

Don Transcription

May 4, 2012

Don Alanen

Im a talker

Born Astoria, mother lived in logging camp, Deep River

-owned by Simon Benson, RR logging

-no doctors

-mom got on speeder, to Deep River, General Wa. Columbia Hospital

-there a week, 1933, has a copy of bill for \$18.05

-father had cash so they got discount

-stayed at Deep River til 3 yrs old

-Benson sold out, his uncle sold in 1936

-logging homestead, sections, sold timber and logged in, cleared it for farms

Father: Sulo M. Alanen (Whitey) Blonde Hair

Uncle: Oiva Alanen

Mother: Frances Olson, father was bullwhacker

-her uncles had the RR, Olson Bros.

-Benson went to Clatskanie, bought big track (Weyerhaeuser had 900,000 acres)

-Moved to Gales Creek, logging hamlet, close to Forest Grove

-small farms, loggers

-Consolidated Timber Company, logged Tillamook Burn from 1933, 1939

-1945 burn, 12 yrs. old, only kid to help evacuate Glenwood

-saw fire, military from Ft. Lewis, black firefighters (shocked), never used the "n" word, only colored boys, sooo nice, bought candy and gum

-he and buddy would go up to hang out w/the black guys

-used shovels and axes to cover fire w/tools, some w/hoses

-people evacuated "Boy, this is gonna be a mess"

-army trucks-ask to help evacuate Glenwood (20+ trucks)

-went w/Leroy to help, mom drove up to camp, dark at 4:30pm, went in truck to get people out

-He yelled, "Hey Leroy!" "Is that your dad?" "Yup" "Well, come on up!"

-Still dishes on peoples tables, people caught off guard

-deer, cats, a little boy in pjs by himself yelling for mommy, she came running "Where's my billy?" "That really got me as a kid"

-People and trucks scattered to different places (August of 1945)

-stayed til late and got a ride home w/Leroy in army truck

-5pm-4am

-following week, went w/dad to Devils Lake Fort Creek on Wilson River Hwy.

-found a stream, "You gotta see this" said his dad

-deer, bear, cougar, racoon, animals by the water hairless, burned to death by the water, bloated no fur

-first deer hunting Tillamook Burn

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- forced dad to go to Sweet Home for another logging job
- huge boom town as WW2 ended
- rations, couldn't buy candy /gum
- asked Leroy if he could buy him candy bars from the army, "Oh sure"
- box of Hershey's, Fifth Ave, Double mint, etc
- "does your mother make cornbread and fried chicken"
- "Ya, but probably not the southern stuff yours makes"

Anyway, he had his mom make them some chicken and cornbread and pie and he took it to them and they were grateful

- had them buy cigarettes for his dad -Lucky Strikes
- gave him the money \$1.90 for a carton

Erickson Saloon-his dad went there, but he didn't go til later

- his step-grandfather was a master heavy carpenter, built RR trestles "Pile Driver Jack"
- also worked as a bouncer at Ericksons
- didn't chew snoos, smoke, drink
- 'They knew I'd be dependable"
- "i sat in a rocking chair on the mezzanine level w/a carbine gun"
- he died at 92 in 1977
- Don took his photographs up to the Historical Society
- he was a foreman w/20 guys at the Bridge of Nations,
- Done has some of his tools and wanted to authenticate some of his prints, some by Ford and some by Kinsey
- Thomas Vaughn, at the OHS, "neat guy...he was excited to see photos"
- he had the identical photos in a drawer
- told him his grand father was a bouncer
- Vaughn laughed about the mezzanine level because it was where they had the "ladies of the night" he was protecting the girls and card rooms
- guys could get dinner, drinks, and

Erickson was a banker, he had a safe

- many single loggers would get their paycheck and give it to Erickson and then he would give them money as they need it

- Father had an eye put out, he and bro puonded on concrete, piece flew up
- another incident as a donkey puncher, limb fell almost put out other eye, he thought, "I better get outta the woods"

Sweet Home-

- he would go to woods w/hius dad and met many guys that went on
- Pat Sotterburg, we were gonna write a book]
- Jack Brandis, VP w/Georgia-Pacific, bought big companies for them
- he was a "loggers logger...star fullback...played for OSU, grad in Forestry, parents had money, story goes, he got a million to start a logging outfit, started a co. in the Tillamook Burn

