on record as supporting section 8(h) and recommended that every IWA leader sign the affidavits. Left wing board members Larsen, Laux, Greenall, as well as Ernie Dalskog and Ilmar Kovinen, representing the Midwestern district councils, spoke against compliance. At the end of the meeting it was decided that the issue should be subject to a rank-and-file referendum vote. A month later, at the IWA's constitutional convention in St. Louis, the matter was put to the delegates in the form of a resolution that stated, in part, the IWA "comply with the NLRB certification provisions of the Taft-Hartley Law." A minority recommendation was also proposed, which resolved that the IWA "not use the facilities of the New Labor Board" and that "to resolve all issues between our union and the employers through bona fide collective bargaining and other peaceful means wherever possible." At the end of the convention, the minority resolution was voted down, the pro-Taft-Hartley resolution passed, and the IWA formally said it'd comply with section 8(h) and require all officers to sign the affidavits.[99]

After the convention, Falding immediately sent letters to the IWA's communist officers, telling them to sign the affidavits or "tender your resignation immediately." Larsen and Laux refused, responding that they did not want to become "a legal party with Taft-Hartley and the Labor Management Board in destroying industrial unionism in the lumbering industry." Both men resigned in September, 1947. Afterwards, Falding wrote to Jack Greenall, the British Columbian communist serving as the union's International Trustee, as well as the leaders of British Columbia's District Council 1, asking them to comply with Taft-Hartley. When District 1's leaders pointed out that they were Canadian citizens and therefore not subject to American labor law, they were expelled from the IWA by a referendum vote. Responding to the expulsion, British Columbian rank-and-file members took a referendum vote and decided, by a wide margin, to secede from the IWA. In early 1948, the IWA's British Columbian District Council 1 terminated its ties to the IWA and founded its own independent union, the Woodworkers Industrial Union of Canada (WIUC).[100]

The WIUC had immediate trouble. British Columbian lumber companies operating under the IWA master agreement were under no legal obligation to recognize the WIUC and employers began

[98] There's a great deal of literature on Taft-Hartley's effect on organized labor. For two accounts, see Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO: 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 241-8; Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 117-22.

[99] IWA, *Preceedings…* 1947, p. 212, 241.

[100] Quotes from Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 120, 124.

terminating their contracts, essentially undoing the gains made in the 1946 strike. It was difficult for the WIUC to rebuild because a 1948 amendment to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act made it harder for British Columbian unions to win certification elections. The left-wing leaders that orchestrated the breakaway also likely overestimated the rank-and-file's willingness to go along with a secessionist movement. Harold Pritchett and Jack Greenall were at the center of the breakaway movement. Both compared the breakaway to events more than a decade earlier, when woodworkers had seceded from the AFL and founded the IWA. If the creation of the IWA was the second coming of radical industrial unionism in the Northwest woods, then Pritchett and Greenall saw the WIUC as radical industrial unionism's third coming. One British Columbian party member, however, later recalled that the success of the 1946 strike had "gone to Pritchett's head," and that he overestimated the zeal of the rank-and-file.[101] Likewise, Ernie Dalskog later called the breakaway "a terrible mistake." "We all knew within a few months [that] we could have handled it in other ways. I'll never forget," he continued, describing when he went down to District 1's headquarters and told other leaders "what had been decided. 'What a bloody fool thing,' they said."[102] In 1949, the IWA started allowing breakaway British Columbian locals back into the union on the grounds that their leaders sign the Taft-Hartley anti-communist affidavits. By 1950, the WIUC was defunct.

In their analysis of the IWA, Jerry Lembcke and William Tattam treat the 1948 secession movement as a major turning point in the union's history, when the IWA purged itself of communists and went from a radical union of the Depression to a business union of the Cold War. The rhetoric union members used, particularly the union's leaders, was certainly different after 1948. Before the 1946 British Columbian strike, union members spoke in terms of industrial democracy and said workers had a right to determine their social and economic fates. After 1948, union leaders sounded a bit more conservative and tended to frame conflicts more narrowly, around bread-and-butter issues, like wages, hours, and working-conditions. Before the breakaway, the union had taken a vocal interest in international affairs. It'd criticized trade with Japan in the years leading up to World War II, sounded off on the role of the U.S. and Canada in the war, and then derided the Marshall Plan, the U.S.'s aid program for Western Europe, on the grounds that some of that money would be used to suppress trade unions and political radicalism. After the breakaway, the IWA retreated from international issues, becoming, in large part, more insular. Regarding "the scope of what unionism should be," write Lembcke and Tattam, "Communists clearly had the broadest vision."[103]

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[101] As quoted in Isitt, *Militant Minority*, 6.

[102] Dalskog, as quoted in Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 116-7. On WIUC, see Jack Greenall, *The IWA Fiasco* (Vncouver: Progressive Workers Movement, 1965); Fred Wilson, "A Woodworker's Story: Harold Pritchett recalls IWA's militant history," *Pacific Tribune*, April 29, 1977, p 12-3.

[103] Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 178.

Perhaps. But looking beyond political rhetoric, the IWA continued to be a strong, fighting union, through the 1950s and 1960s, up until it started hemorrhaging members in the massive timber recession of the late-1970s. The IWA's White Bloc leaders maintained a commitment to organizing. In 1950, the union had roughly 100,000 members. By 1960, it claimed to represent 123,000 members. It also worked to expand in the south and organize black workers. Twice in the late-1950s, IWA members voted to increase membership dues to support organizing campaigns in southern lumber. While anti-communist leaders clearly used the Taft-Hartley affidavits to their advantage, they continued, along with the rest of organized labor, to call for a repeal of the law. The union hadn't reached an accord with management, either, and was just as willing to strike, even if those strikes were framed more around bread-and-butter issues and less around the larger theme of industrial democracy. The IWA's biggest strike ever came in 1954 when it shut down the entire lumber industry in Washington and Oregon, on both sides of the Cascades, in a 12-week long battle to maintain the industry-wide agreements it'd won during the war.

The union's anti-communists also maintained a commitment to forestry and environmental policy. If anything, what IWA members referred to as the "forestry issue" became a larger part of the union's political platform under the leadership of the White Bloc. IWA leaders now argued that industrial flight was as much an environmental issue as an economic and geographic issue. Master agreements may benefit the workers in the short-term, but did little to secure the forests future. Shortly after the IWA won the 1946 strike and was operating under master agreements on both sides of the American-Canadian border, when wages were higher than they'd even been, and timber workers were now working shorter days under better conditions than they ever had, IWA president James Falding reminded the membership that "our fight can meet only partial and temporary success if we merely bargain with our employers over the spoils of an industry which destroys the forests."[104]

[104] "Woodworkers Security Depend Upon Success of Natl. Forestry Program," *International Woodworker*, February 6, 1946, p. 4.

Chapter 6

"Capitalism Has No Place in Our Forests"

Working-Class Environmentalism, The New Deal, and Wilderness

At the IWA's October, 1937 executive board meeting, Ted Dokter, a woodworker from Puget Sound, was given the floor to comment on Washington Congressman Monrad Wallgren's efforts to create a national park on the Olympic Peninsula. The park would "be permanently reserved as wilderness," Doktor explained to his fellow board members, "and no development of the project or plan for the entertainment of visitors shall be undertaken which will interfere with the preservation intact of unique flora and fauna and the essential primitive natural conditions now prevailing in that area." Dokter concluded his comments, saying that the union should "vehemently petition" their congressional allies to "press for early enactment" of the bill. Over the next few months, the union's paper, the *Timber Worker* ran several articles promoting Wallgren's legislation. The articles urged IWA members to write their congressional representatives, tell them there'd been "too much conversation and not enough conservation" around forestry, and letting them know the IWA supported the park. Little less than a year later, in 1938, Wallgren succeeded in passing the legislation that created Olympic National Park. At the union's constitutional convention later that year, John Coffee, the congressman from Washington's 6th district in Tacoma, who also supported the Park, thanked the IWA for backing Wallgren. "I want to congratulate the IWA on having supported the creation of the Olympus National Park," Coffee said, "this great organization believes thoroughly in the principle of conservation. And who more than anybody else should believe in conservation, than those who are employed in the lumber industry." He concluded, saying, "this organization has endeared itself to Secretary of Interior [Harold] Ickes. He told me so several times, because it had the intestinal fortitude and the temerity to stand up and fight for conservation of one of the most beautiful things that God ever created—and that's an old growth virgin fir tree."[1]

Considering the many challenges the IWA was facing in the late-1930s, its support for the Park is notable, in part, because it suggests that union members believed conservation was just as important as organizing, building the union's strength, and addressing continued unemployment. The IWA had been founded a year before Wallgren introduced the Act, in 1937, and since its establishment had been under constant attack from employers and the American Federation of Labor. At the same time union members were being urged to write their congressional representatives and support the park plan, IWA members in Portland were holding the picket lines in the city-wide lockout and workers in several other locales were

[1] Minutes of Executive Board Meeting of the IWA, October 31, 1937, folder 14, box 2, IWA Papers, Acc # Bx 199, Special Collections, University of Oregon; *Timber Worker*, November 7, 1937, p. 1 and November 14, 1937, p.3; John Coffee in IWA, *Proceedings of the Second Constitutional Convention of the International Woodworkers of America* (Seattle, September 12-16, 1938), p. 123.

on strike trying to get union recognition. Although unemployment had peaked in 1933, by 1938 several timber workers were still out of work, and many of those still with jobs were working reduced hours for reduced wages. Wallgren's plan called for preserving approximately 634,000 acres of prime timberland, and industry representatives who opposed the Park said that opening up those stands would do a lot to curtail unemployment. An article in the union's paper disagreed, explaining that while opening the Peninsula's old-growth stands might create some short-term employment opportunities, soon the area would be cutover and then "we will have lost one of the best remaining reserves of old-growth timbers that our country has ever known."[2]

Employment mattered to the IWA, but they didn't believe that allowing timber companies unbridled access to the stands was the answer, or that jobs had to come at the cost of preservation. Instead, IWA leaders argued that if lumber companies managed commercial stands better, it'd be possible to have a viable timber industry that could support logging communities for years to come; there'd then be no need to cutover virgin stands. Harold Pritchett spelled this out in his presidential address at the union's 1939 constitutional convention. He told how decades of "cut-it-out and get-out" had created social instability throughout the Northwest and how timber workers and their families wouldn't be secure until the government forced timber companies to adopt more sustainable harvesting practices. "Woodworkers want permanent communities where a logger can live with his family and count on a supply of timber near by as long as he wants to work in it," Pritchett said.[3] A few years later, Worth Lowry, who replaced Pritchett as the IWA's president in 1941, said much the same thing. The two men were political rivals, though when it came to forestry politics, they spoke in the same tone. "One half of the standing timber in the United States is bunched right up here in the Northwest," Lowry told a Congressional committee investigating forest waste in 1942, "five out of eight industrial workers [in Washington and Oregon] depend upon lumber for a living—and we can't close our eyes to the fact that we're cutting it twice as fast as it grows. It makes up two thirds of our railroad tonnage and means bread and butter and bacon to a lot of people."[4]

Together, the IWA's support for expanded wilderness areas like Olympic National Park and its insistence that existing commercial stands be more responsibly managed in order to protect the livelihood of rural logging communities provide a good outline for understanding the IWA's environmental philosophy. Union members saw no contradictions between working in nature and protecting nature. They envisioned a multi-use landscape and said that parts of the forest could be managed to support employment while other parts could be preserved to protect working-class recreational access. The IWA's environmental philosophy was an extension of the ethic of place that'd been articulated by

[2] "Wallgren speaks on Olympus Proposal," *Timber Worker*, October 7, 1937, p.1.
[3] President's Report, IWA, *Proceesings…*(Portland, March 12-14, 1939), p.114.
[4] Warren T. Miller, "The IWA-CIO Faces the Northwest of the Future," *Industrial Woodworker*, August 12, 1942, p.3.

workers living in company towns in the 1920s and 1930s. In earlier decades, timber workers had come to rely on the forests for many things. First and foremost, it was a site of work. Equally important, though, logging communities relied on the forest for subsistence and to supplement their incomes. Hunting, berry picking, and gardening made timber workers less dependent on their employers. At the same time, workers looked to the forest for recreation and appreciated nature for the sense of escape it provided. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, timber workers began to see their communities and working-class culture as entwined with nature and they began to argue that they, not their employers, owned the woods and that it was their responsibility to protect the trees. This was put best by an IWA member when he said, "as far as I'm concerned, the forests are the heritage of our people and should be used for our people, and capitalism has no place in our forests."[5]

The ethic of place that had emerged in company towns in the 1920s and 1930s became more formally defined in the IWA in the 1940s and 1950s. Union members articulated what I call here working-class environmentalism, the belief that natural resources could be managed for multiple uses and that it was possible to work in the woods while at the same time appreciating the forest for its more intangible cultural value. In forest policy debates throughout 1940s and 1950s, union members talked about nature's beauty, their fondness for the flora and fauna, and about the connection they felt to the landscape. They advocated for increased preservation and worked to expand wilderness areas as a way of guaranteeing continued recreational access to outdoor spaces and protecting the places that'd become important to their communities. IWA members, though, saw no contradiction between preservation and work. They said that it was possible to maintain a working forest alongside wilderness preserves. The forest could provide employment and economically support rural communities at the same time it provided ample opportunities for recreation. In fact, IWA members often argued that workers were in a better position to address the misuse of forests than other environmentalist organizations because their union's strength and relationship to capital gave them the power to force timber companies to adopt more sustainable harvesting practices. As Harold Pritchett said in a 1938 radio address, "indications are that if cutting practices still generally followed are continued, our old growth fir will soon be gone. Organized labor must be the spearhead to correct the past criminal use of our natural resources."[6]

This chapter explores the IWA's efforts to shape forestry policy in the Northwest, focusing on how the union defined its working-class environmentalism and sought to bring resource policy in line

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[5] Joe Morris, as quoted in Andrew Parnaby and Andrew Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada: The Life and Times of an Industrial Union* (Vancouver: IWA Canada, 2000), 269.

