

# FLORINE AND HARRY JONES CAME TO STEVENSON TO WORK AT THE RYAN-ALLEN MILL, 1921

*(The following is an excerpt from the book, "Genealogy and Tales: Fred Adolphus Allen and Sara Jarrett," written by Florine Allen Jones. in 1950 for her granddaughter Emilou Jones. The book chronicles their trip west to Vancouver and eventually into Stevenson.)*

*(Florine's uncle, Nelson Allen was one of the original owners of Ryan-Allen Lumber Co. The Ryan-Allen Lumber Co. was established in 1907 by C. W. Ryan (another brother) and Nelson E. Allen of Vancouver. The Company had operated several mills in southwest Washington and northern Oregon prior to the Stevenson location. These two men were well established both as lumbermen and community leaders in Clark County. C.W. Ryan served several years in the state legislature and N. E. Allen as Mayor of Vancouver.)*

*(Prior to starting the building of the mill, camp and logging operation, it was sold to Tom Ryan who directed the logging; Beryl Ryan who was in charge of the mill; Harry C. Jones of Torrington, Wyoming who handled the business office; and Ira C. Brown of Fort Morgan, Colorado who had the commissary and worked at the mill. The name Ryan-Allen was retained even though the ownership had changed. Harry C. Jones was the husband of Florine Allen Jones.)*

*(This book is part of the history books available for viewing at the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center in Stevenson.)*

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It was late in March when we reached Vancouver, and I thought I'd surely freeze for we had lived so long in a dry climate that the dampness went right through all of us. Harry took a cold and coughed all spring, and we were hardly settled in a furnished house near Marie's when Anne took whooping cough. But even while shivering I'd look at all the trees and shrubs in bloom and knew I'd never seen such beauty before even in the Ozarks. It was good to be near Marie, too, and Uncle Nelson (*Allen*) was wonderful about coming to take us with him if he had to drive out in the country. We started De (*son DeWit*) in school even if it was only a few weeks. De had never had either music or art, and the teacher got very put out at him. The music teacher even came to see me and wouldn't hardly believe me when I said his Wyoming school only had the "3 R's" and no fol-de-rols in education. Anyway he brought home a good report card and when he came in said, "*I got 100 in music and art.*" I took the card and sure enough he had — he got 50 in each, but his other grades were good, so they had to to "pass" him.

Harry had looked around for business opportunities and had decided to go up to Stevenson where the Ryan-Allen Company was starting a new sawmill. Another small town, and I had my heart all set on living in Portland as I had fallen in love with it on first sight.

It was the night of July 3rd that (*sons*) Harold and Jarrett and Homer Mack, their friend, arrived in Vancouver. They had come through in the Ford, and the weather was hot and across the plains and eastern Oregon, the hottest of summer. Poor Jarrett was simply ill with the heat. Homer told me he was sure glad that they got him home to me alive! Jarrett had graduated and brought his diploma along to prove it. The boys got work right away, and Harry was back and forth to Stevenson. I was very anxious to get settled there before De's school started, and we finally found a house. It was harder to find one there than in a larger place.

Uncle Nelson thought it would be great fun for all of them and us to go camping down by Rock Creek where the mill was being built, and I could go in town and look for a house. Uncle Nelson put up a big tent and we went in two cars Harry had traded the Ford in on an Essex. I marvel yet at how much we carried in those cars but a-camping we would go. Uncle Nelson said it never rained in the summer but no sooner were we there than it rained! Not an Oregon mist but a **down-pour** and kept it up. The boys (Nelson *Allen* Jr., Harold *Jones*, Jarrett *Jones*, DeWitt *Jones*, Homer) had a car-side tent they were to sleep in but the first night the rain blew in and soaked them, and we were not much better off in the big tent. A wetter but wiser crowd broke camp and damply crawled in the car and went home.

We also decided to go to the ocean for a few days. They boys had never seen the Pacific. The young folks went down on the boat, and Harry took Marie and I and the four little girls, in the car. Again we took the car-side tent so the boys could sleep out. We rented a small cabin with a lot of cots and so called beds and a wood stove in the kitchen about the size of a frying pan. Marie and I tried to cook for our big bunch on it. Margie was a baby, just a little over a year old, and she got sick and as Marie wrote in a little poem, "*A baby who went to the beach, did nothing but holler and screech.*" We were there three days and boy was I glad to get home. I can't say that my first two vacations in the Northwest were very successful.