- Dad ran a steam donkey for Brandis, puncher, when diesel came they called it a yarder
- 8th bday, w/Brandis in cab of flatbed truck w/stove
- send the kid out here! Got on his shoulders at daybreak to see Brandis' pet deer (all white-albino w/brown spots)

- wouldn't trade for anything, went in taverns (Bateman's)
- hard boil eggs, polish sausage
- other guys never had kids

"Roughhouse Dixon"-he was the toughest hook tender in NW (the hooker)

- he would come in the shop and take the "kid" to get apple pie
- unique period to know these guys
- Clear cutting-many don't understand
- 2 sets of loggers
- Companies w/sustained yield logging, you log the growth for that year, that's what his dad did, one unit here and there, fire safety for building roads, forest service wanted everything logged
- Weyerhaeuser was high density, go in and cut whole thing and then replant
- 1st job was surveying for cat skidders to lay roads, fall timber, 1950
- thought was the surrounding trees will bring in enough seed to grow itself, but birds and squirrels would eat it and nothing grew
- logging a unit, 1st tree that comes up is alder, small seeds that travel
- early 1950s-sweet home-1st helicopters seeding, but still didn't work
- used Tillamook Burn experiences and started hand planting cuz it takes a long time to reforest if you don't (trees are 5-6 yrs. old)

- College and logging in the summers
- grad high school in 1951
- worked for trucking company then to Santiam Lumber in 1950 after school
- after grad, tried to work for uncle in WA, another uncle w/plywood mill
- they all said no, they wouldn't hire him no matter how mad he got that he could not make big money
- expected to marry at 18 and go straight to logging, a lot of girls married in high school

Women in logging camps

- Stuart Holbrook, wrote famous book on logging
- tramp logging, wrote about the single logger w/bedroll who moved around
- few married men
- then when camps stabilized, like Weyerhaeuser, would build for 500 men, then little houses
- then woman started coming and companies
- his mother followed them to logging camps
- at Deep Rover, his friends, shacks, no water, indoor plumbing, or electricity
- water pump on the back porch and outhouse
- never had an indoor toilet till 12 yrs. old or telephone until sweet home

- If camps weren't good, men would move on or just not go to work and drink

-dangerous

-Mill City was big timber area

-boss Rex Pemberton, civil engineer

-studied 5 yrs., father was doctor in Dallas

-Rex worked in logging camps as a kid, grad from OSU

-became General Logging Manager

-before they wouldn't look at a college grad cuz no experience

-his first week, they had coffee, teased him, he smoked a pipe and golfer

-he said "If I'd had known it was like this, I wouldn't of taken the job" (People quitting, broken machines, one snafu after another)

-must think quick, fix quick, Don could realign brakes by 9 yrs old

-College-did engineering

-he wanted to build the equipment and trucks

-worked at a truck shop in high school

-been on back under a cat in the snow repairing

-father had diabetes and would get sent to work regardless, his father would take him from school to work

-wanted to be a heavy mechanic in the woods, as lowest paid kid in truck shop as a helper, change tires, errands, made more than every school teacher in town, in summer more than principal

-"It was a tough life"

-Forest fires-superintendent would send him w/the mechanics to help w/water trucks etc instead of working at the fire spots

-college wasnt even an option for him

Drafted for Korean War: "That was spooky"

-Georgia, Major Long, his wife was lab tech & Penny was a medical stenographers, grant to perfect Pap test for women's mental institute, tested

-Margie, Japanese-Hawaiian gal, husband was Long

- Patton's PR man, Sgt at the Battle of the Bulge, commissioned by Patton there, gave him French cognac, pinned bars on him (1945), Ted was excited, carried bottle with him for yrs, Penny was pregnant and Marge was too, their son Skeeter and Debbie (Don's daughter) were a week apart (1953)

-opened bottle from Patton, brown and dusty, got glasses, Penny still in hospital, "I got this when I got my bars. The old boy himself gave me this and pinned my bars on personally." "This, Don, is good honest French cognac," took sip, they cussed, "Why that stupid...this is cheap rum!"