[6] As quoted in *ibid*, 268. For working-class environmental histories that have shaped my thinking here, see Chad Montrie, *Making a Living: Work and Environment in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Lawrence M. Lipin, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Robert Gordon, "Poisons in the Fields: The United Farm Workers, Pesticides, and Environmental Politics," *Pacific Historical Review* 68 (February 1999): 51-77; and "Shell No!: OCAW and the Labor-Environmental Alliance," *Environmental History* 3 (October 1998): 460-87.

with its vision of a multi-use forest. I argue that the union framed its working-class environmentalism in the rhetoric of New Deal conservationism to try and encourage sympathetic politicians to create a new regulatory regime in the Northwest woods that would force operators to follow more stringent harvesting guidelines and protect the forests for working-class recreation. Although New Dealers in the U.S. and politicians belonging to the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation in British Columbia argued that the Depression had been caused by the mismanagement of rural resources, and they tried to give rural communities more control over resource policy, the politics of forest management were different. In the early days of the New Deal, industry foresters and trade association representatives successfully argued that forests should be the subject of industrial recovery programs, not rural recovery programs, and industry retained control of the dictating forestry policy. Starting in the postwar period, the IWA began to more actively reach out to progressive foresters, conservation-minded politicians, and middle-class wilderness advocates to argue in line with 1930s conservationist philosophies that rural people needed to have more control over forest resources. Although these initial efforts failed, partly as a result of Cold War domestic politics, the IWA maintained these relationships into the 1950s and continued to push for wilderness protections, a movement that culminated with the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964.[7]

NEW DEAL CONSERVATION AND THE NORTHWEST WOODS

In the postwar years, the IWA would articulate its forestry politics in the rhetoric of New Deal conservationism. New Deal conservationism can largely be traced back to farm policy. Many New Dealers believed that the Depression was primarily a problem of agricultural economics. They said farmers' purchasing power drove the economy and so long as farmers remained poor, the national economy would continue to flounder. As Rexford Tugwell one of President Franklin Roosevelt's Brains Trust explained, "when farmers do not buy, industry feels the loss of customers. Ultimately workers lose their jobs. The inescapable mutuality of economic groups in the American economy is thus demonstrated."[8] Farmers were unable to buy because they were unable to produce. Rapid deflation throughout the 1910s and 1920s forced farmers to continually till infertile land and drain every last nutrient from the soil. This created a vicious cycle: the more farmers worked, the worse the soil became, and the poorer they got. "Poor people make poor land," explained the narrator of a 1937 documentary produced by the Resettlement Administration, "and poor land makes poor people."[9] The first, largest,

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[7] For recent literature on New Deal conservationism, see Sarah T. Phillips, *This Land, This Nation: Conservation, Rural America, and the New Deal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Neil M. Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the Environmental Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). For histories of the New Deal in the Northwest's forests, see Richard A. Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest: Production, Science, and Regulation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 123-37; William G. Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislatures: Political Economy of the U.S. Lumber Industry, 1890-1941* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982).

[8] Rexford G. Tugwell, "The New Deal in Retrospect," *Western Political Quarterly* 1 (December, 1948): 375.

[9] As quoted in Sarah T. Phillips, *This Land, This Nation*, 75.

and most expensive New Deal programs therefore attempted to restore the land and break the cycle of farm depletion and poverty through conservation policies, rural improvement programs, and public works projects. The Rural Electrification Administration and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) brought power and water to unirrigated farming communities. The Resettlement Administration relocated struggling farmers and offered them "a mule and a plow" and "a new start." The Civilian Conservation Corps enlisted young men to dig irrigation ditches, replant abandoned farmland, and build a new infrastructure around struggling farm communities.[10]

Farms may have been at the New Deal's political and ideological center, but the forests needed a recovery program for many of the same reasons. The cycles of resource exploitation and economic instability that plagued the agricultural sector also plagued the lumber industry. Chaos in the lumber market throughout the 1920s led to overproduction, overproduction led to deforestation, and deforestation led to further market chaos. This cycle perpetuated rural poverty in the forests, just as it did on farms. Throughout the Depression, unemployment remained disproportionately high in logging communities. Those with jobs worked short hours and for wages well below national industrial averages. Rural poverty in logging communities no doubt troubled sympathetic New Dealers who likely noted that in the forests, like the farms, poor land created poor people. But deforestation also had broader economic implications. Recovery depended on new homes, new factories, and a new infrastructure. This all required lumber, and lumber would soon be in short supply if overcutting continued.[11]

Several promising signs in the early days of the New Deal indicated that the Roosevelt Administration took deforestation seriously and hopeful observers likely believed that it was only a matter of time before the woods saw some equivalent of the TVA. One of these signs was the fact that the new president famously considered himself a "tree grower." He undertook a massive tree planting program on his family's Hyde Park estate and as governor of New York in the 1920s Roosevelt authorized several replanting programs in the Hudson River Valley. Another good sign was that progressive foresters looked to have the new president's ear. Since the 1920s President Roosevelt had been in regular correspondence with Gifford Pinchot, the godfather of American forestry and first Chief of the U.S. Forestry Service (USFS). Pinchot no doubt reiterated to Roosevelt the argument that he'd been making for several decades: the nation was on the verge of a widespread "timber famine" and without immediate action the country's lumber supplies would be completely exhausted by the 1970s. Roosevelt had also exchanged letters with the famous wilderness advocate Robert Marshall, whose 1930 pamphlet *Social Management of American Forests* argued that the federal government needed to take control of the timber industry so that the woods could be managed for the greater public welfare. Industrial silviculture and

[10] Quotes in *ibid*.,21,148.
[11] Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators*, 145; Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rainforest*, 123-137.

self-regulation, Marshall argued, "has brought out several beautifully illustrated conservation magazines. It has produced a great many lachrymose promises and wild assertions, but it has not resulted in any appreciable practice of forestry."[12]

But the forests never saw anything like the TVA or Resettlement Administration. If New Dealers were committed to rural resource conservation and knew the timber famine was imminent, then why not? The simple answer is that the New Deal's promise of rural revitalization through resource conservation was hijacked by lumber industry representatives and trade groups. New Deal farm programs were large, expensive, and omnipresent. Industrial recovery programs were different. Rather than direct federal intervention, New Dealers pursued policies of industrial self-regulation to stabilize manufacturers. On the nation's farms, the New Deal state could be seen everywhere. In industry, the federal government took a back seat role. Do your own "housecleaning," FDR told industry in one of his famous fireside chats, "and thus avoid oppressive regulation."[13] Of course, forests were rural resources, similar to farms in many ways, and progressive foresters like Pinchot and Marshall argued that this should make them the subject of interventionist New Deal resource policies. But trees were also industrial commodities, and in the years after Roosevelt's election, industry representatives made a far better case that the forests should be the subject of industrial policy, not rural policy. They could do their own housecleaning just fine, with no help needed from the federal government.[14]

If industry alone made this argument, perhaps conservation-minded New Dealers would've been reticent to hand management of the forests over to operators. But foresters also backed the policy of industrial-self regulation. By the early 1930s, progressives like Pinchot and Marshall were a dying breed. Instead, forestry was led by professionals who'd been reared in industry-funded colleges and who wanted to maintain forestry's cozy relationship with industry money. The role that industry-sympathetic foresters played in early New Deal forestry debates could be seen in the publication of *A National Plan for American Forestry*, more commonly known as the Copeland Report. The report was the brainchild of New York Senator Royal S. Copeland, who believed it would serve as a guide for New Deal forestry policy. One of the report's authors, R.S. Kellog, had previously stated that considering the social impacts of logging was "propaganda" that had no role in proper scientific discourse. Another of the report's contributors, Franklin Reed, described men like Pinchot and Marshall as "religious zealots" who'd lost touch with the profession. It's little surprise, then, that the Copeland Report prescribed nothing radical.

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[12] Robert Marshall, *The Social Management of American Forests* (League for Industrial Democracy, 1930), 2. On FDR's conservation, see Maher, *Nature's New Deal*, 17-32. On progressive foresters in the New Deal see, Brian Balogh, "Scientific Forestry and the Roots of the Modern American State: Gifford Pinchot's Path to Progressive Reform," *Environmental History* 7 (April 2002): 198-225; Brian Black, "The Complex Environmentalist: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Ethos of New Deal Conservation," in *FDR and the Environment*, 19-47.

[13] As quoted in David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 200), 135.

[14] See Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators*, 172-96.

Though it criticized the lumber industry's culture of fierce competition and maintained that a complete lack of regulation led to deforestation and overproduction, it nevertheless argued that industrial self-regulation, not federal intervention, was the appropriate course of action.[15]

The report squared nicely with the desires of the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association (NLMA), the largest trade organization in the timber industry, and among the largest trade groups in the country. Since its founding in 1902, the NLMA had vigorously pursued a policy of industrial self-regulation and cooperation as a way to ward off state intervention and bring some order to the industry's chaotic markets. The Copeland Report provided the NLMA with an opportunity to institutionalize the cooperative practices and policies it'd been pursuing for more than three decades. And in the months after the report's release, NLMA lobbyists descended on the nation's capital, Copeland Report in hand, urging Congress and the president to include lumber in its larger plan for industrial self-regulation, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA).[16]

Like most New Deal programs, the NIRA was large, complex, and sweeping. It empowered labor through its infamous section 7(a), which gave workers the right to choose their own bargaining agents. It created a massive works program through the Public Works Administration. And, perhaps most importantly, it set up a system for enshrining industrial self-regulation into law by creating "fair codes of completion," to be administered by the National Recovery Administration (NRA). Industry representatives and trade organizations were given more-or-less complete control for writing the codes. Progressive foresters again warned that giving the lumber industry self-regulatory powers was a mistake. Raphael Zon, a former USFS forester, explained in a letter to FDR that placing the lumber industry under the NRA "means throwing away the greatest opportunity we have to bring the management of public lands under control." Zon's warnings, though, went unheeded, and responsibility for drafting the NIRA's Article X, the Lumber Code, was placed squarely in the hands of the NLMA.[17]

"With absolute control over the rule-making process," writes historian Richard Rajala, "operators and their technical advisors succeeded in drafting a series of vague, flexible provisions that posed no challenge to traditional liquidation techniques."[18] Under the Lumber Code's provisions, young trees or trees reserved for seed sources had to be preserved only "as far as practicable" or "so far as feasible." Operators could petition to opt out of the code's mandated replanting program, which many did. Critics

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[15] Kellog and Reed quoted in Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators*, 177. U.S. Congress, Senate, *A National Plan for American Forestry*, Senate Document 12, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., March 13, 1933.

[16] Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators*, 14-50, 78-188; John H. Cox, "Trade Associations in the Lumber Industry of the Pacific Northwest, 1899-1914," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 41 (October 1950): 285-311. Robert E. Ficken, *The Forested Land: A History of Lumbering in Western Washington* (Durham: Forest History Society, 1987), 165-96.

[17] As quoted in Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rainforest*, 186. On the NIRA and the Lumber Code, see Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators,* 172-96; Rajala, Ellis W. Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly: A Study in Economic Ambivalence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 123-146.

[18] Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rainforest*, 186.

like Zon, who continued to insist that industrial self-regulation would only lead to continued deforestation were reminded of the Lumber Code's sustained-yield provisions, which were supposed to regulate harvest rates and ensure that cutting and forest regeneration existed in equilibrium. But sustained-yield policies were only enforced on the smaller operations that the NLMA was hoping to squeeze out of the market. Sustained-yield is "not so hot for the poor operator," a small landholder said in response to the Lumber Code.[19] In the end, the Lumber Code did very little to conserve the forests. It also strengthened monopoly control over the industry by putting increased pressure on smaller operators. While Article X didn't do much for the forests, it did a lot for lumbermen's public image. They could point to sustained-yield policies and seed tree management programs and say they took deforestation seriously.

In May 1935, the Supreme Court declared the NIRA unconstitutional. Nevertheless, the Lumber Code established an important precedent in the woods that would shape the federal government's relationship to the lumber industry for years to come. Article X made industrial self-regulation look practical and effective. It created the perception that the lumber industry took deforestation seriously. And, it made industry-controlled sustained-yield policies look like an effective tool for combating forest denudation. Subsequent timber laws were therefore little more than reimagined and reworked versions of Article X. In 1937, Congress passed the Oregon and California (O&C) Act, mandating sustained-yield on the revested O&C Railroad Grant Lands. Then in 1944 it passed the Sustained-Yield Forest Management Act, allowing private operators increased access to public forests. The NLMA heralded both acts as legislative victories. They would stabilize prices, curtail overcutting, and bring further order to the chaotic lumber market, without the need for intrusive government intervention.[20]

A few keen-eyed observers saw through the industry's rhetoric. Former USFS Chief Ferdinand Silcox pointedly criticized the government for its emphasis on industry stabilization and overproduction, not the "social consequences of timber depletion." A report by the USFS found that the O&C Act "resulted in a brief period of industrial activity, followed by inevitable economic and social disaster." A 1940 study conducted by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission criticized industry-controlled sustained-yield policies, showing that the annual harvest outstripped growth two to one and warning that the forests are "being depleted at a dangerous rate." A 1941 study by the Washington State Planning Council pointed to the "numerous ghost towns" as a sobering, grave, and "grim indication of what happens when the timber supply gives out." But by the mid-1940s, it was largely too late. Charles McKinley, who served on the Northwest Regional Planning Commission lamented that the ascendency of

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[19] As quoted in *ibid*.

[20] Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict*, 150; Roy O. Hoover, "Public Law 273 Comes to Shelton: Implementing the Sustained-Yield Forest Management Act of 1944," *Journal of Forest History* (April 1978): 86-101; C.M. Granger, "The Cooperative Sustained Yield Act," *Journal of Forestry* 42 (August 1944): 558-9; Elmo Richardson, *BLM's Billion-Dollar Checkerboard: Managing the O&C Lands* (Santa Cruz: Forest History Society, 1980)

self-regulation policies in forestry politics had created an atmosphere “inhospitable to sober reflection.” Indeed, in the woods, New Dealers had lost sight of the fact that poor land makes poor people. [21]

LUMBER SNAFU

In the postwar years, the IWA attempted to get forests redefined as rural resources, not industrial commodities, thereby making them the subject of what they saw as more democratic recovery policies. It faced a challenge, though. Forestry science and policy was largely determined by industry professionals, trained in industry-funded colleges. Everything workers knew about the forests and wood came from work and company towns. Labor-friendly New Deal politicians were sympathetic to the IWA’s call for a new regulatory regime and progressive foresters probably agreed, yet they were easily marginalized in political discussions. IWA president James Falding pointed this out in 1945 when he frustratingly explained, “We are treated as a group of interested but technically uninformed woodworkers.” In order to legitimate their environmental knowledge, in 1945 IWA members voted to assess a dues increase to create a new research department and then hired a professional forester named Ellery Foster to lead it. Over the next few years, Foster would be the figurehead behind the IWA’s forestry campaign. He became particularly important because he articulated the union’s working-class environmentalism in terms that resonated with conservation-minded New Dealers and middle-class wilderness advocates, which helped the union build a large coalition able to stand up to industry-trained foresters and powerful trade associations. As Falding said after hiring Foster, he would show politicians and professional foresters “we are not shooting in the dark.”[22]

There was no love lost between professional foresters and IWA members. As an article in the union’s paper put it, “professional forestry is merely a cover for the continuing devastation of timber resources.” Likewise, the IWA press frequently referred to the professionals and bureaucrats who set resource policies as “swivel chair foresters.”[23] Why, then, did the IWA accept a professional forester into its ranks? Part of the reason was that Foster brought stunning credentials that would give the IWA’s environmental politics legitimacy in forestry debates. Foster had been born in Minnesota in 1905. After graduating from the University of Michigan’s School of Forestry he worked as a ranger, timber cruiser, mapmaker, and siviculturalist for the USFS. In 1935 he was appointed to be the Forest Service’s Chief of National Planning. Two years later, in 1937, he began a three-year term as head of Minnesota’s

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[21] Silcox quoted in William G. Robbins, “The Social Context of Forestry: The Pacific Northwest in the Twentieth Century,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 16 (October 1985): 418; F.L. Moravets, *Production of Logs in Oregon and Washington, 1925-1948*, USDA, Forest Service, Forest Survey Report no. 101, Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station (Portland, 1950), 7; Northwest Regional Council, *Forest Depletion in Outline* (Portland, 1940), iii; Washington State Planning Council, *The Elma Survey* (Olympia, 1941), 39; Charles McKinley, *Uncle Same in the Pacific Northwest: Federal Management of Natural Resources in the Columbia River Valley* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 459-60.

