

# RUDY HEGEWALD

## Notes from Oral Interview and Video May 14, 1992

- \* Born in Hoeckendoprf, Germany, September 15, 1905. Came by Steamer “The Columbus.” Landed in New York, Ellis Island, 1925. “Big cattle yard”; people separated by ethnic groups. Couldn’t speak English.
- \* German Immigrant 1925. 19 years old. Came by himself to relatives in Nebraska by train. Baker by trade. Went to work in Lincoln, Neb in a bake shop. Then . . .
- \* Went to work in bake shop in Ashland, Neb.; then to Chicago Polish bake shop. Walked streets for 6 weeks because he didn’t have a job. He thought the shop was too dirty.
- \* Brother joined him in 1927 in Chicago. Also a baker; he got a job out in Cicero.
- \* (Story of cat falling in molasses barrel in bakery!)
- \* Didn’t like big city; saw a billboard, “Go West Young Man”. Bought a ticket to Portland, Oregon. I thought Horace Greeley knew more than I did, so I headed west!
- \* Went to the Fleischmen Yeast Co; applied for a job; jobs were hard to find. There were a lot of men in the waiting room. Manager said, “I got one in Stevenson, WA.” So I took it. That was June of 1927. I worked for “Squeaky” Jones who was run out of business by other bakery so had to look for another job. (Squeaky had a high pitched voice.) \$3.40 a day is what I earned at Ryan-Allen Mill just above Stevenson.
- \* I bought me an old ton-and-a-half Model T Ford truck. That was in 1929- 1930, that’s how I got started in Stevenson. I hauled cord wood down to the landing, besides working the the Ryan-Allen mill.
- \* Logging techniques are different. When I got started in the Basin, took the job to liquidate the timber company up Hamilton Creek and into the Basin. 40 million feet of timber left. Made a contract with the Bank of California. Had to top the trees out and put in a logging railroad. 6,000 feet. Burned out in 1928, so in 1938 I made the deal to take the stuff out. Alder and vine maple was grown up through the railroad ties. Just me and Norman Rakshaw did it all. I hauled out the locomotives, donkeys, everything. I took out eight donkeys and locomotives and scrapped them. I should have saved one, but I never thought. Then I built

a road up Rock Creek to get the timber out. That's when Ray Simmons when to work with me. It was a hot June, and breezy. Sat to eat out lunch. Old Joe Bathea went up the tree to top it out with 10 sticks of dynamite instead of a saw and axe. He wrapped the dynamite around the tree and went down the hill and didn't come back at all. The tree blew up and started a forest fire. He had the fuse about 30-40 feet down the tree \_\_\_\_\_; the fuse just got the brush afire. I was working on a cat in the Basin; the cat you have is the one that cleared that whole area. I built the roads up Rock Creek with it. We called in the Forest Service to help put out the fire. The wind just blew it right up the draw; then another wind just shut it down, blew it right back into itself.

When I hauled the stuff out of the Basin it was obvious that they only cut the logs to 65 feet to fit onto the railroad cars. They left the brush and any part of the tree that had limbs. It was junk to them. I remember a hollow cedar tree that was 6' in diameter.

The waste those days was terrible! We didn't take anything that was less than 18" in diameter. Tops and limbs were all left as brush.

I bought the mill site after I sold the timber from up Rock Creek; I sold Hemlock logs to Crown Zellerbach. I started the mill at your new museum site with ol' Ed Barnett just below Shippy's. I also worked at Bonneville Dam. I helped put in the footings for the powerhouse and the coffer dam.

I was responsible for all the main roads that goes north into county and national forest land. I logged noble fir for the War department during the War (II).

"Quote from Rudy; "The name of the game was 'bull strength and awkwardness'. We did everything by brute strength, sweat, and by hand.

Trout Creek was big timber and I had a veneer plant going in Home Valley. One tree was 9' in diameter and we peeled it down to six inches; it took six hours. We counted the rings and it had to be over 500 years old.

We found timber at Willard that had 800 rings, just a shade under eight feet in diameter. But we didn't care at that time. Anyway, they were so big we couldn't load them on a truck, but had to put them on a low-boy.

When I started the mill at the site the wages were 50 cents an hour and in a few years to 60 cents.

March 17, 1933 St. Patrick's Day I married Helen, my sweetheart for life.

Date started Hegewald Mill on the Center site: 1952.

Number of employees at peak of production: 242 (plus a dozen+ teenagers for summer employment clearing brush.)

In 1973 I sold out to Louisiana Pacific.