-"I've seen General Patton's diaries"

-Went to Hawaii to visit them when they retired

-Patton's estate had 6 diaries, each a set of 2

-they were big leather bound thick, with documents, copied and printed

-opened up, napkin from an inn outside of Bastogne, tank formations scribbled out, strategies, Ted wanted to write the true book, but he was alcoholic and never did

- of all the guys, most successful loggers, lumbermen that made it-90% military officers, most had degrees before WW2, went into the war, his boss was Lt.Cmdr. in navy, another was a bombardier in Royal Canadian Air Force, construction foreman was an officer in Airborne
- Logging...very quick decisions or you could kill a man
- Of all guys and bosses, he never worked for a 500 guy that would hold a candle to the loggers
- worked under 3 Harvard MBAs, some real tough, a few would smack a man but some would negotiate
- 500s took forever to make decisions, 3 of them bankrupted, he consulted for oil patch and build military equipment
- told guy to trust him to build this big trailer for hauling the M-1 tank, met this metaler guys who said they would fold up Mid-com (oil patch decline)
- the guys had all diplomas/awards on the wall, guy from UofPenn, deal for manufacturing trailers, he had good mech.engineers, froemans, he was th
- contracts with Lockheed, Boeing, very little w/Freight-liner (they were hwy)
- huge tires and trucks/trailers to Saudi Arabia
- 1st company in manufacturing/engineering was largest logging/trailer manufacturere in the world
- founder couldnt keep up w/modern managment, he was old school, lost his compant and was bailed out by Collins
- they built Weyerhausers big rigs, they had trucks that were illeagl but use them on their own roads
- Mayalsia, Plillipines, big big rigs
- 1959-
- tried to go back to sawmill as engineer, but they interviewed him w/old Cutler (perfectionist), nut for fucshias, hard to get along with, toughest one
- effieciency, industrial engineering, he interviewed w/Cutler, called him a college kid, Don dropped names of men he worked with, Cutler told him things he had to do as a logger
- that guys at the mill 18 hrs a day, but it was his life
- didnt even look at Dons resume-"How long would it take for you to get to my position?" Dons replied, "Coompanies that need planty managers, college grad 10-15 yrs"
- Culter:"No punk college kid is gonna take my job in ten yrs!"
- 2 yrs later they hired their first engineer, he had paved the way for that guys job
- Dad w/8th grade grad was smart and experienced enough to do the job
- That Willamette Industries, Bill Swindel Sr. , his son went to Stanford for industrial engineering, sooner they get them in plants they better (he became CEO)
- Dad died at 56 yrs of diabetes, his aunt was a health food nut and said they had him on the wrong diet, had a heart attack
- he was lean, muscular, healthy, but cholesterol and diabetes got him, docs wanted an autopsy, but a different doctor called Don in and said bluntly that it was "your mothers cooking that did it"
- took classes, she weighed his food, he could have eggs and didnt drink
- other relatives lived into 80s and 90s
- Mom had a young heart and very healthy, blood and heart of a 45 yr old

-she got Alzheimer's and anemia (couldn't get B-12)

-Felt closer to Mom as a youngster

"I think I had the ideal parents"

Father treated him as an adult, discipline was to "play a game"-Let him make mistakes and learn from them

-Did his share of drinking

-he had the money from work to buy a car, but dad said he would probably be drafted out of high school

-Dad bought the car so he could drive it to school-a powder blue Chrysler, white sidewalls, wine colored interior, best car in school

-big boat, but he wanted a Olds 88 Rocket V-8

Dad would give him freedom and he "never wanted to disappoint him"

-made girls take their shoes off when they got in the car, leather white marks

-drove that car on senior class trip, gona all night, got home about 630am, had come up to Portland, 6 pack beer all day and night, not much, but home late and was beat, Dad was sitting down to breakfast smiling, Don started to go to bed, but Dad came in and made him put work clothes on, eat breakfast quick, and go to work, "You wanna play like a man, you can work like a man"

-One toime, caught on a sadie hawkins night, 2 girls 3 guys, one of the girls bros car, 41 Ford all customize, they picked up Don and she had 2 fifths of bourbon, bought a case of beer, went to a party before the dance, girl trips and falls out of the car into street cuz she was drunk,

-cop (had his wife with him) came took IDs, told them to go into coffee shop, came in later and asked what happened, they told him she had brought the bourbon, 9pm to poilce station, Midnight-all parents had been called and the liquor commissioner and state police, mom got call and went crying to his Dad,