[22] “Rebuilding and Conserving our Wood Crop—Another Must,” *Industrial Woodworker*, June 27, 1945, p.7.

[23] “Urge Government Support for Forestry Program,” *International Woodworker*, February 7, 1945, p.1.

Department of Natural Resources. In 1940 he accepted a position working under New Deal secretary of agriculture Hennery Wallace in the Cooperative Land Use Program. Since 1942, he'd been working as a lumber analyst for the War Production Board.[24]

More than his experience, though, Foster likely appealed to IWA members because unlike most foresters, even progressive ones, he seemed to understand things from the workers' perspective. He didn't shy away from using terms like "capitalist class" or from referring to industry representatives as "timber butchers." He made no claims to impartiality, rarely moderated his tone, and was quick to condemn wanton resource exploitation and the forestry profession's unholy dependence on industry money. That tone was evident in any one of his diatribes against the industry, like when he wrote that industry silviculture is "a colossal hoax by which the lumber barons hope again to lull an uneasy public into complacency long enough to finish their wasteful exploitation of old growth forest for the benefit of a privileged few."[25] Unlike most forestry professionals, he also understood that workers could and should play a role in environmental politics. "Against the forces of entrenched interests that grow fat by exploiting scarcity," Foster wrote, "foresters and woodworkers should be natural allies."[26] Foster may very well have been reared in the forestry profession's bureaucratic ranks, but he spoke with the style of a worker born in the radical ferment of the Depression.

Foster's first major action as head of the IWA's research department was to publish a pamphlet titled *Lumber Snafu.* The pamphlet took its name, and indicated the more confrontational tone the union would bring to forestry politics in the postwar period, from Foster's observation that there'd been few concrete steps taken to preserve the forests. Instead, industry spokesmen, government foresters, and politicians had offered only "a lot of excuses." "All of that gets us nowhere," Foster wrote. Meanwhile, "the condition of lumber remains 'situation normal—all fouled up.'"[27] Though only two dozen pages long *Lumber Snafu* was a sweeping and remarkably detailed explanation of the forestry problem. Foster thoroughly documented the economics of the lumber industry, arguing that the entire nation's economy rested on a responsible forest management program. He made a compelling case that the government needed to adopt interventionist policies to protect forests in order to meet the demands of the expected postwar housing boom. He also dedicated several pages to outlining the problems of industrial self-regulation and industry-controlled sustained-yield policies, calling the latter nothing more than a

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[24] For Foster's biography, see Presidents Report, IWA, *Proceedings…* (Eugene, November 13-7, 1945), 180-1; Executive Board Meeting Minutes, August 2, 1945, folder 13, box 14, Papers of the International Woodworkers of America, Acc. Bx 199, Special Collections, University of Oregon.

[25] "The New Age of Wood," June 27, 1946, p.3.

[26] Ellery Foster, "Woodworkers and World Forestry," *Unasylva: A Magazine of Forestry and Forest Products* 1, no. 3 (November-December, 1947): 8. For more on Foster's reasons for working with the IWA, see Ellery Foster, "On Working for a Labor Union," *Journal of Forestry* 44, no. 7 (July, 1946): 474-6.

[27] Ellery Foster, *Lumber Snafu* (Portland: IWA, 1946), 2. Copy in folder 13, box 133, IWA Papers. Shorter versions of *Lumber Snafu* also reprinted in *International Woodworker*, January 6, 1946, p. 4-8; and *Journal of Forestry* 44 (June 1946): 393-400.

"publicity stunt to convince the indignant public that the lumber barons have finally got a religion." Industry self-regulation and sustained-yield, he continued, did nothing to help workers, nothing to help the communities dependent on lumber, and nothing to preserve forest resources. What these policies did do was "help the large timber owning companies to tighten their monopolistic grip on the forest industries."[28]

Yet the pamphlet's most important argument was that the New Deal had abrogated its promise of economic restoration through rural revitalization in the woods, something Foster drew out by comparing the government's forestry programs (or lack thereof) to New Deal farming programs. The forests are going to continue to be a problem he wrote "until we have a national lumber production program comparable to the national food production program. With all its shortcomings, the food program looks like virtual perfection when contrasted with the dismal lumber picture of recent years." What separated the government's farm and lumber programs, Foster continued, was that New Deal agricultural policy had a human face and a concern for broader social issues. Industrial self-regulation did not. Unlike the forests, the federal government understood that on the farms, poor land makes poor people. "Most of what the government does about lumber production is to issue news releases," Foster wrote. "Contrast this with the farm program. The government has a genuine program to provide the farmer with technical assistance and financial aid as well, aimed at improving life in the farming communities."[29]

The fact that Foster was a forester was no doubt important in shaping his and the IWA's forestry politics in the postwar period. But what was even more important was that Foster had worked as an economist in the Department of Agriculture before coming to the IWA. Foster's view of rural resources, how they should be managed, and the federal government's role in protecting resources can be seen in an earlier document he wrote there in 1942, titled "The Development of Rural Land-Use Planning Committees." Here, Foster argued that rural resources needed to be managed in cooperation with rural people, who knew the land and, consequently, knew best how to manage the land. Rural people, as opposed to industry, had a vested interest in long-term planning and, by virtue of their connection to the land, best understood the resource. It was the government's job to empower those people and give them the tools and technical assistance they needed. In rural land-use planning committees, Foster argued, "the individual participants have shown capacity to think in broad terms of the general good, and not merely of selfish interest." He continued, "as technicians and experts work with farm people on the rural planning committees they learn and accept a simple but fundamental distinction: research may be done by the expert alone; but planning ought to be done with the people." The "central idea," he concluded "is the traditional democratic one: people living together peaceably by guaranteeing to each other certain agreed

[28] Foster, *Lumber Snafu*, 8.
[29] *Ibid.*, 15.

upon rights, allowing special privileges to none, dealing with common problems on the basis of majority opinion and decision—with government protecting the individual in his rights and helping him to be a free and useful member of democracy's organic whole."[30]

Foster's belief that cooperative land-use planning was the key to preserving and managing rural resources were well represented in *Lumber Snafu*, and particularly his recommendation for restructuring sustained-yield units. Like many progressive foresters, Foster only disagreed with sustained-yield in practice, not principle. The problem wasn't that sustained-yield was inherently flawed but rather that sustained-yield units were managed by industry silviculturalists who set harvest rates to benefit the bottom line, or applied the even less scientifically rigorous methodology of "by-guess-and-by-God." Looking again to soil conservation programs, Foster recommended that "representative committees of local people" should be given responsibility for administering and maintaining sustained-yield units. It sounds like a fairly innocuous proposal.[31] It was anything but. Forest policy had always been premised on the fact that land owners have the exclusive right to manage their lands how they see fit. Federal and state-level policies had been rebuffed or legally challenged throughout the 1920s and 1930s because landowners framed these laws as a state intrusion on private property. Foster was suggesting that rural working people had a claim to forestland ownership and they accordingly had a right to manage the forests in their own best interests. The same idea would later be proposed by foresters in the 1970s, who called it "community forestry." It was a radical idea then, and even more so in the 1940s.[32]

Foster's idea of community forestry was a new way of articulating timber workers' long-held belief that work and company town life had given them rightful claim to the forest. Since the 1920s, timber-working communities had been arguing, in one form or another, that although the lumbermen held legal titles to the land, the fact that they lived and worked in the forests gave them a claim to ownership and the right to decide how forests should be managed. Several workers also pointed out that few, if any of the Northwest's lumbermen actually lived in the region. For absentee landowners, deforestation was a conceptual problem, one they rarely noticed, unless it negatively impacted their ledgers. Timber workers, on the other hand, could see deforestation first hand, and feel its effects deeply. "The operator lives a thousand miles from the forest—no Weyerhaeuser has slept in a log house for many years," wrote IWA president James Falding. "But the lumberjacks and their families, after the trees are gone, find

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[30] Ellery Foster, "The Development of Rural Land-Use Planning Committees: A Historical Sketch," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 8 (1942): 8,11.

[31] Foster, *Lumber Snafu*, 18.

[32] On community forestry, see Mark Baker and Jonathan Kusel, *Community Forestry in the United States: Learning from the Past, Crafting the Future* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2003); Ryan C. L. Bullock and Kevin S. Hanna, *Community Forestry: Local Values, Conflict and Forest Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

themselves inhabiting ghost towns. The mill machinery rusts and the schools close." He continued, the work only "breaks a man's back." The loss of community "breaks his heart."[33]

IWA leaders like Falding and Foster frequently evoked the plight of rural logging communities and the union's rank-and-file membership in debates over forestry in the 1940s and 1950s. But the extent to which *Lumber Snafu* and the IWA's subsequent environmental activism represented rank-and-file imperatives is not fully clear. While (as previous chapters have shown) timber workers developed a close connection to the landscape through work and company town life and as early as the 1920s expressed a concern over forest denudation, a union's leadership doesn't necessarily express the views and beliefs of a union's membership. At times, union leaders may follow the dictates and policies laid out by the membership. At other times, they may move in different directions. Put another way, union leaders are independent actors that sometimes take their cues from the membership and sometimes don't. Trying to figure out if *Lumber Snafu* represented rank-and-file attitudes is made more difficult by the nature of the IWA's archive. Like most union archives, the IWA's records represent the voices of the leadership. Convention proceedings, internal communications, and the union's newspaper were forums where the leadership expressed their vision for the union. Although the union's leaders frequently talked about the massive support they had from the rank-and-file on forestry issues, the extent to which this was real or imagined is an open question.

Whether it expressed the views of the rank-and-file or not, *Lumber Snafu* nevertheless circulated widely. It became the basis for the IWA's official forestry program, introduced at the 1945 constitutional convention. It was published in its entirety in the union's paper. Thousands of copies were distributed to locals throughout the country. Members were instructed to hold meetings to discuss the pamphlet and consider its proposals. "I want to urge every local union to take up this problem," Falding said, "and organize its own program to make every member familiar with the IWA forest plan and to make the whole community familiar with it. It is our job—the organized woodworkers' job—to lead off in the forestry fight."[34] *Lumber Snafu* found its way to professional foresters, politicians, and conservation advocates. The *Journal of Forestry*, an academic publication that usually toed the company line in regards to forestry science, published a shorter version of Foster's work. The famous New Deal conservationist and former Oregon congressman Richard Neuberger wrote a piece in the *New York Times* endorsing *Lumber Snafu*. Oregon Senator Wayne Morse and Washington Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson both praised the piece in the local press. Gifford Pinchot wrote to the *Industrial Woodworker* to

[33] "The Axeman's Folly," *International Woodworker*, November 2, 1945, p.6.
[34] "Statement of IWA Officers on the Problems of Forestry," December 26, 1945, p.4.

offer his "hearty thanks" to the IWA for taking up the forestry issue. And, eventually, *Lumber Snafu* found its way to the desk of the House member from Michigan's 12th District, "Fightin' Frank" Hook.[35]

THE HOOK FORESTRY BILL

Square-jawed and steely-eyed, Frank Hook looked more like he belonged in a logging camp or miners' hall than the floor of the United States Congress. He spoke tough and acted even tougher and though he'd earned the nickname "Fightin' Frank" back in his high school wrestling days, he nevertheless lived up to that title throughout his political career. In 1940, he publically accused Texas Senator Martin Dies of belonging to the fascist Silver Legion of America. In 1945 he got into a wrestling match on the House floor after Mississippi Congressman John Rankin accused the CIO of being a communist organization. He was a vocal and vociferous advocate of every major piece of pro-labor New Deal legislation and strongly supported the Social Security Act, wages and hours legislation, and the Wagner Act. In addition to being a good labor-friendly Democrat, Hook was also what historian Sarah Phillips calls a "New Conservationist." He believed that private resources affecting the public good needed to be properly managed and fairly distributed to improve the living standards of rural people. He'd supported all of the New Deal's agricultural programs and widely criticized the lack of comparable forestry legislation. He'd also supported the creation of Olympic National Park and later, the creation of Isle Royale National Park on the shores of Lake Superior.[36]

It's therefore not surprising that the IWA's forestry program resonated with Hook and moved him to political action. In May of 1946, Hook introduced H.R. 6221 to the House Agricultural Committee. What quickly became known as the Hook Forestry Bill adopted most, if not all, of the recommendations Foster made in *Lumber Snafu*. It drew heavily on agricultural policy and included language establishing a forest insurance program similar to federal crop insurance, subsidy payments for operators undertaking planting programs, and federal production planning assistance. The bill also looked to address problems unique to the lumber industry by including provisions for federally-built logging roads, funding for safety research, a federally-funded tree planting program, and a plan to encourage states to pass stricter harvesting policies. Little about these proposals was controversial and the federal money that Hook's plan would have funneled towards industry might've even encouraged industry to throw its political weight behind the bill were it not for two of the bill's additional proposals.[37]

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[35] "Woodworkers Security Depend Upon Success of Natl. Forestry Program," *International Woodworker*, February 6, 1946, p. 4; "Senators Act on IWA Plea," *International Woodworker*, June 23, 1946, p.2.

[36] Phillips, *This Land, This Nation*, 21-36; Mary Louise Hook Allen, *Fightin' Frank: The Biography of Upper Peninsula's 12th District Democratic Congressman* (M.L.H. Allen, 2001).

[37] See Ellery Foster, "Hook and Thom Bills Add Up to a National Forestry Program," *International Woodworker*, May 29, 1946, p.2.

The first of these: the Hook Bill proposed to amend the 1944 Sustained-Yield Forest Management Act to require all future public-private cooperative land units to be administered by "cooperative forest management committees." The bill's language was a bit vague, but Foster explained that this would be a step towards community forestry. "Cooperative management means that forests units will be managed without the monopolistic evils inherent in our present sustained yield acts," he wrote. The second controversial proposal was likely even more distasteful to the lumber industry's operators: it would be illegal to cut timber for commercial purposes until a government-licensed forester had authorized a specific harvesting plan. Together, Foster wrote, these two proposals would eliminate indiscriminant clear cutting and ultimately mean "an expanding rather than a declining industry with ever more and more opportunities rather than less and less as the years go by."[38]

Industry, understandably, did not share the IWA's enthusiasm. Operators across the country voiced their concern that regulating cutting on private lands was a violation of property rights. The NLMA charged that the bill would be too expensive to administer and a government-licensing program would be impractical and inefficient. Lumbermen attacked Hook in his hometown newspaper, *The Escanaba Daily Press*. "Attention All Landowners," ran the headline of an advertisement taken out by the Independent Land Owners Association, a Midwestern lumbermen's trade group, "Important Facts You Need to Know About The Hook Forest Dictatorship Bill." "Hook and others try to make you believe or try to create the impression that the so-called Hook forest Dictatorship Bill effects only the Big Operations and Landowners," the article explained, but the bill's cutting provisions would curtail the rights of smaller operators and mills. Even farmers clearing trees to make way for planting would be subject to the whims of government foresters. Hunters, fisherman, and hikers, it warned: misuse the forests and "you could be sent up for as many years as the Bureaucrats wanted to send you in jail, for any number of years, up to life. One example of the Bureaucrats' idea of the Four Freedoms." This was a bill not just about cutting practices and forestry, the Land Owners Association argued. "YOU ALL are covered by this act of regimentation and dictatorship."[39]

Small landholders appear to have been unmoved by the Land Owners Association's sudden populism. One small mill owner quoted in *The Escanaba Daily Press* found Hook's plan compelling and told a reporter that he believed the "bill was economically sound." Members of the U.P. Rehabilitation and Economic Council, a group of farmers and small landholders in Michigan's Upper Peninsula were

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[38] *Ibid*. Also see Ellery Foster, "Forestry Department," *International Woodworker*, May 22, 1946, p. 2; Foster, "Hook Bill: For Sportsmen and Outdoor Enthusiasts, too," *International Woodworker*, July 3, 1946, p.2.