In the fall we moved into a big house in Stevenson. The house was old but roomy, and we bought the wood they had on hand which looked like such a lot that we thought it would more than run us all winter — poor ignorant us! We had a big range in the big old kitchen, and the house had a hot air furnace in which the wood was supposed to burn but as the draft was poor, and the wood wet, it usually lay a stewing in its own juice while we sat above it a-freezing. Edith, Ira, and Allen (*Brown. Edith and Florine were sisters*) came in November, and Ira went to work in the mill and was to start a store as soon as the mill was finished and the camp ready. We had an early winter for the Northwest and by December 7th were snowbound and our wood nearly gone. We had hoped to get more wood soon as the mill started sawing but soon saw we would have to patronize the wood yard.

Edith and Ira (*Brown*) were having a house built at the mill site and were staying with us. We had Uncle Nelson's and Marie's come for Thanksgiving with us that year and were fortunate the weather was fine that week.

I had lived in a small town for all my life for Joplin was small town as I first remembered it, but I had never lived in a town like Stevenson. Firstly, it was a river town and was for years dependent on boat service. Then the railroad came through and the town had grown up on a steep hillside. It had three churches, Methodist, Congregational and Catholic, but the Catholics had a priest who came only once a month. The school house was on a hill and just below it the court house and hotel. In fact, the whole town was just one layer above another on a hill.

De entered the 8th grade and the other boys went to work in the mill. Homer was called home in December by serious illness of his father.

At last it was spring and I have never seen anything lovelier than the cherry trees in our back yard. They were simply loaded and when the cherries came were loaded with Royal Arms. I loved to pick them and through the cherry season could be found perched in the trees like a robin! Ed Armitage came when school was out, and he and De did quite a cherry business. Never have I seen fancier or cheaper fruit of all kinds. I bought jars all summer and canned and preserved like I never expected another fruit crop.

The Mill was finished and Edith and Ira (*Brown*) had built a house at the camp. Harry and I went back to Missouri for a few days in June and while we were gone, Harold (*Jones*) married Gladys (*Allinger*). They went into Portland and were married. Harold had gone to work as a bookkeeper in Washougal Woolen Mill a few month before. Ed went back to Torrington, Wyoming, and Homer came back and he and Jarrett (*Jones*) went to the University of Washington in Seattle that winter. Harry (*Jones*) got elected to the school board and Edith and I had joined the women's club.

I had brought my letter from Torrington United Presbyterian Church and went in the Congregational in Stevenson, a most struggling little church and so in need of workers.

We had quite a bit of company in the next few years. The Clatworthys and Currys came on their way to Portland and California and Uncle Ben came a couple of times bringing guests and Peg's parents came. One fall we always took our visitors sightseeing. When we first went to Stevenson, the road on the North Bank of Washington side of the Columbia was very poor. You either went along the Washougal river or a longer road over Pleasant Hill, but both were more wagon trails than roads, so we nearly always took the ferry over the Columbia and came to town over the Columbia River highway. This ferry trip always frightened some of our guests. Leah sure dreaded it and although Uncle Lincoln and Aunt Maude (*Allen*) came to live at the camp, Aunt Maude never became reconciled to the ferry. Others of our guests were quite fascinated by it. Stevenson was really a most interesting place and deserves a volume of its own, which I hope some day to write.

