

NORTH BONNEVILLE (Thursday, Marcy 3, 1966)

Bustling Sawmill Era Faded As Timber Cut Down

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NORTH BONNEVILLE — Little mills were important business for this area in earlier years, V. R. (Verne) Carpenter, 81, former mill worker and brakeman on logging railroads, said in recalling the era before construction of Bonneville Dam.

By the middle 1920s “not much territory was left to log off,” the long-time resident said. Trucks didn’t “go all over the country” getting timber. The earlier mills “cut what they had” and then ceased operation.

Although the timber was cut, a good second growth is coming on at present. “A good share” of the land once logged over by the early operators is owned at present by Crown Zellerbach Corp., Carpenter said.

At the time Carpenter arrived in 1916 the area was heavily timbered, he recalled.

Before that he resided for about four years in Clark County — on Mill Plain and at Image.

Mill Supplied

In 1912 Carpenter trucked logs by heavy wagons from “all around” to Blair’s mill at Sifton. The mill was moved to Proebstel (Vancouver area) in the spring of 1913.

During most of his time in Clark County Carpenter was employed at the Denny-Renton Clay and Coal Co., a sewer pipe shop at Image, five miles east of Vancouver, with payroll of about 30. The company’s main office was at Portland, and tile from Image was shipped by scow at the firm’s own dock, mainly to Portland.

There were three rails at Image including a passing rail.

A good bank of clay, about 12 to 20 feet deep, was located north of the plant and contained “some of the best clay I ever saw.” A couple of little dump cars, towed by a horse, were used in transporting the clay.

Vancouver was getting its water supply from



Verne Carpenter

a couple of miles northeast of the sewer plant, the North Bonneville resident recalled. The city got “awfully good water” through 10-inch pipelines.

Moving On

In 1916 Carpenter decided to move upriver, and embarked with his team on *The Dalles City* steamboat. He was unloaded at Moffett’s Landing, which he described as “a sandbank” where Bonneville Dam is now situated, below a



Verne and Anna Carpenter on their 60th wedding anniversary, December of 1968.

big fishwheel.

This was an easier trip than reported by a friend, Jay Ferguson, who went by land about the same time. Bridges had been washed out above Washougal, and Ferguson had to take his buggy apart twice to get across creeks on the way.

North Bonneville hadn't come into existence yet. The old name for the community was Cascades, but the post office carried various labels over the years. The name was changed to Moffett's Springs in 1908, but the post office

was discontinued in 1910.

When Carpenter arrived the only building at North Bonneville was owned by John Moman Stevenson, but he had moved to the town of Stevenson. In 1917 a Wacomac Post Office was established at the Western Pacific mill.

Springs Utilized

Table Rock Mineral Co., owned by Porter Brothers, controlled considerable land in the area and had a hot springs north of Moffett's springs. An 8-by-8-foot concrete tank on the Table Rock property contained the mineral water. A hotel that had been operating in the

area previously was gone, but a bottling works was bottling the spring water.

Carpenter helped excavate for a new hotel, which was built around 1918.

Originally Carpenter had come here to work at the Kilgore saw mill, which was straight back from the hot springs under the bluff. About one mile of flume extended to the road. Carpenter hauled lumber from the flume to the Cascade sidetrack.

The Kilgore mill “didn’t last long,” Carpenter recalled, and he later hauled supplies and lumber for the D. J. Finn and Western Pacific mills.

D. J. Finn built a mill on Greenleaf Lake in 1917, did a little logging and sold out. The mill’s cookhouse was in the bottling building, which was nearby.

Finn sold to Western Pacific, which employed about 80 men at the mill and logging camp. At first timber was logged into the lake, then a railroad was built back into the hills and the raw material was brought out that way.

Owners Change

Next operators of the mill were Bill Eccles of Utah and a partner from Portland. Last operators were Donovan and DuPois of Vancouver, a little bigger operation than Western Pacific. The mill finished out in the mid-1920s.

Carpenter said Potter’s mill, which had a sidetrack and employed around 20 men, was established northeast of the hot springs near Kidney Lake and finished out in about two or three years.

Sprigg Brothers mill, employing about 20 men, was operating on Bass Lake in the early ’20s and lasted only about two years. An SP&S sidetrack ran to this firm. One little tie mill also operated for a short time, around 1929.

For 12 years Carpenter was employed as a brakeman on logging railroads. Most of this time was on the Hamilton Creek Line and the rest on the Western Pacific road.

People didn’t move into the area much until about 1921, Carpenter said. Loggers who wanted to go on a spree could head for Portland every two weeks — it was “Portland or bust” and they came back “busted.” Pay day was once a month at the start, but was once every two

weeks toward the last, the North Bonneville man said. The loggers, however, didn’t have much difficulty getting money whenever they wanted it, he said.

Mills Operating

At present Ray Ziegler operates a small mill on a back street in North Bonneville. W. E. Craik also had operated a mill on the south side of Green Lake periodically.

Carpenter said in earlier years there was a fishwheel near what is now Bonneville Dam, and one below the dam above the Lower Cascades Rapids. In addition, a fishwheel on scow was brought into the latter area.

A fishwheel on a scow operated opposite Shadow Lake two were located above the Bridge of the Gods, and other wheels were “strung up all up and down the river.”

Warren and McGown fish canneries were below the dam on the Oregon side of the river.

The SP&S had a water tank at the Cascades opposite the dam, and trains stopped there to water up, Carpenter recalled. Persons who wanted to board the passenger train had to flag down the engineer.

In later years the water tank was moved to Skamania.

A mail pouch for the community was tossed off the train, hooking onto a “catcher pouch” with big iron hook alongside the tracks. Carpenter also remembers cream cans being tossed off at the Cascades.

He said Walter Tol opened a store in the community in the mid-’20s and that this was enlarged during the boom days of dam construction.

Early in the construction days some of the people got together and decided to change the community’s name to North Bonneville. Carpenter, however, preferred the old-time name of Cascades.

Some mail addressed to Cascades still is received at the post office, he has been informed by postal officials, but it has been a long time since any has been received for Moffett’s. The name Moffett’s, once used for the post office, was the name of the hot springs, too, until about three years ago.