[39] Independent Landowners Association, "Attention All Landowners: Important Facts You Need to Know About the Hook Forest Dictatorship Bill," *The Escanaba Daily Press,* September 28, 1946, p. 3, emphasis in original. Also see, Independent Landowners Association, "Who Owns the Bulk of the Forest Land in the United States?," *The Wakefield News*, October 4, 1946, p.3; "Secretary of Agriculture, Budget Director to Discuss Program," *Daily Globe*, May 19, 1946, p.1; "Hook Outlines Provisions of Bill to Regulate Forestry," *Daily Globe*, November 6, 1946, p.5.

also unconvinced by the alarmist tone of the campaign and reportedly "blasted Walter A. Henze, chairman of the Independent Land Owners Association for his current campaign against the bill."[40] Foster was also quick to point out that the technical assistance provided to small landowners would make them more competitive in a market dominated by monopolies and trusts. "Like the individual farm operator, the small timber operator needs the services of technical experts, but his operation is not big enough to support a staff of such experts on his own payroll," Foster explained. "The government farm program helps to fill that need for the farmer, and the Hook Bill would do the same for logging."[41]

Like large and small landholders, professional foresters were divided over questions of the Hook Bill's merits. Officially, the USFS remained mum. But at their 1946 executive board meeting the IWA's leaders announced that they'd received the widespread, if silent support of government rangers and silviculturalists. Industry-employed foresters were another matter. Shortly after the Hook Bill's introduction, the union was inundated with letters and reports from industry scientists reminding woodworkers of "the sound science" behind clear cutting and industrial self-regulation. Responding in the pages of the union's paper, Foster seemed neither phased nor particularly surprised. Industrial self-regulation is "propaganda," he wrote, and any "forester who talks for clear-cutting is aiding and abetting the selfish, shortsighted purpose of the timber butchers."[42]

Divisions between small and large landowners, and public and industry foresters, are nothing new in the lumber industry's history. What was without precedent, however, was how the Hook Bill fractured and reshaped the political landscape of organized labor. To understand how and why requires a closer look at the IWA's emerging environmentalism. The Hook Bill was about restoring the promises of New Deal conservation and making forestry management the subject of resource policy rather than industrial policy. It was also about legitimizing rural communities' claims of forest ownership. And, perhaps most importantly, it was about protecting and preserving woodworkers' sense of place. "The IWA wants a broad-scale forestry program," the union's officers explained, "one that makes provision for the many uses and value of forests, and not just for saw logs." Many of the members saw the forests as more than just a commodity. Forests were homes, sites of culture, and central to many timber workers' identity. For them, the Hook Bill was as much about work as recreation. "We want our forests and forest waters to be good places for hunting and fishing," a resolution in support of the IWA's forest program explained, "we want to see more of the attractive spots in the woods developed for family outings, where we and anyone else can come on holidays and vacations to have a good time outdoors."[43]

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[40] "Congressman Defends His Forestry Bill At Labor Parley," *The Escanaba Daily Press*, August 28, 1946, p.7.
[41] Ellery Foster, "Forestry Department," *International Woodworker*, May 22, 1946, p. 2.
[42] "'Overmaturity' of Forests Colossal Hoax Says Foster," *International Woodworker*, January 16, 1946, p.6.
[43] "Statement of IWA International Officers On the Problems of Forestry," *International Woodworker*, December 26, 1945, p.4.

The increasingly environmentalist tone of the IWA's conservation politics puts it at odds with one of its staunchest allies on the Pacific Coast: the International Fisherman and Allied Workers of America (IFAWA). The timber workers and the fishermen had an important relationship. Both were unions of so-called unskilled workers, both had been ostracized by the AFL in the early-1930s, and both had relied on one another for support during their move to the CIO. In the late-1930s, both the IWA and IFAWA passed amendments to their bylaws allowing dual-card membership for fishermen who worked the lumber camps in the off-season. Timber workers must've therefore been surprised when the IFAWA rebuffed a request from the IWA's executive board to back the Hook Bill. It wasn't so much that the fishermen were opposed to forestry legislation. Rather, they were upset over the IWA's support of increased commercial fishing regulations. Around the same time the Hook Bill was working its way through legislative channels, Oregon voters proposed Referendum 7, a ban on commercial steelhead fishing in Nestucca Bay. Steelhead, an anadromous species of rainbow trout, had been on a steady decline since the 1920s and by 1946, the year the referendum was introduced, few commercial steelhead fisheries remained. Even so, the IFAWA came out strongly against the referendum out of fear that it might create a dangerous precedent, going so far as to appear at press conferences alongside cannery operators. The IWA press saw this as collusion and a violation of CIO progressivism. At the same time, while steelhead had little remaining commercial value, they still had a great deal of value to several sport and subsistence fishermen, including several woodworkers, and the IWA heavily critiqued the IFAWA for endorsing the bosses' position. The fishermen have been "duped" by industry science, one IWA member said, and the fishermen needed to hire a biologist "to put you fellows on the beam the way Ellery Foster has done for us."[44]

IWA environmentalism might have created new enemies, but it also strengthened existing partnerships. In October of 1946, *The Escanaba Daily Press* reported that Ivan Brown, president of UAW Local 9 from Hook's district had just returned from Washington, D.C., where he'd been lobbying heavily for the bill. The UAW's support of the bill was partly political—Hook was one of the UAW's congressional stalwarts. At the same time, the UAW's backing reflected autoworkers' own working-class environmentalism. As historian Chad Montrie has shown, rising rates of car ownership among UAW members and autoworkers' postwar affluence—the result of hard won battles at GM and Ford in the late-1930s and early-1940s—created an environmentalist ethic in the UAW not unlike the one in the IWA. Said Brown in his explanation for why the UAW was standing behind the bill, "Congressman Hook has

[44] Richard L. Neuberger, "The Woodmen and the Trees," *The Nation*, October 5, 1946, p. 379. On Referendum 7 see State of Oregon, *Official Voters' Pamphlet for the Regular General Election* (Secretary of State: November 5, 1946), 4. On IWA-IFAWA relationship, see Executive Board Meeting Minutes, July and August 1938, folder 13, box 14, IWA Papers. On the IFAWA see Geoff Mann, "Class Consciousness and Common Property: The International Fisherman and Allied Workers of America," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 61 (Spring 2002): 141-60.

recognized the deep-seated American love of our forests. He knows that his constituents have always considered it their right to go into the forests to hunt, to study nature, to picnic or camp out."[45]

The UAW's support of H.R. 6221 was important. It was among the most powerful unions in the country and it showed the bill had the broad backing of labor. The UAW's support was also important because it helped bring the CIO's national office around from its previously tepid embrace of the IWA's forestry policies. Prior to 1946, the CIO didn't have a stellar record on supporting environmental issues. In the early-1930s, for instance, CIO figurehead and former miners' union boss John L. Lewis vocally opposed New Deal electrification programs on the grounds that cheaper (and cleaner) power might replace coal. And in 1945, delegates at the CIO's constitutional convention just barely passed a resolution supporting a national forestry program. But the IWA, by now the largest union on the West Coast, and the UAW, the largest union in the Midwest, helped change the CIO's tune. At timber and autoworkers' behest, delegates at the 1946 CIO convention nearly unanimously endorsed a resolution supporting the Hook Bill, stating that H.R. 6221's provisions to "protect and preserve selected areas of forest wilderness and virgin timber for public enjoyment and recreation" was important to the entire working-class. And finally, urging "all civic-minded and public-spirited groups to join the campaign."[46]

Whether civic-minded and public-spirited groups would actually join the campaign was unclear. The political lines that would shape later land-use conflicts and divide conservationists and preservations were being redrawn in the mid-1940s, in ways that did not favor the CIO's vision of a broad coalition. Political debates over nature and the allocation of natural resources are, of course, as old as America itself, if not older. But in the postwar period, these debates were taking on unmistakable class dimensions. Postwar affluence, and urbanization created a new middle-class that saw forests as sites of recreation and a new middle-class environmental politics geared towards wilderness preservation. The economic needs of rural working-class communities were increasingly seen as less important, and far less urgent than the need to expand national parks and to preserve outdoor recreational opportunities.[47]

But the IWA's blending of conservation and preservation, land-use and wilderness protection resonated widely. In the months after the bill's introduction, the *International Woodworker* reported receiving the support of a broad number of groups not traditionally aligned with workers. Oregon Grange Master Morton Thompkins promised that farmers would back the bill. "We have a big stake in forestry," he told a reporter for the union's paper. The largely middle-class Seattle Mountaineers, the Sierra Club, and the Keep Oregon Green Coalition endorsed the bill. The likely reason middle-class environmentalists

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[45] "Congressman Defends His Forestry Bill At Labor Parley," *The Escanaba Daily Press*, August 28, 1946, p.7; Montrie, *Making a Living*, 91-112.

[46] Foster, "Hook Bill," 2. Also see Ellery Foster, "Piece of a Larger Whole," *International Woodworker*, December 25, 1945, p.7; "Forestry Program Resolution Adopted by CIO Convention," *International Woodworker*, February 28, 1945, p.1.

[47] See Lipin, *Workers and the Wild*; Montrie, *Making a Living*; David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

supported the bill could be found in an article written by the famous Northwestern conservationist Richard Neuberger in *The Nation*. "Various outdoor clubs fought the conservation battle for decades without labor's assistance," he explained, "trees cut to the ground meant jobs; labor and the lumber industry were of one mind on the subject of conservation. Today, labor is the newest recruit in the camp of the conservationists." Neuberger's view of history was a bit fuzzy, as timber workers and bosses had never been of one mind on forestry conservation. Nevertheless, the sentiment he expressed showed how the IWA's campaign in support of the Hook Bill was reshaping the landscape of forestry conflict politics, one that recognized that workers, like preservationists, recognized a collective environmental "obligation to future generations of Americans."[48]

Heading into the fall of 1946, the IWA felt good about the Hook Bill's chances. The fishermen aside, never had organized labor been so strongly behind a piece of environmental legislation. Nor had farmers, preservationists, wilderness advocates, or New Deal conservationists like Neuberger been so strongly behind labor. The IWA had found the right man for the job in Hook, and the ease through which he saw through the attacks made against him in the press by lumbermen of his home district showed that he was going to see this thing through to the end. "That's the kind of thing this country has needed for a long time," Foster wrote in his official analysis of the Hook Bill, "and we're certainly glad to see a Congressman with the brains and the push to throw it in the legislative hopper."[49]

"CCF: Farmer, Labour, Socialist"

Coalition building would play an important role in British Columbia's postwar forest politics as well, and in the mid- to late-1940s the Canadian IWA's forestry campaign would be significantly shaped by its association with the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). The CCF was founded in 1932 by a socialist faction inside the mainstream Liberal Party. Like American New Dealers, CCFers believed that resource exploitation and mismanagement caused the Depression. Their proposals, however, differed greatly. New Dealers wanted to save capitalism. CCFers wanted to overthrow it. "There is no solution possible to the problem of preserving our major resources unless private ownership of forest lands is abolished," said CCF Comox Riding MLA Colin Cameron in 1941."[50] The CCF's call for public ownership of natural resources helped it gain popularity throughout the country, and its official mantra, "CCF: Farmer, Labour, Socialist," shows it drew its political power from radicals, rural farming communities, and resource workers. It was extremely popular in British Columbia. In 1941, the CCF

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[48] Neuberger, "The Woodmen and the Trees," 378. Also see "Forestry 'Battle of the Century' Opens in Oregon-Skirmish Held in State Grange Hall," *International Woodworker*, July 17, 1946, p.1, 2; Foster, "Hook Bill," p.2. For another account of the IWA's role in middle-class wilderness politics, see Mark Harvey, *Wilderness Forever: Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 95-7.

[49] Foster, "Hook and Thom Bills," p.2.

[50] Colin Cameron, *Forestry…B.C.'s Devastated Industry* (Vancouver: C.C.F., 1941), 2.

won enough seats in the British Columbian Legislative Assembly to prevent either the liberal or conservative parties from establishing a majority and it maintained its role as the official opposition party for the next decade.[51]

CCF socialism combined with IWA District 1's communism gave British Columbian forestry politics a radical tenor. Articles explaining forestry politics in the CCF's paper, *The Federationist*, for instance, often sounded like lessons in Marxist economics: the state treats the forests "merely as a valueless factor until through the investment of capital it comes to be a source of interest and value. Under the present exchange economy, price is the chief regulator of resource exploitation, modified by the degree of completion or monopoly which prevails and by the conditions of supply and demand." IWA members said more or less the same things, but in the far plainer language of workers. "The lumber barons grind our bones and our trees into the pottage that means profits for them."[52]

IWA and CCF forestry politics could be infused with the radicalism and rhetoric of Marxism and socialism. But it also reflected the IWA's working-class environmentalism and woodworkers' sense of place and forest ownership. "No one deplores more than we do, the wastage of our forests," an editorial in the *BC Lumber Worker* explained, "a trip through the highways and railroads of Vancouver Island, bedecked as far as one's eyes can carry with nothing but logged-off and burned over lands, makes us wonder what there is about this system of ours that is worth hanging on to." These are "our forests, and we must take pride in perpetuating them so that our children and our children's children might know the majestic grandeur or our wooded places before the Mackens, M[a]cMillans and the Filbergs get hold of them."[53] The IWA's and CCF's forestry politics, therefore, were as much about leading British Columbia's workers towards a bright socialist future as they were about preserving community and rural economic opportunity, as much about political revolution as bread-and-butter issues. "Socialized forestry," explained Colin Cameron, means "all-year-round work in each forest district," and all "the comforts of modern life," like "community halls, union halls, churches, stores, and theatres."[54]

Recent changes to British Columbia's forest ownership system helped the CCF's and IWA's forestry politics gain traction among politicians and professional foresters. Through the 1930s, the Crown retained ownership of nearly 90% of British Columbia's timberland. Industry merely leased the forests

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[51] On CCF, see Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005); Benjamin Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

[52] *The Federationist*, September 17, 1936, p.4. "Vitally Interested," *BC Lumber Worker*, November 24, 1937, p.3.

[53] "Forestry," *B.C. Lumber Worker*, November 24, 1937, p. 6.