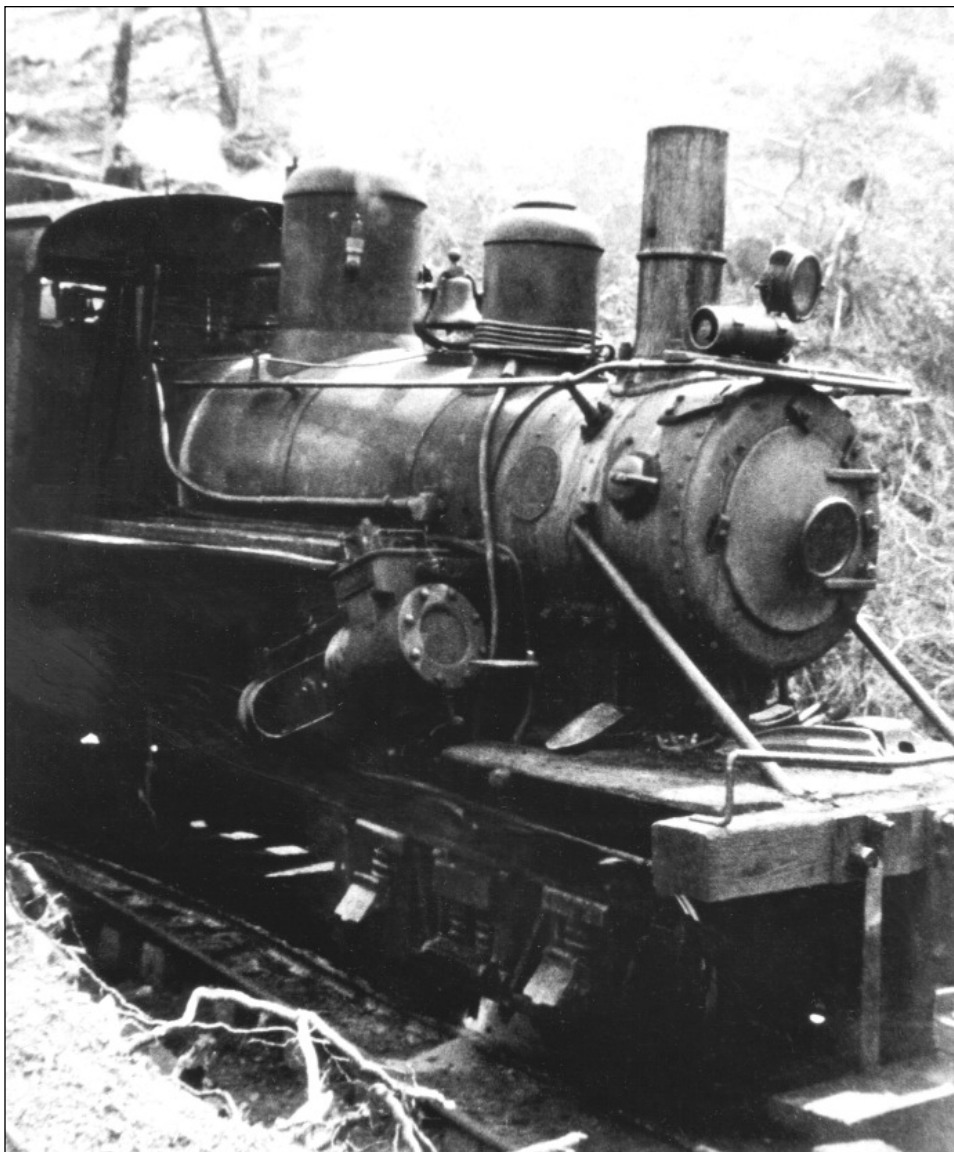
My family is grown now and from their memories should be able to write their own memoirs. The years have been good to us. We have long since passed our allotted three score and ten and someday when I have less on my mind, I may tell of the past thirty. But for now I feel I must write "Finis" to this story, all of which is based on things which truly happened once upon a time!

Following are copies of story of the Ryan-Allen Lumber Co. featured in  
"Skamania County Quarterly" published by the  
Skamania County Historical Society.