-parents never said anything, but after college and he was working a logging job

-a guy he worked with asked "what happened to you that night you got picked up over there in Brownsville cuz he was there that night that his Mom came to the shop yelling for his Dad, told him Don was at poilce

-Dad said, "Well, was he in the wrong?" Mom-"Well, they had liquor in the car"

"Went I aint gonna go and bail him out"

-Thats the way he was, teach him a lesson, give him something to do and them leave him alone, "If you get in trouble, rather than do it different, go talk to the neighbor Frank"

-Mom didn't want to let him go, but many boys wished they had dads like Dons

-Wondered how she put up with the logging lifestyle and she DID know the difference,

-Father died when she was 2. Mother at 18. Grew up independent

-logging camps and they owned a farm

Step-dad didn't treat her very well, would go to aunts (August and Adolf Olson's wives, well to do-Cadillac convertible)

Her cousin Earl Olson-college kid, a lot of fun,

-She had a flapper dress in her cedar chest and put it on for Don and did the Charleston, Don thought "Holy Cow!"

-He would take her around to the speakeasies, Studs Bearcat Roadster car (only 2 in Portland)

Edie Pate(?) - parents had a lumber company

-knew the Olson's' from St. James Lutheran Church)

-told Don that his relative were wealthy

-they sold most during depression 1930s

-Earl was quite the rounder, eligible bachelor

-Don wondered how his mom could accept living like that and then go in to visit rich relatives? Pictures of her as a "doll", horseback riding, tennis, etc

-Lived both sides of life, strong woman

Mt. St. Helens-

-he has a coin-medallion made because May 18th is his younger daughters bday

-Plume was huge, a quarter of the sky "Holy Cow! I've never seen anything like that before in my life"

-Their eaves filled up and had to clean it off roofs,

-Penny had a 280-Z and they had to change air filters a lot

-Panic up there, Yakima was black at 3pm

-Don't wash it into sewers, sweep it up and put it around the yard as compost

-It was just like sand, very coarse, hard to wash off sidewalks

Corker - they knew people that lived up there by it, he was representing some foundries, some guys had a company building siesmographic equip.

-guy had a PhD in Geology from MIT, metalurgy, etc

-rinky-dink warehouse, nothing n walls, looked like a bombed out shelter

-they had some instruments up there, he would call them

-180 degrees from what the Forest Service was telling Don, press and govt. lied about knowledge, etc

-cant tell people or they would all evecuate

-some people he knew, logging couple, had a sight fixed on mountain

-she would check her sight and see that that part of the mtn had moved!

-Don was talking back and forth w/Forest Service and those guys, but "rumor control" meant being quiet

-a lot of people were killed, some even refused to leave

-He had been at that Weyerhoouse camps w/the logs and trucks, huige off highway trucks, loggs like matchsticks in blast

-The Tule River under I-5, debris and ash up to 10ft thick

-Huge mess washing down the river

-Too bad they didnt have the proper equipment like they have now, some equipment was found to show what they filmed, but they died from suffocation

Village Museum-

Project to open a museum

-Now, you cant go thru a sawmill/plywood mill, tours too dangerous, cant do a logging camp, except at Camp 18 (Pioneer Picnic on Labor Day), but thats just a restaurant w/some equip

-Needed more publicity

-Met with Mike Lindberg, city commissioner, wrote that Oregon needs a major aquarium, wanted Portland but would need to haul the saltwater, just not smart

- 1986-Don proposed a "live, logging, lumbering museum"
- outside display, needed the property, architects wanted to help
- got letters from Mayor Bud Clark, volunteers, invited to a meeting w/City on Union Station
- went to a lunch at the Forestry Center-they thought he would "step on their toes" he figured Portland was big enough to support something like that
- major attraction
- Planned a village (kinda like the Ford Dearborn village or the one at Plymouth-colonial w/oxen etc)
- Live museum-men doing work in period costume with the examples of yarders etc
- It would take, with lots of money, ten years to get it going/ongoing
- Village is replica of logging camp, add a doc, dental, blacksmith, coppersmith
- architects wanted to build it
- Talk to Scandinavian group, was approached about his logging history, asked to talk about family influence
- Lumberjacks of maine, came to lake states, depleted in late 1800s
- came out to NW, PSU needs a course in logging history

Sent from my iPad