[54] Colin Cameron, "How our Forest Workers & Small Farmers will Benefit by Socialized Forestry," (CCF, Economic Planning Commission, 1937). On the CCF's forestry program, see Jeremy Wilson, "Forest Conservation in British Columbia, 1935-85: Reflections on a Barren Political Debate," *BC Studies* 76 (Winter 1987/88): 3-32; Joseph G. Moore, "Two Struggles Into One?: Labour and Environmental Movement Relations and the Challenge to Capitalist Forestry in British Columbia, 1900-2000," (PhD Dissertation, McMaster University, 2002); Scott Prudham, "Sustaining sustained yield: class, politics, and post-war forest regulation in British Columbia," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25 (2007): 258-83;

and then returned the land to public ownership after they finished cutting. Operators, for the most part, liked this arrangement. They didn't have to sink money into land purchases or worry about unloading the land once trees had been cut. This system had ecological benefits, as well. Leases were spread out and rotated, thereby ensuring that no one section of forest was overworked. The system collapsed in the late-1930s, however, when American companies began investing in British Columbian forests. The new, large firms cornered the market on licenses, forcing many operators to buy land for the first time in the province's history.[55]

In the mid-1930s, professionals in the province's Forestry Department had dismissed the IWA's and CCF's call for more responsible resource management. "As long as we have more old growth timber than the mills can use," said British Columbia's Chief Forester P.Z. Caverhill in 1931," there is no excuse, or function for sustained yield management." But by the early-1940s, provincial foresters were increasingly coming around to the IWA's and CCF's point of view and gradually recognizing that landownership was leading to rapid and unprecedented deforestation. "We have nothing like the timber resources we once thought we had," British Columbian forester Ernest Manning said in 1941. "Our production capacity is being reduced alarmingly. Our most valuable areas are being overcut. Our production must of necessity fall off sharply during the next few decades if prompt measures are not taken to forestall it."[56]

New calls for action from the province's foresters, along with continued pressure from the IWA and CCF put increased pressure on mainstream politicians to reexamine the forest licensing system. In 1942, British Columbian premier John Hart appointed Justice Gordon McGregor Sloan (the same Sloan who would later arbitrate the IWA's 1946 strike) to lead a Royal Commission tasked with developing a new forestry plan. The Sloan Commission first convened in Victoria in the early spring of 1944 and over the next four months heard from hundreds of individuals, foresters, industry representatives, and workers. Representatives from the British Columbia Lumbermen's Association expressed their interest in maintaining the status quo. Roderick Haig-Brown, the timber worker turned fisherman turned conservationist, implored the committee to think of how forest destruction affected salmon runs. IWA representatives spoke about the need to protect rural communities. "British Columbia forests can provide a livelihood to thousands of people," Harold Pritchett testified, "provided steps are taken to bring an end to the waste that has characterized lumbering in the past." The most notable testimony came from Colin Cameron, who by that time was serving as the CCF's chief forestry critic in the Legislative Assembly. "The only way out of this impasse," he said, was an entirely "provincially owned and operated industry."

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[55] Gordon Hak, *Capital and Labour in the British Columbia Forest Industry, 1934-74* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 45-51.

[56] Caverhill and Manning both quoted in *ibid*., 46.

Cameron then reiterated what had become the guiding principle of the CCF's forestry politics: that rural people and workers knew best how to manage the land. "Loggers are the best foresters," he said.[57]

There was little hope that CCF's socialized forestry would find favor with the politically moderate Sloan. But both the IWA and CCF socialists nevertheless played an important political role during the Committee's hearings, helping shift Sloan's centrism to the left. As E.T. Kinney, British Columbia's Minister of Lands and Forests explained, the CCF presence at the Commission forced Sloan to recognize "a compromise between rigid government regulation and outright exploitation of the forest resource."[58] Sloan's recommendations were submitted to the provincial government in 1946 and they became the basis for the 1947 British Columbia Forestry Act. The new legislation did several things, but most importantly it replaced the lease system with Forest Management Licenses (FLMs) that would be harder to acquire and only issued to companies that agreed to harvesting plans developed in conjunction with Forest Service Agents.[59]

The IWA's press was quick to point out that this was only an incomplete solution. Although FLMs would reshape public lands management, they did nothing to change "wanton waste and ruthless destruction" on private lands. Still, the 1947 Act was a step in the right direction. It was a tacit acknowledgement that rural working people had claims to the land and that forests are a "basic natural resource that cannot be left entirely in the hands of private interests, but must become the responsibility of government, acting in the interests of the people." The IWA felt confident that with the CCF's continued support, it could move forward on more extensive legislation in the near future.[60]

NEW DEAL CONSERVATIONISM AND WILDERNESS

Although the coalition that organized around the Hook Bill was unprecedented, the bill was ultimately the victim of bad political timing. The same year he introduced H.R. 6221, Hook was facing a tough election. His seat had changed hands several times in the past, and victory had always been determined by the thinnest of margins. Hook first claimed the seat from Republican John Bennet in 1934 with a less than 5% gap. In 1942, Bennet reclaimed the seat for the Republicans. In 1944, Hook defeated Bennet once more. Bennet was again trying to reclaim the seat in the 1946 midterm elections and all signs indicated that it was once again going to be a tight race. While IWA members in Michigan logging towns like Iron Mountain, Gwinn, and Marquette were clearly going to pull the lever for Hook, some of

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[57] Royal Commission on Forestry, GR 520, box 5, volume 14, British Columbia Archives, Victoria, p. 5336-51, 5348-9, 5365-66.

[58] As quoted in Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 51.

[59] On the Sloan Commission, see Prudham, "Sustaining sustained yield," 268-9; Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 50-1; Patricia Marchak, *Green Gold: The Forest Industry in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 35-9; Jeremy Wilson, *Talk and Log: Wilderness Politics in British Columbia, 1965-96* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 13-14.

[60] "Fire Blackened Stumps or Perpetual Forests?," *BC Lumber Worker*, March 12, 1947, p.2.

the more conservative German farming communities in the northern part of the district might swing the election in favor of Bennet. The residents of Michigan's 12th district were therefore probably not surprised when they opened the paper the morning after the election and read that it'd been another close race, determined by a less than 3% margin. Hook had lost. After the defeat set in, Hook told reporters that he still believed the forestry bill had a chance. The IWA echoed Hook's optimism. But the legislation needed more than optimism to survive. The bill had been languishing in the House Agricultural Committee for months, where southern Democrats who'd grown critical of the CIO, and the IWA in particular, for its role in trying to organize black southern workers, refused to bring the bill up for a vote. Compromise and political trading might've been possible had Hook retained his seat. But with Hook gone, the bill failed.[61]

Things weren't going much better in British Columbia. The CCF and IWA had viewed the 1947 British Columbian Forestry Act as a first albeit incomplete step in the right direction. But in a rush to meet growing demand for timber, the British Columbian Forest Service issued too many FLMs, too quickly. The Forest Service couldn't maintain adequate supervision and it began allowing private companies to cut on Crown lands without the mandated oversight. In a few widely publicized cases, forestry agents even took bribes from industry representatives to ignore harvesting quotas. Later, in 1954, the Legislative Assembly would convene a second Sloan Commission to revisit the FLM system. During the first Commission, Sloan had played the political middle, thanks to pressure applied from the left by the IWA and CCF. But labor was absent during the second round of hearings. When British Columbia's District 1 seceded from the IWA in 1948, the CCF denounced the move and the new Woodworkers Industrial Union of Canada withdrew from the party. Shortly afterwards, the CCF fell into rapid decline. With the CCF and IWA gone, the second Sloan Commission moved rightward and returned to the old foresting licensing system.[62]

Hook's ouster, the Hook Bill's failure, and the dissolution of the CCF-IWA partnership were just a few of the larger problems the union confronted as it moved into the 1950s. After a national strike wave in 1945 several politicians turned against organized labor and those who didn't, like Hook, lost their seats. The 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, which augmented the union certification process, made it harder for the union to organize and expand. The union was also facing a new industry in the 1950s. A merger wave spread throughout Northwestern lumber in the early part of the decade. Large companies swallowed up smaller companies and medium-sized firms started to grow thanks to new investments. Between 1953 and 1960, the Northwest's four largest lumber operators, Weyerhaeuser, Georgia-Pacific, US Plywood, and Pope & Talbot increased their timber holdings from 2.9 million acres to over 3.4 million acres. In 1959, Long-

[61] Allen, *Fightin' Frank*, 75.
[62] Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 64-6; Isitt, *Militant Minority*, 3-18.

Bell, which had merged with two other companies in the late-1940s, again merged with industry giant International Paper. By 1960, the Northwest's eight largest companies owned more than 34% of the region's commercial forestland. While larger companies consolidated, smaller companies increasingly turned to public forests. In Oregon, lumber companies had harvested 716 million board feet from USFS stands in 1945, accounting for roughly 11% of the state's total cut. By 1950 more than 15% of Oregon's total cut came from Forest Service land. By 1960, close to 30% of all the wood harvested in Oregon came off of USFS holdings. The Forest Service budget became almost entirely reliant on commercial timber sales and the agency effectively became an arm of private industry. In the 1950s, it focused less on managing the nation's public forests in the interest of the public good and instead looked to raise allowable cut levels to appease industry.[63]

The Hook Bill's failure, the increasingly consolidated lumber industry, and the new direction of the Forest Service didn't, however, bring an end to the IWA's working-class environmentalism or its attempts to bring New Deal-style conservationism to the Northwest woods. Rather, the union remained committed to enacting working-class environmentalism and merely shifted its focus from national campaigns towards regional campaigns in the Northwest, where it still had some congressional allies and it could continue to build the coalition it'd started to cultivate with wilderness advocates and middle-class environmental groups. The IWA's change of direction could be seen in a resolution passed at its 1951 constitutional convention. The resolution identified wilderness preservation in the Northwest's forests as a particularly important arena through which the union could more successfully shape environmental politics. It argued that expanding wilderness would restrict large timber companies' access to lumber and force them to adopt more sustainable practices that would prevent boom and bust cycles. At the same time, the resolution reiterated the union's larger emphasis on preserving outdoor recreational opportunities. "Outdoor recreational facilities must be available to the average man," it stated, adding that living "includes more than food, clothing, shelter and the various kinds of gadgets we think we need. It includes a desirable general environment and a lot of good outdoor country for recreational purposes." Finally, the resolution called for strengthening the relationship the union had developed with groups like the Sierra Club and Seattle Mountaineers, encouraging locals and members to work with "all interested parties concerned with the preservation and development of old-growth forests."[64]

The IWA's first political fight over wilderness came in 1953, when six republican members of Washington's congressional delegation and the state's governor, Arthur Langlie, announced their intention to seek reductions to Olympic National Park and open up several thousand acres of previously

[63] On mergers, see Walter J. Mead, *Mergers and Economic Concentration in the Douglas-Fir Lumber Industry* (Portland: US Forest Service, 1964). On the Forest Service in the 1950s, see Paul W. Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests Since World War Two* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 82-130.

[64] IWA, *Proceedings*…(Denver, October 1-5, 1951), 271.

protected forests to cutting. At stake were two large tracts of old-growth forest on the west side of the park, in the Hoh and Bogachiel rainforests. In order to make the reduction proposal appear to reflect public opinion, Langlie convened in 1953 the Olympic National Park Review Committee (ONPRC), a seventeen-member panel tasked with studying the park's boundaries. Most of the seats on the ONPRC were filled by state forest managers, forestry professors, fish and game officials, and industry representatives, but three seats were given over to wilderness advocates, Polly Dyer of the Mountaineers, Emily Haig of the Seattle Audubon Society, and Rosamond Eagle of the state Garden Club. In exchange for participating, Langlie promised Haig that if wilderness advocates didn't agree with the committee's recommendations, they could issue a minority report that would be published alongside the ONPRC's formal recommendations. Meanwhile, the Mountaineers and Sierra Club began a large letter-writing campaign encouraging groups to testify at field hearings that would take place in the following months, specifically reaching out to the IWA.[65]

Throughout the fall of 1953, the ONPRC heard from more than 55 witnesses in three separate hearings that took place in Seattle, Montesano, and Port Angeles. Al Hartung, one of the IWA's anti-communists from the Columbia River District Council who became president of the IWA in 1951, testified on the IWA's behalf at the Montesano hearing. Hartung's comments begin to show that the IWA now saw wilderness preservation as the arena where the fight to bring New Deal conservationism to the Northwest would be played out. He echoed many of the union's arguments that'd been made during debates over the Hook Bill, saying that if the park were opened to logging, "the big timber stands would be gone within a few brief years," and while there might be a temporary boom in the industry, it'd be quickly followed by a collapse. Hartung alternatively proposed if the surrounding Forest Service lands could be sustainably managed there'd be more than enough lumber to support local logging communities for decades to come. He defended the Park's current boundaries because they provided important recreational opportunities for workers in the timber industry. Timber workers "like to get out into the rougher country…for fishing, hunting, or just plain camping," he told the ONRPC, "we want to see at least part of this country kept in good condition for that kind of outdoor recreation." He ended his testimony by pointing out that IWA members wanted the Park's boundaries maintained because the old-growth stands there are "unique in the Northwest." "The beauty of much of the park country is precisely the fact that it represents old-growth stands which are now very rare, and represents natural conditions which can provide great enjoyment for large numbers of people…such things are irreplaceable and can be protected only inside a National Park."[66]

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[65] Michael Pebworth, "Evergreen Struggle: Federal Wilderness Preservation, Populism, and Liberalism in Washington State, 1935-1984," (PhD Dissertation, University of Oregon, 2003), 121-6.

[66] Statement on Olympic National Park, September 25, 1953, folder 43, box 280, IWA Papers.

Despite the fact that 98% of the people and organizations that testified at the hearings opposed the boundary reduction, the ONPRC nevertheless proposed opening up parts of the park to cutting. The IWA was invited by Haig to sign its name to the minority report. Both environmental groups and the IWA were expecting Governor Langlie and the Washington congressional delegation to back the ONPRC's recommendations and ignore the minority report. Langlie, one of his biographers writes, was an ardent foe of wilderness expansion, so it's not entirely clear why he dropped the issue in early 1954. Perhaps Langlie didn't feel he had the mandate he believed he needed to reduce the park's size. The fact that the IWA represented more than 20,000 voting timber workers in Washington also probably played a significant role in his decision. The fight over Olympic National Park may have been a small victory for IWA members, but it was a victory nonetheless, and perhaps more importantly it strengthened the working relationship between the union and middle-class wilderness advocates.[67]

The IWA would again work with middle-class environmentalists little less than a year later when the USFS announced plans to reduce the boundaries of the Three Sister's Wilderness Area in central Oregon, a move, Hartung wrote in the *International Woodworker*, that "was just like the attempt to give away a chunk of the Olympic National Park last year."[68] The Three Sister's Wilderness had been controversial for some time. Prior to the 1964 Wilderness Act, wilderness boundaries were determined by the USFS. The agency placed forests into one of three categories. The strictest was "wilderness," a designation that allowed for no cutting or road building. Second, "primitive areas" allowed for some cutting, and the final category was "intensive management." Since the early-1930s, the Three Sisters had been defined as a primitive area. In 1955, under pressure from Oregon timber companies, the USFS moved to reclassify nearly 50,000 acres around the Horse Creek drainage and place it under intensive management.[69]

The announcement received immediate attention from Hartung. Writing in the union's newspaper, he made several of the same arguments he'd made during the Olympic National Park controversy, again articulating the union's position that abrogating wilderness was a violation of the tenets of New Deal conservationism. He said that if surrounding forests were managed along sustainable-yield guidelines, there'd be no need to open the Three Sisters up to intensive cutting. He further added that opening the area to cutting would make it easier for the USFS to continue reducing the area's size in the future. "After they get this 50,000 acres," he wrote, "then they can say, with much justification, that the remaining 200,000 acres could just as well be pared down further—a little here and a little there." Finally, he argued that preserving the existing boundaries would do more for the economy than cutting.