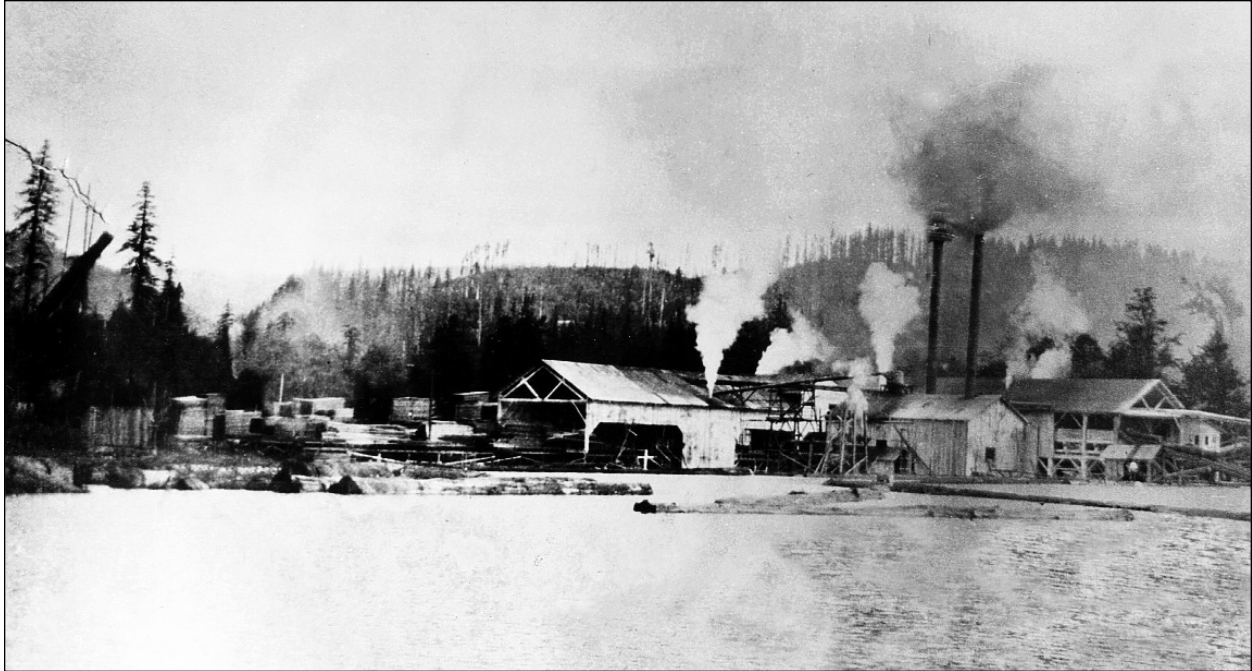
## **RYAN-ALLEN LUMBER CO. Stevenson — 1922-1932**

**(Part 1)**

By Edwin F. Brown



**"The Asthma" one of two locomotives used at the  
Ryan-Allen mill during 1922-1932.**



**Panaramic view of Ryan-Allen Lumber Co. mill and pond taken in 1926.**

The Ryan-Allen mill near Stevenson became a reality in early 1922 when two of the Ryan brothers, Tom and Beryl, started building the railroad spur from the main line near Stevenson, up Rock Creek west of town.

The Ryan-Allen Lumber Co. was established in 1907 by C. W. Ryan (another brother) and Nelson E. Allen of Vancouver. The Company had operated several mills in southwest Washington and northern Oregon prior to the Stevenson location. These two men were well established both as lumbermen and community leaders in Clark County. C.W. Ryan served several years in the state legislature and N. E. Allen as Mayor of Vancouver.

Prior to starting the building of the mill, camp and logging operation, it was sold to Tom Ryan who directed the logging; Beryl Ryan who was in charge of the mill; Harry C. Jones of Torrington, Wyoming who handled the business office; and Ira C. Brown of Fort Morgan, Colorado who had the commissary and worked at the mill. The name Ryan-Allen was retained even though the ownership had changed.

The mill was located about two miles west and north of the main part of Stevenson on the old Iman homestead. The road from town was up the west side of Rock Creek. What is now called Red Bluff Road was the main street of the mill town. The mill, railroad, docks and more houses were to the east toward Rock Creek. The movement of logs to the mill and lumber from the mill to the railroad mainline near Stevenson was done by two steam driven locomotives, (dubbed Asthma and Hayfever by Mrs. Brown from the wheezing sounds they made). The rail spur ran up the west side of Rock Creek and eventually to the basin east of Red Bluff.

By the fall of 1922 most of the machinery was in place, the pond filled with water, and logs coming out of the woods. Water to fill the pond came by way of a flume which ran north to south between the cookhouse and the main street, behind the office and the store and emptied into the pond. Logs were dumped into the pond from the west side just beyond the mill. Finished lumber was piled on the mill dock or across the tracks by the plank road. The plank road was west of the mill and the railroad tracks. According to the Skamania County Pioneer at that time the mill was to reach a capacity of 150,000 feet of finished lumber per day.

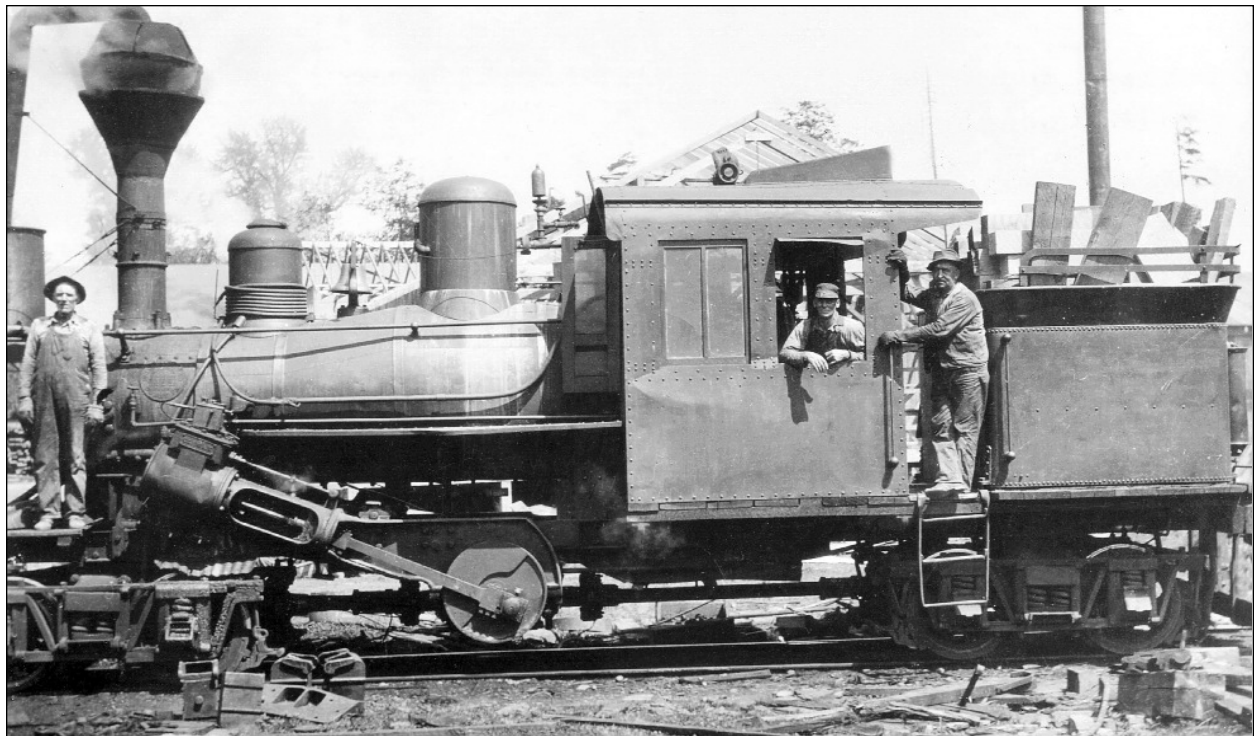
In March 1923, the county commissioners authorized a road to the mill to go south of the Gropper farm. This also required a new bridge across Rock Creek.

There were about twenty-five or thirty families who lived at the mill town. These houses were built by the families who worked for the company. The men could construct their own houses or have it put up for them. The company furnished the lumber. I believe all of the homes had water and electricity to the house. The other facility was "out back." About 1930 we got a phone line.

Ira Brown had the commissary (store). It was not run on a cash basis but goods purchased were deducted from wages. The store stocked no fresh or perishable food but had quite a line of canned goods, tobacco, candy, work clothes and day to day essentials.

Most meat, fresh produce, and such services as schools, churches, medical, banking and major shopping were handled in Stevenson, Vancouver or Portland. Milk and dairy products, ice, and vegetables in season were delivered by local producers.