[67] Pebworth, "Evergreen Struggle," 132. George Scott, "Arthur Langlie: Republican Governor in a Democratic Age," (PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1971), 279-81.

[68] President's Column, *International Woodworker*, January 12, 1955, p.6.

[69] Kevin Marsh, *Drawing Lines in the Forest: Creating Wilderness Areas in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 23-4.

The Three Sisters is "a great tourist attraction," he wrote and that tourism in Oregon was "third in importance to the lumber business."[70] A few months later, Hartung was invited to testify at the Northwest Wilderness Conference, an event organized by Sierra Club activists and wilderness advocates from Eugene, Oregon. According to the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, Hartung "made a homespun address on what wilderness and the parks mean to the working men, and promised labor's continuing support in keeping wilderness inviolate."[71]

Before making its final decision regarding the Three Sisters reduction, the USFS organized a public hearing at Eugene, where it was inundated by criticisms from timber workers and environmentalists. Hartung reiterated the IWA's position that most timberland wasn't being utilized effectively and that lumber companies needed to manage their stands better rather than look for access to untouched stands. "We are worried," he said, "that the present privately-owned acreage is not being used properly in many instances, but that is no excuse for encroaching on the public's right to have a wilderness area large enough to be truly termed wilderness." Karl Onthak, the Dean of Students at the University of Oregon and one of the founders of the Friends of Three Sisters agreed with Hartung's assessment. "This industry will have to find other solutions, the first of which will doubtless be better utilization of the wood now cut, such as is already being done by the more efficient operators. Howard Zahniser, president of the Wilderness Society, said something similar in his testimony. "Our hope in preserving areas of wilderness free from lumbering," he said, "is dependent on our ability to achieve a prosperous lumbering industry based on sound timber management within the forests and woodlots outside the wilderness."[72]

Unlike the Olympic National Park controversy, the effort to protect the Three Sisters wilderness failed. Despite public pressure, in 1957 the USFS redefined the Horse Creek drainage as "intensive use" and opened up the area to timber harvesting. The Three Sisters case, writes historian Kevin Marsh "became a rallying cry for the national wilderness movement," and afterwards middle-class environmentalists started pushing for national legislation that would remove the power from the USFS to determine wilderness boundaries and place it in the hands of Congress.[73] The IWA was again part of this effort. In 1958, in written comments submitted to the National Wilderness Preservation Act hearings, the IWA railed against the "self-serving" interests that'd wanted unbridled access to areas like the Three Sisters and warned that future generations "will hold us responsible for having cheated them of part of their birthright as Americans," if Congress didn't act.[74] The movement also received help from several New Deal politicians. Senators Wayne Morse and Richard Neuberger, from Oregon, and Frank Church,

[70] President's Column, *International Woodworker*, January 12, 1955, p.1, 6.
[71] As quoted in Pebworth, "Evergreen Struggle," 138.
[72] As quoted in *ibid*., 138-9.
[73] Marsh, *Drawing Lines in the Forest*, 34.
[74] Senate Committee on Interior Affairs, *National Wilderness Preservation Act: Hearings*, 85th Congr., 2 sess. (1958), 435-8.

from Idaho objected to the USFS's decision to open up the Horse Creek drainage to cutting and responded by sponsoring the Wilderness Act. The end result of the movement was legislation passed in 1964 that stipulated the Forest Service no longer had the authority to change wilderness boundaries. That power now rested exclusively with Congress.[75]

Several historians have argued that the Wilderness Act was a turning point in environmental politics. And it was. The Act democratized land and resource management, making it easier for advocacy groups to get wilderness designations. Throughout the 1950s, the USFS had become less responsive to the public and more responsive to industry and had rebuffed several attempts by activists to expand or create wilderness areas. Now, after the Act, wilderness advocates could lobby their elected representatives to increase wilderness boundaries or get new designations. IWA members likewise spoke about the Act as a more democratic form of environmental politics. For timber workers, though, the Act was also the culmination of a nearly two decades' long struggle to bring New Deal style conservationism to the Northwest woods. Because the Act made it possible for the public to have more say in wilderness designations, the IWA saw it as a step in giving local people more control over the resources and forests on which their livelihoods depended.

AFTER THE WILDERNESS ACT

In the decades after the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act, the IWA retained a commitment to wilderness preservation, responsible forestry policy, and environmental activism. Throughout the late-1960s and early 1970s, the union's American contingent focused most of its activism on the USFS. By the late-1950s, most of the private forestland in the Northwest had been cutover and the industry transitioned to state and federal lands. By the late-1960s, most of the USFS's operating budget was coming from timber sales and industry representatives and agency bureaucrats put incredible pressure on foresters to ignore preservation policies or look the other way when it came to overharvesting. Throughout the late-1960s and early-1970s, the USFS was a frequently discussed topic at IWA conventions and in the regional labor press. The union's critique focused on the fact that the USFS had abrogated its mission to manage the forests for both production and recreation. An IWA forestry policy bulletin published in 1972, highly critical of the USFS, reiterated the union's belief that there had to be an equal balance between production and preservation. There must be a "balance in the use of the forest for consumptive and non-consumptive productions upon the economic, social, and recreational needs of society," the document stated, concluding that "the concept of multiple use land must be adopted." In British Columbia, the IWA similarly maintained its commitment to forestry issues. In the 1960s, British Columbia's District 1 supported a failed attempt to pass province-wide mandatory reforestation program

[75] Marsh, *Drawing Lines in the Forest*, 34-7.

and later received national attention when, in 1972, it staged a massive march on the British Columbia capitol of Victoria (reminiscent of the large march during the 1946 strike) to protest the provincial forest service's announcement that it was going to cut the forestry staff that oversaw harvesting. As Jack Munro, who became president of the IWA in 1971 put it, "our membership has some of the best environmentalists that exist."[76]

Yet, in the 1960s and 1970s, the IWA was dealing with larger structural changes to the timber industry that made it difficult for the union to maintain its membership, let alone continue its environmental advocacy. One of the biggest changes was the rise of small contract logging outfits that independently cut lumber and then sold the timber to a mill, known as "gyppos." Gyppo logging exploded in the postwar period, largely as a result of the industry's transition to federal lands. USFS contracts tended to be too small to make them worth the time of large-scale industry operators and instead went to the smaller gyppo crews. Thus, as cutting on federal land expanded, so too did gyppo operations. Gyppos were much harder to organize. As they were independent, transient outfits, the IWA couldn't follow its traditional pattern of first winning certification at a small mill or camp and then expanding the organizational drive up the production chain. More than that, gyppo outfits tended to be family-run and their crews conservative and resistant to unionization. The obstinate Stamper family in Ken Kesey's novel about Oregon loggers, *Sometimes a Great Notion*, typified post-war gyppo loggers. The Stampers distrust outsiders, labor unions, and refuse to participate in large strikes, invoking the family motto, "Never Give A Inch." As historian William Robbins writes, "reckless and daring gamblers, always ready to move on to the next stand of timber, the multitudes of gyppos were unique to the postwar era in the Douglas fir country. Opposed to labor unions and government regulations, they were a throwback to an earlier day of independent entrepreneurship."[77]

Technological developments also challenged the IWA's ability to maintain its membership. Going back to the early twentieth century, the Northwestern forest industry had always been notable for intensive technological changes in the production process, from the incorporation of steam donkeys in the 1910s to electric-powered mills in the 1920s. In the 1960s and 1970s, operators began adopting bunch harvesters and retractable yarding spars. The biggest developments came with the adoption of computers in mills. By the late-1970s, a single mill worker sitting in front of a computer screen and handling a joystick could mill the same amount of wood that it had previously taken a dozen men to mill. As sociologist Patricia Marchak has pointed out, prior to the 1970s, technological development had always allowed the industry to expand its production capacity so that there was largely no net effect on employment. In 1968, for instance, the Northwest lumber industry was able to achieve 1950s production

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[76] Jack Munro, as quoted in Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 271. On the IWA's working-class environmentalism after 1964, also see Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict*, 178-212.

[77] William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 110.

levels with 21% fewer workers, yet overall employment in the industry was higher in the late-1960s because operators invested those savings in expansion. This changed in the 1970s as forest denudation reached a tipping point and the woods were no longer able to support large, capital-intensive operations as they had in the past. Instead of investing money saved from technological developments in their Northwest operations, large timber companies invested in their operations outside the region or moved into new ventures that did not expand employment opportunities. Weyerhaeuser started buying up commercial and residential properties and essentially became a real-estate speculator while other companies, like Georgia-Pacific and Simpson, started expanding into the pine forests of the American south.[78]

In addition to gyppo logging, technological changes, and capital flight, the IWA also faced challenges from within the ranks of organized labor throughout the latter decades of the twentieth century. This was particularly true in British Columbia where several Canadian leftists began to express a desire to have an identity distinct from American radicals. As historians Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby write, "for many Canadians in the trade union movement, American-based international unions, including the IWA, came to represent one more example of American encroachment on Canada's sovereignty." Throughout the late-1960s, Canadian radicals founded several independent unions in British Columbia's timber products industry and encouraged workers to abandon the IWA in favor of unions run by and for Canadians. The largest of these was the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada (PPWC). PPWC leaders, write Neufeld and Parnaby, were "notorious for wrapping themselves in the Canadian flag and making sweeping criticisms of international unions, assuming that pro-Canadian sentiment was justification enough for their actions." In 1970, the British Columbian IWA lost the three largest Vancouver Island sawmills to PPWC raids. In 1977, a PPWC raid on a Vancouver sawmill took three months to settle and cost the IWA more than $100,000 in legal fees.[79]

The biggest challenge to the IWA in the late twentieth century, though, was the timber economy. In the early 1960s, unprecedented demand from Japan sent fir prices skyrocketing, up 400% from 1950. While the boom was good for loggers, the declining price of shipping meant it was cheaper for Japanese buyers to import whole logs and have them milled in developing countries rather than purchase cut lumber and pay the associated costs of union labor in Northwest mills. By 1972, more than 40% of the trees harvested in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia were being shipped overseas unmilled and the region's largest sawmills began shutting their doors. In the late-1970s, the Asian lumber market crashed and, to add to timber workers' troubles, domestic house building came to a near standstill. Logging operations started issuing their crews pink slips. Between 1975 and 1980, more than 200

[78] Patricia Marchak, *Logging the Globe* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 143-52. On technological changes in the industry in the 1960s through 1980s, see Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 156-60.

[79] Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 198, 199.

logging operations left the region, some closing up outright, others relocating to the American south. In this short five year period, the Northwest timber industry lost more than 25,000 jobs. A rural logging town with only 25% unemployment was said to be weathering the timber recession relatively well.[80]

In the wake of layoffs and mill closures, the IWA started hemorrhaging members. In the 1950s, the union had somewhere around 150,000 members throughout the U.S. and Canada. By the early 1980s, it had fewer than 75,000 members. The IWA's American district councils were hardest hit. While British Columbia was affected by the timber recession, the Canadian IWA was able to spread to other timber-producing regions where the lumber economy wasn't as bad, like the prairie forests of Alberta and Saskatchewan and the Atlantic Coast forests of Newfoundland. American labor law largely prevented the American IWA from expanding. "Right to work" laws passed in Southern states, which prohibited unions from making union membership a condition of employment, made it nearly impossible to organize new workers as Northwestern operators moved south. American labor law also allowed employers to replace striking workers with scab labor, which sometimes cost the union many members or forced the union to take concessions. In 1986, for instance, when the Washington and Oregon IWA struck Weyerhaeuser over a wage cut, the company threatened to replace the strikers with scabs and IWA members were forced to agree to a $4.30/hour wage cut.[81]

Looking at the way the law was hamstringing the American IWA, Canadian District Councils began to argue that they needed more autonomy or they too would be dragged down. "The American trade union movement is going downhill," IWA president Jack Murno said in 1986, "and is becoming a burden to Canadian trade unions." The same year Munro made his comments, IWA leaders on both sides of the border entered into talks to dissolve the trans-border partnership that had existed since the IWA's founding in 1937. After the break, formalized in 1987, the American and Canadian IWAs became two separate international unions. The Americans retained the IWA name while the Canadian contingents adopted the title of IWA-Canada.[82]

The American IWA continued to lose members throughout the 1980s. By the early 1990s, the union had fewer than 15,000 dues-paying members and in 1994 merged with the International Association of Machinists (IAM). Although the union continues to this day as the IAM's Woodworker's

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[80] On the decline of the lumber industry in the latter twentieth century, see Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict,* 178-212; Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise,* 153-71; Thomas R. Cox, "The North American-Japan Timber Trade: A Survey of Its Social, Economic, and Environmental Impact," in *World Deforestation in the Twentieth Century*, eds. John F. Richards and Richard P. Tucker (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), 164-86; Cox, "The North American-Japan Timber Trade: The Roots of Canadian and U.S. Approaches," *Forest and Conservation History*34 (1990): 112-21; Joe P. Mattey, *The Timber Bubble that Burst: Government Policy and the Bailout of 1984* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). You're still reading footnotes? I'm impressed. Here we are at the end of the dissertation and you're still being studious and attentive. I don't know who you are, or where I'll be when you read this, but find me and I'll buy you a beer. On the IWA's history in the 1990s, see Neufld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 264-303.

[81] Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 252-54.

[82] As quoted in *ibid*., 257.

Department, it really only exists to manage the pensions of retirees. IWA-Canada didn't fare much better. By the mid-1990s, the timber recession caught up to Canada's other provinces and the union started losing members at an astonishing rate. IWA-Canada has only survived by diversifying its membership. As of 2000, approximately 48% of IWA-Canada's membership works in jobs outside the woods. The union represents chocolate makers, home care workers, and greenhouse workers in British Columbia, trailer manufacturers in Alberta, hotel workers in Manitoba, and dairy workers in New Brunswick. IWA-Canada has unionized the only Nike plant in the world—a hockey stick factory in Ontario.[83]

In the 1940s, Ellery Foster and other IWA leaders predicted that if industry continued to have disproportionate control of the forests, if operators continued to cut with no concern for the future of the resource, then rural communities would suffer. It's at best a pyrrhic victory, but those predictions have proven true. As forest denudation continued into the 1960s and 1970s and as forestry officials, politicians, and industry representatives continued to look the other way when it came to the decline of the forests, the Northwest's woodlands became no longer capable of supporting a lumber industry and its rural communities by the late-twentieth century.

[83] *Ibid*., 298-302.

CONCLUSION

"WE MUST TRANSFORM NATURE TO LIVE"

In May of 1990, Dave Luoma, Don Zapp, and Dave Morrison, were working a forest tract about fifty miles north of the Vancouver Island logging town of Campbell River. It was a beautiful spring day in the coastal Northwest, which is to say it was cold, damp, and moody. A thick fog had rolled into the forest off the nearby tide flats, filling in the lowland valleys and blocking the base of the interior mountains from view, detaching their ice-tipped ridges from the earth. Rain floated down from the sky, saturating the sheets of moss hanging from the twisted branches of the gnarled deadfall spread across the lichen-colored forest floor. It was the kind of day that sent the Californians who had started moving to the Northwest a decade ago scurrying for umbrellas. But Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison, who combined had more than seventy-five years' experience working in the woods, knew the sun was villainous. It dried out the forest floor, made the woods susceptible to fire, sent game running for cover, and warmed rivers and upset the salmon. There's no drama in sunlight. Life is too sterile and flat when baked in the sun's rays. Rain is life on the forested slopes of the Pacific Coast. Umbrellas are for people who think timber magically springs into existence in the aisles of hardware stores.