**(Continued in next issue)**



**Ryan-Allen Co., Stevenson, used locomotives like this one in its operation.**

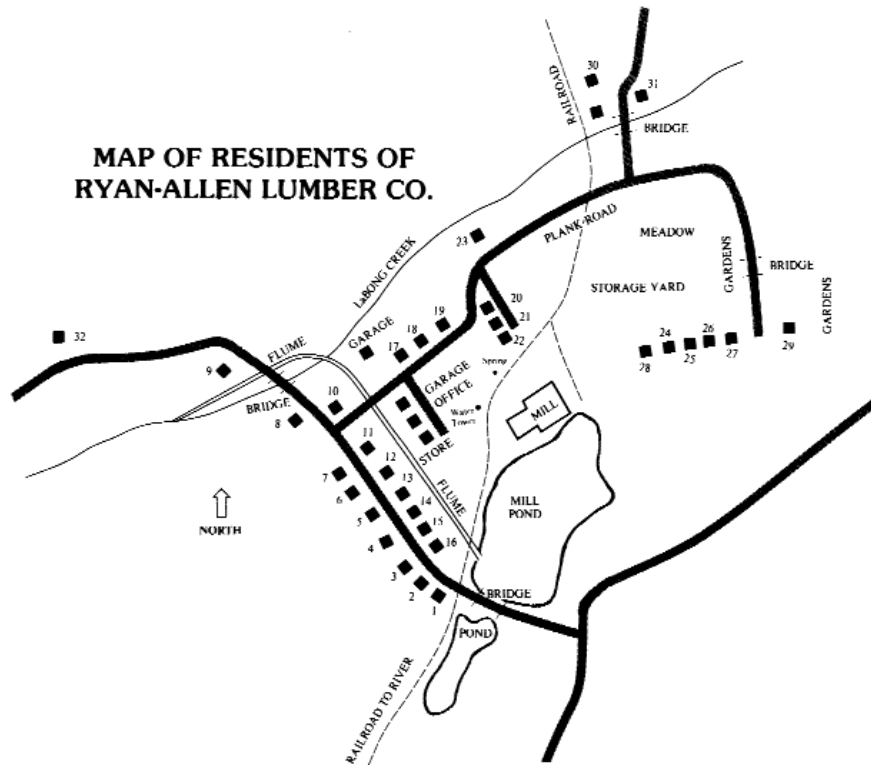
**(Photo Courtesy Ed Brown)**



Ryan-Allen Lumber Co. lumber deck in 1926 or 1927.

## RYAN-ALLEN MILL CAMP RESIDENTS:

1. Ed Brummitt: off bearer on saw.
2. Ed Glass: millworker.
3. William Hicinbothen: head sawyer.
4. Bill Warfield: millworker.
5. Carl Krohn: woods boss.
6. Frank Burlingame: millworker.
7. Bud Billington: millworker.
8. Roy Pearsall: millworker.
9. a. Eugene Turner: millworker.  
b. Tom Loveless: millworker.
10. Beryl Ryan: part owner, office worker.
11. W. L. McEldowney, millworker.
12. Henry Pearsall: millworker.
13. Earl Herd: millworker.
14. Roy Warren: woods and millworker.
15. Miner Groat: choker setter.
16. Abe Brummit: train brakeman.
17. a. Mr. Sumners: cook house.  
b. Herb Rankin: cook house.  
c. Dick Graham: cook house.
18. Herb Rankin: ran the trim saw.
19. Fred Warren: millworker.
- 20, 21 and 22 were bunkhouses.
23. Roy Craig: blacksmith.
24. a. Ed Krause: millworker.  
b. Lincoln Allen: owner and office worker.  
c. Bob Grondahl: log scaler.
25. Ira Brown: worked in mill and ran store.
26. a. Tom Ryan  
b. Ernie Coe: millworker.
27. a. Jack McGree: millworker.  
b. Leo Allen: millworker.
28. Dave Mason: millworker.
29. Carl Krohn: woods boss.
30. Ike Yancey: millworker.
31. Vern Rankin
32. Roy Shultz: night watchman.



\*Sumners ran the cook house first but got sick and had to leave. Herb Rankin and Martha ran the cook house next and Dick and Annabelle Graham ran the cook house when Tom Ryan logged on his own after the mill burned.

The following people also lived there but we aren't sure where:

Ed Borman: head blacksmith.  
 Mr. Wahls: millworker.  
 Mr. Lawson: in charge of a camp in the basin.  
 Mr. Baldridge: woods boss.  
 Hugh Finley: superintendent of the woods.  
 Hank Moore: hook tender.  
 Manley Moore: head rigger.

Ray Jeregerson: planerman.  
 Bedford Burnett: steam engineer.  
 Mr. Wallace: saw filer.  
 Mr. Eastlick: millworker and he made beautiful violins.  
 Herman Groat: blacksmith for the donkeys.  
 Ray Groat: brakeman.  
 Jim Burlingame: millworker.  
 Bill Meyers: millworker.  
 Mr. Parrot: millworker.  
 Orville and Pete Cooper: millworkers.

Orville and Pete Cooper's parents lived in a house between Glass and Hicinbothen. We neglected to put it on the map.

**Compiled by Hazel "Perky" Marsh)**



## RYAN-ALLEN MILL CAMP CHILDREN:

Arnold, Nellie, Ruby, Glen, Harold,  
William, Ruth, Jack, James and  
Lucille Brummitt.  
Pete and Iril Cooper.  
Florence Glass.  
Frank and James Burlingame.  
Beulah, Mildred and Esther  
Hicinbothen.  
Cecil, Esther and Ilena Warfield.  
Two Parrot girls (forgot their names).  
Robert, Dorothy and Kenneth  
Billington.  
Hazel and Regina Turner.  
Ben McEldowney.  
Donald Pearsall.  
Mildred, Marjorie, Alice Ann, and  
Randall Rankin.  
Phylis and Lester Krause.  
Lois, Roy, Carl, Alethea, Leslie and  
Melvin Warren (Hazel didn't live  
there).

Clarence and Ruby Mason.  
Mary Groat.  
Jack Grondahl.  
Elna, Thelma, Charles, Faye, Fern and  
Dean Shultz.  
Erma Lee, Kenneth, Isabel, Anna May,  
Craig. Robert, Richard and  
Daniel Krohn.  
Donald and Dean Graham.  
Allen and Edwin Brown.  
Earl Bash, half-brother to Kenneth,  
Donald, Lorin Yancey.  
Cody and Merle Loveless.  
Allen Warren.  
Lois Sunderland and two brothers  
(forgot their names).  
Ruth King.

**(Compiled by Hazel "Perky" Marsh)**

# **RYAN-ALLEN LUMBER CO.**

## **Stevenson — 1922-1932**

**(Part 2)**

By Edwin F. Brown



**Ryan-Allen Lumber Co. woods crew in 1922. Identified people are: third from left, Henry Johnson. In front is Bill Warfield, Sr.**

**(Continued from Volume 16, Number 1)**

By 1925 the company was doing well and W. L. Lawson was contracted to handle the logging work. This added new equipment in the woods and left more time for mill operations and opening new markets by the mill managers.

Fire in timber country is always a hazard. In the 1920's and 30's, this was a particular problem because of lack of access to fires in many areas and the need for development of new fire fighting equipment and methods. In 1924 Ryan-Allen lost a considerable stand of timber even though control was brought about in two days. In August 1927 a fire north of the mill threatened to destroy the whole area but hard work by fire crews and a wind shift saved the Ryan-Allen mill and the town of Stevenson. Lawson Logging Co. lost some equipment up on Rock Creek. Some damage was done



**Ryan-Allen Lumber Co. woods crew in 1922. Identified people are: First row: Henry Johnson, left, and Bill Thompson, right. Second row: Jack McGee, left, and Cecil Warfield, right. Top row: Arnold Brummitt, second from left, and Orville Cooper, third from left.**

to some of the railroad track and tressles but timber on hand kept the mill running. Ryan-Allen also sawed some logs for other operators in the region during this time. September of 1929 was probably one of the worst fires to threaten Stevenson and the mill. It started beyond Beacon Rock, went up the Hamilton Creek area burning out farms, hotels, logging equipment and everything in its path. Some of the loggers in the basin near Red Bluff escaped by coming out through Rock Creek. The fire came from the west onto the edge of Stevenson and up Rock Creek toward the Ryan-Allen mill. Every available man fought the fire and quick response by the Hood River fire department with large pumps and other equipment saved the town. These fires extended from the Clark County line to the Stevenson city limits and resulted in unknown loses in property, timber and equipment. The account of these fires are reported in the September 20, 1929 issue of the Pioneer.