The weather put a spring into Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison's step, hastening the pace of work. The three men worked as fellers, a job that, in ways, was still the same as it'd been in an earlier era. It still involved carving a notch into the base of a tree's trunk, then a back-cut, and finally scurrying out of the way as the timber teetered, tipped, and then crashed to the earth. Two things, though, made Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison's work a bit different from that of their forbearers. The first was chainsaws. In the 1950s, companies transitioned away from the two-man crosscut saws workers called the "misery whip" and adopted gas-powered saws. The first chainsaws were big, loud, clunky, unreliable things that spit oil. By the late-twentieth century, they'd come down in size and become much more powerful. The second was that the massive old-growth timbers had all but disappeared. By 1990, even the most liberal estimates said that less than 14% of the Northwest's original old-growth remained, and that was mostly in national parks and protected wilderness areas. Old-growth was nearly nonexistent on private lands and reduced to about 6% on non-protected public lands. It'd been replaced by second, third, or even fourth growth trees, most no more than twenty or thirty years old, and no bigger than a beach ball in diameter.[1]

So when the small trees Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison were working suddenly gave way to a grove of ancient, old-growth Goliaths, the men were understandably shocked. They hit the kill switches on their

[1] For estimates on remaining old-growth, see Douglas E. Booth, "Estimating Prelogging Old-Growth in the Pacific Northwest: Reconstructing age structure from the 1933 survey," *Journal of Forestry* 89, no. 10 (October, 1991): 25-9; Charles L. Bolsinger and Karen L. Waddell, *Area of Old-Growth Forests in California, Oregon, and Washington* Resource Bulleting PNW-RB-197 (U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, December 1993).

saws and wandered closer for a better look. It was an approximately 25-acre stand on the east-side drainage of the White Creek watershed, filled with every major softwood species on the British Columbian coast: Douglas fir, balsam, hemlock, spruce, red cedar, and cottonwood. Some of the trees were more than four hundred years old, as wide at their base as a garage door, and as tall as three football fields laid end-to-end are long. The rest of the forest had been harvested and replanted several times and become rational and uninspiring in its symmetry. This grove was still wild, filled with giant trees and bunches of ferns that grew in patterns that defied logic and imagination. To this day, no one knows how the stand survived. This part of Vancouver Island's forest had been intensively cut several times in the past, first in the early twentieth century and again in the 1950s. Entire generations of workers, timber cruisers, surveyors, engineers, hikers, and hunters had somehow missed this. It would seem that after all these years, after a century of scientific forestry, intensive management, and cutting, the forests still has some secrets. Luoma, who'd been working in the woods since the mid-1970s, said it was the most incredible thing he'd ever seen. Zapp told the local press that "as soon as we walked back in and saw the stand, we just couldn't do it, that was it right then and there." The men packed up their tools, piled into the truck, and headed for their employer's office. They said that they would not cut the stand, nor would anyone else in their union, the International Woodworkers of America-Canada (IWA-Canada). When asked by the press for a comment, Morrison responded with a logger's wit and wry. "Hug a logger," he said, "you'll never go back to the trees."[2]

The story is a good metaphor for understanding the ethic of place and working-class environmentalism that has been central to timber workers' culture throughout the twentieth century. Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison had no reservations about felling several acres of forestland because trees are, in part, market commodities that make modern life possible. They become houses and furniture, shipping crates and railroad ties, newsprint and cardboard boxes. Trees support the Northwest's rural working-class communities, both through direct-employment in the timber industry, as well as through jobs in the associated service sector—the small shop owners who sell and service chainsaws and logging equipment, or the waitresses who work in the late-night diners that stay open to feed the workers coming off the last shift at the mill. Though, at the same time, Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison believed the forest had a value beyond the marketplace. Some of that value can be described. The forests are sites of recreation and subsistence, places to camp, hunt, and fish. Some of that value is more intangible. There's a mystique and magic in these places. The same year Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison came across the old growth timber stand north of Campbell River, their union, IWA-Canada, issued a forestry policy statement that better articulated timber workers' ethic of place. "We cannot take one-sided positions that

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[2] Quotes from Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada: The Life and Times of an Industrial Union* (Vancouver: IWA Canada/New Star Books, 2000), 274.

sacrifice biological diversity, waterways, or forest soil, any more than we can ignore the needs of people, jobs, communities, or the economy," said the document, "while we strive to limit disturbance and minimize impact, we must remember that we are human beings and that we must transform nature to live."[3]

This dissertation has argued that the sentiment expressed in IWA-Canada's 1990 forestry policy statement, as well as Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison's reverence for that old-growth timber stands, has its roots in the early twentieth century, in patterns of immigration and demographic change, in working-class families and communities, in work in the woods and life in the company towns, in Depression-era union organizing, in the creation of the IWA, and in the union's attempts to bring New Deal-style conservationism to the woods in the postwar period, as well as its attempts to expand wilderness in the 1950s. Immigration and migration shaped the cultures and values timber workers brought with them when they entered the woods. Workers coming from farms brought land-use traditions and subsistence practices that would help workers see the forests as more than just sites of work. Midwestern loggers brought experience in industrial labor and a distrust of their employers. Scandinavians and eastern Europeans brought labor radicalisms that would shape latter-day industrial union movements. Employer policies that incentivized married workers also shaped timber workers' understanding of place. They saw the forests not just as worksites but also places that entwined their homes and communities.

Work shaped working-class understandings of place as well. In the opening decades of the twentieth century, lumbermen tried to impose their vision of an ordered, industrial landscape on the forest. This vision expressed itself in new technologies, like steam-powered donkey engines and high-lead logging systems. The pace of work also became faster and, consequently, more dangerous. Employers also came to rely on a new professional class of logging engineers and forestry scientists who not only organized and planned production, but also provided political and environmental arguments for intensive and destructive harvesting practices. Nature was not as easy to control as the lumbermen imagined, though, and workers retained a good deal of control over the production process. Workers came to believe that they knew the forests better than either their employers or logging engineers and claimed ownership of the woods.

The fact that Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison were working just north of Campbell River is also fitting, and not just because that's where Roderick Haig-Brown lived most of his life and where, in 1942, he wrote *Timber*, his novel about loggers who came to see unionization as a means to forest conservation. Throughout the early twentieth century, that part of Vancouver Island had been home to many company towns, just like forested areas throughout the Northwest. Company towns played an important role in shaping timber workers' relationship to the landscape. Because employers had to keep workers' living

[3] International Woodworkers of America, *The Forest is the Future* (IWA, 1990), 2-3.

quarters mobile in order to respond to the economic and environmental imperatives of Northwestern lumber production, company towns in the Northwest were light on amenities. Instead of looking to their employers to provide, workers and their families looked to nature. They supplemented their diets with food grown in gardens, berries foraged from clear cuts, and game animals hunted in the woods. Activities like bee-keeping, cascara-harvesting, and claiming the bounties on cougars provided extra income. Communities also turned to nature for recreation, taking to the woods for hiking, skiing, and fishing trips. As workers interacted with nature, they developed a connection to the land and started to believe that protecting their communities was a matter of protecting the forests.

That Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison were IWA members is also fitting. The IWA was founded in 1937, in the turmoil and hard-times of the Depression, born from American Federation of Labor unions in southern Washington and Oregon and the Communist Party's nascent woodworkers' unions in northern Washington and British Columbia. The IWA was important in the Northwest woods, partly because it offered better wages and working conditions, but more because it voiced timber workers' understanding of place during the labor uprisings of the 1930s and gave timber workers and their communities more control of their jobsites and company towns. In later years, the IWA began to articulate an understanding of place that was both local and regional. They said that the fate of their communities was threatened by capital flight, and they began to pursue regional contracts that would discourage their employers from moving the work and impoverishing their communities. More importantly, the IWA gave workers the political power to address forest destruction.

The IWA began to politically articulate timber workers' vision of place in a conservation philosophy that I have termed working-class environmentalism. Working-class environmentalism recognized that the forests have multiple uses. Trees provided jobs and economically sustained the Northwest's rural working-class communities and IWA members said that there had to be more harvesting controls to ensure lumber industry jobs well into the future. They also said that parts of the forest had to be preserved and entirely out-of-reach of the saws. Most of all, the IWA argued that the people who work in the timber and lived off of the forests should control and manage the resource. Conservation-minded New Deal politicians in the U.S. and Co-operative Commonwealth Federation politicians in British Columbia, as well as several environmental groups responded to the IWA's calls for more balanced forestry policies based on conservation and preservation. This broad coalition proposed sweeping changes to federal forestry laws in 1946, then proposed expanding Washington's Olympic National Park in 1950, and finally advocated for the expansion of Oregon's Three Sister's Wilderness area in 1956, culminating with the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964.

As Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison's story shows, working-class environmentalism was still part of timber workers' culture in the 1990s. Yet, at the very moment the three loggers encountered the old-

growth grove and took a stand to defend it, the view of timber workers as environmentalists was shifting. Wilderness advocates, politicians, and the media had started to portray workers like Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison as an anathema to environmentalism. In many ways, this is a view that persists until today. It seems fitting, then, to end this dissertation by asking what's changed since 1964. Why is it that we don't see environmentalists when we look at the rural Northwest's working-class and why don't we hear about loggers like Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison in debates and political discussions about the future of the Northwest's forests?

The simple answer is that the popular understanding of what environmentalism is, and who and who isn't an environmentalist changed in the latter decades of the twentieth century and became inconsistent with working-class environmentalism. Like Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison, most Northwestern timber workers continued to advocate for a multi-use forest, one that provided jobs for rural people and recreational opportunities through wilderness preservation. They understood that all human activity impacts nature and believed that placing the entire forest out of reach of the saws was as untenable as it was unrealistic. The trick was finding a way to constrain that human impact and maintain a working forest alongside wilderness. In the mid-twentieth century, though, several environmental activists started adopting a different, far narrower definition of environmentalism. Groups like the Sierra Club, Audubon Society, and later, more radical environmentalists from organizations like Earth First!, started arguing that all industrial activity, and logging in particular, was inherently destructive to nature and had no place in proper forest management. Environmentalism increasingly became a movement focused purely on preservation and minimizing, if not outright eradicating, the human footprint in nature. So while loggers like Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison, as well as unions like IWA-Canada continued to argue that logging could and necessarily had to exist alongside preservation, late-twentieth century environmentalists said that the only way to truly protect the forests was by putting them out of reach of the saws. The movement no longer had a space for working-class environmentalism.[4]

Somewhat ironically, one of the biggest turning points in reshaping the environmental movement was the 1964 Wilderness Act, the very legislation that IWA members had helped pass. In the debates that preceded the legislation, middle-class environmentalists and timber workers had spoken in similar tones, both arguing for a multi-use forest where industrial activity existed alongside wilderness areas. The Act, though, narrowly defined wilderness as uninhabited, roadless, and "primitive." Afterwards, middle-class environmental groups increasingly adopted the Act's language as the only legitimate definition of

[4] See Kevin R. Marsh, *Drawing Lines in the Forest: Creating Wilderness Areas in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 34-7; David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 125-136; Michael Pebworth, "Evergreen Struggle: Federal Wilderness Preservation, Populaism, and Liberalism in Washington State, 1935-1894" (PhD dissertation, University of Oregon, 2003), 140-156.

preservation and began to redefine what was and wasn't a legitimate use of the forest. Hiking and backpacking were fine because they didn't interfere with the forest's "primitive" quality. On the other hand, environmentalists said that hunting and fishing, to say nothing of industrial logging—that is, the very types of activities that rural Northwesterners relied on—were far too destructive and did not maintain a "primitive" forest. Because timber workers did not fall behind this definition of wilderness and continued to advocate for roadside campgrounds, "day use" areas, and cutting on commercial stands, they were now seen by middle-class environmentalists as opposed to preservation. Looking at how post-1964 environmentalism transitioned from a broad, inclusive movement into something more narrow, Michael Pebworth writes, "the highly educated and passionate activists" who made the 1964 Wilderness Act possible "could have made timber worker issues, such as high wage employment and sustainable forestry, immutable parts of a larger wilderness preservation agenda." Instead, "wilderness preservation activists decided to narrow their focus to an even smaller range of strictly wilderness preservation concerns."[5]

Politicians who'd been previously supportive of the IWA's working-class environmentalism also changed their tone about logging in the wake of the 1964 Wilderness Act. Oregon senators Wayne Morse and Richard Neuberger were both New Deal Conservationists and IWA supporters. While an arbitrator for the National War Labor Board, Morse had issued the decision that led to the IWA's first region-wide master agreement. Before winning his Senate seat, Neuberger had publicized the Hook Bill and championed the IWA's efforts to bring New Deal-style conservationism to the Northwest woods. By the mid-1960s, both men still considered themselves pro-labor New Deal democrats. And in many ways they still were. But after 1964 they started lending their names and political support more to efforts to expand wilderness and curtail logging. Perhaps Idaho Senator Frank Church best illustrates this change. When Church first entered the Senate in 1957, as one of his biographers writes, "he was a confirmed conservationist in the vein of Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot." When Church introduced an earlier version of the Wilderness Act to the Senate in 1961 he did so by saying that wilderness wasn't just about preservation but about giving working people more access to nature. After the 1964 Act passed, Church received immediate accolades from middle-class environmental groups and equally immediate pushback from Idaho's mining and timber industries. In his future efforts to expand wilderness in Idaho, Church cultivated the support of the middle-class groups to give him political cover, inching closer and closer to the idea that what constituted wilderness was unused, untouched space.[6]

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[5] Pebworth, "Evergreen Struggle," 140. Also see Marsh, *Drawing Lines in the Forest*, 34-7.

[6] Sara Dant, "Making Wilderness Work: Frank Church and the American Wilderness Movement," *Pacific Historical Review* 77 (May 2008): 237-72. On Morse and Neuberger's conservation politics, see William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story, 1940-2000* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 215-47.