The children of school age were taken to school initially by a horse drawn wagon and in later years by bus (actually a covered truck) operated by John Potts. Over the



**Another photo of Ryan-Allen Lumber Co. woods crew taken in 1922. Identified is Cecil Warfield, second from left in first row.**

years, the mill kids were prominent in school athletics, music, plays and held class and school offices. Also they were in such activities as Scouting, 4-H and the town band.

Many of the adults served on election boards and civic activities, while others were members and officers of fraternal organizations and the local American Legion Post.

Hunting, fishing and other outdoor seasonal pastimes also stirred some into action.

Many families had small gardens and raised a cow, pig, rabbits or chickens. The cook house had the only garden of any size.

When the logging operations moved further toward Red Bluff and extensive railroad repairs were required, a crew of Japanese laborers was brought in. They had their camp just north and west of the railroad track near Ike Yancey's house. They lived in tents with board floors, cooked and washed outdoors and were gone in a few months.

Baldrige was the logging contractor in the latter years of the mill's operation. Tom Ryan was still responsible for overseeing the logging operations and made frequent trips to Stevenson even though his home was in Vancouver.

From the late 1920's there was increasing competition from inexpensive foreign

lumber and the depression of the early 30's had hit the local economy.

On August 3, 1932 the final blow came when the mill burned. These events were related by my mother, Edith Allen Brown some 41 years later:

"By 1932, the Depression was in full swing and the mill was running only when they had an order to fill. In August 1932, one of the hottest days I had ever experienced, the mill had closed down about the middle of the morning. They had finished an order from Oklahoma for derrick timbers which were piled high on the dock waiting to be loaded and shipped out. Harry (Jones) and Ira had taken off immediately for the golf course at Washougal. After lunch, Beryl (Ryan) and Asa Ryan came out from town to see about the loading of the timbers. As they drove into camp, they saw smoke coming up from the mill and immediately went to investigate. They found that things were aflame, apparently the oily sawdust around the planer had been ignited from spontaneous combustion by the sun. They were unable to control the fire and it was a complete loss."

The site where the mill was located was cold by the next day. Amazingly no buildings or houses were lost and no one injured or burned.

After the mill was destroyed, some of the families moved, many stayed and worked wherever work could be found.

Beryl Ryan and Harry Jones went into the mill and mine supply business in Portland. Tom Ryan and others continued to log north of Stevenson and some smaller mills were set up in the area. Ira Brown worked for the Parr Lumber Co. in Stevenson until 1937 when she moved to Vancouver. Some of the families remained at the mill town for several years.

#### THANKS FOR HELP

I can take little credit for this account. Much of the information came from Ruth Allen Smith Schane and Esther Allen, Peggy Ryan Williams, Dr. Lynn Ryan, Billie Ryan O'Neal, Agnus Lindsay, R. DeWitt Jones, Mrs. Christine Jones, Anne Jones Taggard, and Allen Brown of the Allen, Ryan, Jones, Brown families. I am also indebted to Thelma Shultz Leatherman, Leo Allen, Floyd Shippy, Kenneth Billington, Mrs. Aletta Rogers, Mrs. Phoebe Yeo, Jack McGree, John Allinger, and the Skamania County Pioneer circa 1920-1932.

Special thanks to Faye Shultz Weber and Hazel (Perky) Wickham Marsh for getting the layouts and graphics organized, and for handling a lot of the details for me.

—Edwin F. Brown





Photo of Ryan-Allen Lumber woods crew taken in 1922.



### **Edwin F. Brown**

Edwin Brown lived at the Ryan-Allen mill as a child and attended Stevenson Grade School for four years. He graduated from Vancouver High School and received a bachelor's degree at Washington State College and a Master's of Business Administration at California State University at Long Beach.

Brown is living in Rancho Palos Verdes with his wife Patricia. They have three daughters and seven grandsons.

In compiling this information, Brown, and others talked with various children of the original owners.



**Flume used at the Ryan-Allen Co.'s sawmill, Stevenson,  
(Photo Courtesy Ed Brown)**