In short, the 1964 Wilderness Act was a turning point in environmentalism, when both the movement and the definition of who was counted in the movement fractured along class lines. Environmentalism largely became a middle-class movement focused on preservation and expanding access for "low impact" outdoor activities. As historian Richard White has famously pointed out, there's no shortage of irony in the middle-class environmental movement's belief that recreation is the only legitimate use of nature, their criticisms of logging, and their very belief in "primitive" nature. Middle-class environmentalists advocate for untouched nature and vehemently criticize timber workers who want to maintain harvest rates, yet simultaneously they buy houses and consumer goods made from lumber, never acknowledging the workers' whose jobs they deplore are the very workers who make their modern lives possible. White argues that all modern life impacts nature in some way and that work isn't inherently destructive but rather a way of knowing and appreciating nature, something the modern environmental movement would be wise to recognize. Work, writes White, "links us to each other, and it links us to nature…in giving up our hopeless fixation on purity, we may ultimately find a way to break the borders that imprison nature as much as ourselves." Luoma, Zapp, and Morrison would likely agree.[7]

In the Northwest woods there was another culprit that significantly shaped perceptions of timber workers and contributed to a larger idea that work was at odds with environmentalism: *Strix occidentalis*, a diminutive brown bird more commonly known as the Northern Spotted Owl. In 1968, a wildlife biology graduate student at Oregon State University named Erik Forsman began mapping Spotted Owl nests as part of his dissertation research. Prior to Forsman's work, scientists knew next to nothing about the bird. Forsman's research established a standard methodology for radio-tagging and mapping nests. By the mid-1980s, biologists had discovered more than 3,000 nesting pairs and tagged more than 1,000 birds. The data revealed that the owl's situation was far more dire than anyone had imagined. On average, a healthy breeding pair only produced two offspring that survived into adulthood, and only then under ideal circumstances. Each breeding pair needed between 1,200 and 3,000 acres of old-growth forests to successfully rear their young and unless radical steps were taken to preserve the remaining ancient forests, scientists predicted, the Northern Spotted Owl would be extinct within twenty years.[8]

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[7] Richard White, "'Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?': Work and Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, William Cronon, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 185.

[8] On Forsman's research and its impact on the biology of the Spotted Owl, see William Dietrich, *The Final Forest: Big Trees, Forks, and the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 52-65; Matthew S. Carroll, *Community and the Northwestern Logger: Continuities and Changes in the Era of the Spotted Owl* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); Paul W. Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests since World War Two* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 176-77, 261-2; William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict,* 178-214; Thomas R. Cox, *The Lumbermen's Frontier: Three Centuries of Land Use, Society, and Change in America's Forests* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2010), 363-75; Stephen G. Boyce and Chadwick D. Oliver, "The History of Research in Forest Ecology and Silviculture," in Harold K. Steen, ed., *Forest and Wildlife Science in America: A History* (Durham: Forest History Society, 1999), 431-40.

Species go extinct all the time. It's an unfortunate reality of modern life. The Spotted Owl may very well have suffered a similar fate if not for the impeccable timing of its discovery. Around the same time Forsman was beginning to map the birds, middle-class environmental groups like the Sierra Club and Audubon Society were redirecting the wilderness movement towards old-growth preservation and arguing that ancient forests were unique and required special and immediate protections from logging. This was often a difficult sell. Most people, particularly those who lived outside the Northwest, didn't understand the difference between an old-growth forest and a second- or third-generation forest. As long as people could see trees, they assumed the forest ecosystem was healthy and not in need of any special dispensation. The Spotted Owl became a way for the environmental movement to communicate the differences between an ancient forest and a new forest—here was a bird that could only live in old-growth, and surely it wasn't alone. Moreover, it was easier to build a campaign around wildlife. "Thanks to the work of Walt Disney with Bambi," explained Andy Stahl, a lawyer with the Sierra Club's legal defense fund, "wildlife enjoys substantial, substantive, statuary protection." The campaign to save the Spotted Owl, in other words, was less about saving the owl and more about using the bird as a proxy for the campaign to save old-growth. The bird became an unwitting spokesperson for virgin wilderness. As Stahl put it, "the Northern spotted owl is the wildlife species of choice to act as a surrogate for old-growth protection and I've often thought that thank goodness the spotted owl evolved in the Northwest, for if it hadn't, we'd have to genetically engineer it."[9]

It would turn out that environmentalists like Stahl had a good eye for seeing how the owl could sway public opinion about old growth. Throughout the late-1970s and early-1980s, the bird became a media star and the movement to save old-growth forests became a national concern. The Northern Spotted Owl was profiled in the *New York Times* and featured on the cover of *Time* magazine. Celebrities, movie stars, and progressive politicians, many of whom had never stepped foot in a Northwest forest, talked about the pressing need to preserve the owl's habitat and pull it back from the brink of extinction. All this attention gave the political and legal campaign to protect the Spotted Owl real momentum. In 1973, Forsman and his researchers created the Oregon Endangered Species Task Force and recommended that the Forest Service set aside 300 acres of habitat for each known pair of spotted owls. When the Forest Service laughed at putting the equivalent of $10 billion in timber sales out of reach of the saws, environmental groups sued the agency and forced it to comply with Forsman's recommendations under the National Environmental Policy Act. In 1986, scientists revised their estimates and now said that radio telemetry data suggested that each breeding pair only needed 1,000 acres of old growth forest to successfully rear their young. To force the Forest Service to comply with the new data, environmental groups filed a petition with the national Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to get

[9] As quoted in Dietrich, *The Final Forest*, 92-3.

the Northern spotted owl listed under the 1974 Endangered Species Act (ESA). In 1987, acting under pressure from the Regan administration, the FWS refused to list the owl. A year later, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund successfully filed suit against the FWS, which was ordered to give the owl ESA status. That decision opened the legal floodgates and between 1988 and 1990, environmental groups filed no fewer than three dozen lawsuits against the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, seeking injunctions to stop timber sales in owl habitat. Trying to stem the tide of litigation, in 1990 the Forest Service agreed it'd no longer auction timber in owl habitat, but later that year announced the sale of 3.2 billion board feet of lumber in an area known to contain several nests. Environmental organizations again took the Forest Service to court. In 1992 a federal judge issued an injunction against all timber sales, temporarily shutting down the industry. In April, 1993 President Bill Clinton made good on a campaign promise to resolve the forest controversy and placed six million acres of Northwest forestland under federal protection. The executive order practically shut down Northwestern logging and Clinton, the supposed down-home representative of honest rural working folk, essentially gave pink slips to tens-of-thousands of timber workers.[10]

The collapse of the Northwest lumber industry wasn't the owl's fault, of course. It had far more to do with the timber recession of the mid-1970s, the collapse of the Asian lumber market in the late-1970s, and more than a century's worth of intensive cutting that had severely denuded the Northwest woods and made them incapable of supporting rural resource extraction economies. Still, rural Northwesterners saw the owl as a symbol of their economic powerlessness and focused their rage and disaffection on the small bird. As Dick Mossman, a logging truck driver from Forks, Washington explained to journalist William Dietrich, even if the owl wasn't responsible for the decline of the timber industry, it was nevertheless a potent symbol of how people who depended on that industry for their livelihood had lost control. "To have someone on the East Coast dictate our future is really troubling to us," he said, "we feel the people in this area have the best experience to handle the forest." Barbara Mossman, Dick's wife, agreed. "We've always taken care of ourselves out here," she said, "we never asked the outside communities for anything. Now they want to tell us how to manage our woods. It's like being molested."[11] Many in the Northwest's rural logging communities no doubt shared Mossman's feelings that the campaign to protect an owl was an unneeded intrusion on an already suffering community. People in logging towns nailed dead owls to fence posts or hung inflatable birds in effigy

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[10] Carroll, *Community and the Northwest Logger,* 42-58; Dietrich, *The Final Forest*, 50-7, 81-91, 227-49; Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict*, 205-11; Cox, *The Lumbermen's Frontier*, 363-75; Susan Schrepfer, "Conflict in Preservation: The Sierra Club, Save-the-Redwoods League, and Redwood National Park," *Journal of Forest History* 24 (1980): 60-76; Steven Lewis Yaffee, *The Wisdom of the Spotted Owl: Policy Lessons For a New Century* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1994); Interagency Scientific Committee, *A Conservation Strategy for the Northern Spotted Owl* (Portland: Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, 1990).

[11] As quoted in Dietrich, *The Final Forest*, 153.

outside of saw shops. Local diners advertised "Spotted Owl Stew" as the special of the day. You could see some of the vitriol that rural working people directed at the owl on the bumper stickers placed on battered F-150s as they sped along coastal Highway 101. "Save a Logger, Eat an Owl," they said. Or, "I Love Spotted Owls—Fried," and "Loggers are an Endangered Species, Too." On February 28, 1989 logging truck drivers blocked the roads around Olympia and more than 400 timber workers rallied on the steps of the Washington State capitol demanding the state senate pass anti-set-aside legislation. "Is it spotted owls or our kids?" one logger asked at the rally, hoisting his three-year-old son up before the crowd, "our kids come first."[12]

For middle-class environmentalists, it was easy to interpret the dead owls hanging from fence posts, bumper stickers, and rallies like the one in Olympia as clear evidence that the rural working-class lacked an environmental consciousness. Dave Foreman, co-founder of the radical environmental group Earth First! said that the reaction of the Northwest's rural working-class to the Spotted Owl campaign was clear evidence that it's the "bumpkin proletariat so celebrated in Wobbly lore who holds the most violent and destructive attitudes towards the natural world."[13] Many agreed with Foreman. In media reports and popular culture the Northwest rural working-class came off as ignorant, tobacco-spitting reactionaries who were part of an outmoded frontier culture and too backwards to realize that the times were passing them by and that logging was no longer a tenable occupation. Many environmentalists at the center of efforts to expand Spotted Owl habitat seized on these images and used them as a justification for proposing legislation that would severely harm the rural Northwest. As one environmentalist from Oregon put it, "I personally look around at a lot of these loggers, and I feel sorry for them. They're uneducated, they're crude, they're not people I would choose to be around. I don't think there's a defensible reason to keep these people doing what they're doing and keep them in their state of ignorance."[14]

The media and environmental movement's characterization of timber workers as backwards and anti-environmentalist upset Russ Poppe, a timber feller from Forks, Washington. Talking with journalist William Dietrich, Poppe explained that journalists and environmentalists simply didn't understand that timber workers had a more pragmatic view of nature. "I'm as environmentally sensitive as the next guy," he told Dietrich, "but environmentalists have some idealistic notion of the way the world ought to be. It would be real romantic to think that the world can be some sort of paradise, but paper and lumber is going

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[12] See Carroll, *Community and the Northwest Logger*, 120-32; Beverly Brown, *In Timber Country: Working Peoples' Stories of Environmental Conflict and Urban Flight* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); Robert Leo Heilman, *Overstory—Zero: Real Live in the Timber Country of Oregon* (Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1995); James LeMonds, *Deadfall: Generations of Logging in the Pacific Northwest* (Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press Publishing, 2004).

[13] As quoted in John Bellamy Foster, "The Limits of Environmentalism without Class: Lessons from the Ancient Forest Struggle in the Pacific Northwest," in *The Struggle for Ecological Democracy: Environmental Justice Movements in the United States*, Daniel Faber, ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), 201-2.

[14] As quoted in Carroll, *Community and the Northwest Logger*, 153.

to be needed." Poppe explained that he held the forests in reverent regard, but also understood that it's impossible to live without impacting the natural environment in some way. Electricity comes from dammed rivers that disrupt salmon migrations, produce comes from tilled fields sprayed with insecticides, and the middle-class environmentalists who object to Poppe's work nevertheless live in six-figure homes framed from the lumber he's cut. The largest clear cut in Washington State isn't on the Olympic Peninsula, he pointed out, but rather on the other side of Puget Sound, where Seattle's settlers wiped out the trees and paved-over the forest decades ago. Poppe told Dietrich that turning the Olympic Peninsula into a giant wilderness preserve is as untenable and inconsistent with modern life as clear cutting every last stand of timber. There has to be a balance between conservation and preservation, he said, between protecting animals and protecting the livelihood of rural people. Environmentalists couldn't see things from his perspective, he explained, because wilderness preservation "don't affect their pocketbook."[15]

Poppe, somewhat ironically, has more in common with the middle-class environmentalists than either he or they might realize. He can give you the name of every berry and mushroom that grows in the woods, which ones are best picked fresh, which ones are better dried and preserved, and which ones will send you to the emergency room. Poppe works ten hour days in the unrelenting rains of the Peninsula's forests, but give him a day off and the first thing he does is grab his rifle and head back to the woods in search of deer. On sunnier weekends he'll take his family on hikes in nearby Olympic National Park. Poppe shares middle-class urbanites' disdain for the ugliness of clear cuts and would like to see more trees left along streams to improve water quality and preserve salmon spawning habitat. "It's hard for people like us to understand the treatment we're getting," he says, "we feel a kinship to this land." Another logger speaking with sociologist Matthew Carroll said something similar. "I've lived and worked in the woods all my life; I love it. If I didn't love it, I wouldn't be here. I depend on the woods," he said, "how can anyone who knows less than I do about the woods say I'm not an environmentalist?"[16]

Although the acrimony of the Woods Wars has faded in recent years, timber workers are still situated outside environmentalism, which is more than a bit ironic since Northwesterners today are perhaps more aware of the importance of place in their lives than ever before. Like other rural parts of the country, the Northwest has seen an influx, though some might say infestation, of mostly middle-class, ecologically-minded people. In the late-1990s, Forks started marketing itself as an eco-tourist destination and it's now the gateway to the Olympic National Park where backpackers outfitted with the most modern gear from REI stop and fill up on supplies before heading into the Hoh and Queets Rainforests. Roughly

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[15] Russ Poppe, as quoted in Dietrich, *The Final Forest*, 51. Also see Egan, *The Good Rain*, 171-4; Brown, *In Timber Country*, 8-12.

[16] Poppe, as quoted in Dietrich, *The Final Forest*, 51; anonymous Forks, Washington logger as quoted in Carroll, *Community and the Northwest Logger*, 153

200 miles to the north, as the crow flies, the cabin where Roderick Haig-Brown lived and wrote *Timber* still stands on the banks of the Campbell River. It's become something of a pilgrimage site for British Columbian environmentalists and outdoor writers who hope to draw on the same nature and stunning landscape that inspired Haig-Brown. Crossing back over the border and heading southward to the Columbia River Gorge will take you to the old logging town of Hood River, now the windsurfing capital of the world, where middle-class thrill seekers catch the forty-knot winds that howl across the Columbia's waters, made placid by Bonneville Dam. Thirty miles up the Columbia is the Deschutes, the Northwest's premier steelhead river where, in September and October, you'll find middle-class fly fishermen dressed in $800 Gore Tex waders plying the waters with $1,000 high-modulus graphite rods. Before spilling into the Columbia, the Deschutes flows through Bend, Oregon. In the 1940s and 1950s, Bend was the headquarters of Brooks-Scanlon, once among the largest lumber companies in the state. You won't find many loggers in Bend today. What you will find are Californians, the scourge of the rural Northwest. They're coming here by the thousands and transforming old farm houses into summer playpens and rapidly inflating the real estate market. A few of them have opened vineyards throughout southern Washington, north-central Oregon, and the Willamette Valley. The Northwest sits at roughly the same latitude as Burgundy and Bordeaux and the region's rich volcanic soils, connoisseurs say, produce excellent Pinot Noirs and Rieslings. A good place to enjoy a fine Northwestern wine is in the southern Oregon logging town of Ashland. There, on a summer's eve, you can throw out a blanket in a field, sip your wine, and rub elbows with Silicon Valley millionaires as you watch the Ashland Shakespeare Festival's outdoor production of *Hamlet*.

Talk to the Northwest's new rural middle-class in any one of these places and they'll point to the tall Douglas fir forests with deep reverence and say that an ethic of place needs to be a moral guide that shapes the region's social, civic, and environmental values. Timber workers like Russ Poppe, Dick and Barbara Mossman, and Dave Luoma, Don Zapp, and Dave Morrison agree. But no one's listening.

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