

W.L. Maxwell, Agent

P.O. Box 1047

July 31, 1951.

Wilmington, Delaware

Mr. Axel A. Anderson,
Elk River, Idaho.

Dear Axel,

Last Sunday morning I was searching for some old records and I found a bunch of old diary books that I had forgotten about completely. They cover the years from 1906 until I left Potlatch, Idaho. I don't know why I kept these old diaries all these years because the information they contain would not be of any value except perhaps to you and me, and if Ike Adams and Ira Schuh are still alive and live in that section of Idaho they too might like to recall the names of some of their old buddies so I am going to copy off a couple of pages out of the 1910 book because I believe you will get quite a kick out of it. I know I did.

Here is word for word what I had written:

"The first crews to appear on the virgin timber land and hay meadows of Elk Creek started the morning of July 21st 1909. There were six in this pioneer party, Charlie Monson, Jack Jones, the cook, Mrs. Jack Jones, Mike Welch, Joe Popovich, and Charlie Lee. They were joined on August 12th by Dan Shay, Joe St. Peter, Ed Stenseth, Pete Westlund, Elmer Torgerson as cook who replaced the lady cook, Pete and Albert Sorenson, George Wright, Andrew Liden as flunkey, Earl Scott, Charlie Eklund, Ira Schuh, Jack Clark and several others I cannot now recall. Most of the work up to this time was on what we now know as Elk River townsite, August work was on clearing pond, building camp and clearing a road to what is now Elk River Dam."

"On the first day of September 1909 Frank Crowley started construction of the dam at the lower end of the present log pond at Elk River. With him were Ed Roach, Charlie Scriven, Jim Burns, C.W. Bean, Wm. Shearer, John Kaaen and Jack Astle. Phil Duffany and George Wright joined them on October 12th. These men continued on through until the dam was finished on January 16th, 1910. Bob Weitbrecht, the Milwaukee engineer, replaced McGillivray, the time keeper, on Dec. 2nd and it was in December that we first find Alfred Johnson, who started Dec. 1st, also Ira Schuh who started at noon on Dec. 1st. Bill Hunter, Oscar Johnson, Ed Boyd, Joe Pavich, Tony Pavich, and Joe Markovich came on the job the first week or so in December and worked until the dam was finished on January 16th 1910."

Immediately after these lines I wrote down something that is so badly faded out that I cannot read what it says but I do recall that the reason Frank Crowley was forced to stop the work was because of a heavy snow storm. Perhaps Ira Schuh can remember that.

"Charlie Fern, afterward foreman on the meadows, started September 14th. Ed Newman Sept. 9th. Swan Palm Sept. 10th. Hans Walden Sept. 25th. T/S Lancaster Sept. 25th, Andrew Monson Oct. 6th, Wm. Holmes as donkey engineer Oct. 7th, Sam George Oct. 11th. Theodore Thompson, Axel Anderson and Fred Eiger on Oct. 17th.

Ed Stenseth Nov. 1st, Alfred and Oscar Johnson and John Erickson on Nov. 19th, Harry Weiseth as second cook on Oct. 27th. Most of the fall work was changing and clearing the creek bed and preparing piling for the plant foundations."

1910 Diary book:

"In January and February the snow was quite bad and few men came in, however five husky fellows did make it. Wm. Watts, Julius Dahl, Wm. Kisor, Scott Shoemaker and C.E. Crane. In April Harry Wood, Oscar Meador, Tony Pavich and Frank Lorich. On June 2nd W.L. Maxwell, Everett Brouillard, Bert Curtiss, Joe Bishop, Frank Juneau, Scott Benjamin, Frank Borki, Fred Emmered, Henry Fornier and Fred Picard came in with a tote team from Bovill."

"On July 3rd 1910 the Milwaukee construction crews finished a temporary telephone line to their construction camp at Jersey Siding and sent us word the next morning that they would endeavor to bring in the Jeffries-Johnson World Championship fight and invited us all to come over to Jersey Siding and celebrate the 4th. The boys had two big double headers of beer. We had quite a party."

"On July 10th Joe Dion came in with his crew of millwrights and framers and carpenters and on the morning of July 11th actively started on construction work of the saw-mill plant. None of that original crew are now with us except C.G. Morris, who started July 15th, Isaac Adams and possibly Harry Lane. H.L. Woodward who started August 1st 1910. On the last day of July there were 228 men employed and living in the big tents along what is now First Street where the Bank now stands."

Apparently I added several notations to the original notes I had entered at the time these incidents took place.

"On August 16th Charlie Eklund, Axel Anderson, Ed Stenseth and Swan Palm contracted to grade Linden Creek, Shattuck Spur and Cameron Creek branch lines and by working about 15 hours a day and doing their own cooking earned \$139.60 each which was a large months pay. Charlie Johnson, Wm. Watts, E.L. Corbin, Ted Thompson, Charlie Lee and Joe Bishop changed the river channel that meandered through the meadow to its present channel past the planing mill. Lonzo Knight started August 4th. Archie Newcomb, the tall loose jointed young fellow who dreamed of a great future. C.A. Soper, Sam Opola, Fred Flood and Mike Woisich were watching fires. Then on Sunday afternoon August 21st Charlie Monson called out all available men to fight fire South and South West of Elk River. Henry Wandke, engineer on the donkey, Harry Brownfield, Bert Crose, George Denevan, Charlie Ragotte, P.V. Kitley, L.D. Hallberg, who had a barber shop in a tent back of the old barn and Fred Lind were in one party that left the store with a tote team and a lot of supplies. Fire covered the entire South portion of the country, crossed Elk Creek below the falls and South of where Pete Skyarve was mining. In September more men were added to the mill construction work. Ole Lillyman Sept. 2nd, as head machinest, Ole Loken Sept. 24th, C. Cesare Sept. 7th, W.J. Beadone Sept. 5th, Nick Barton Sept. 7th, Luke Trotter Sept. 8th, Andy Borgerson Sept. 9th, Eddie Erickson and Jack Nordwall started Sept. 5th. Hoy Angney and C. Emilio on Sept. 23rd. Bob Nelson with a crew of 12 men started construction of the dry kilns on September 16th and at the same time work was started on the timber dock and green chain."

Well Axel, how are you anyhow? Some one told me recently that you had a narrow escape in an automobile accident on the St. Maries grade and that you were laid up in a hospital for a long time. I'm sorry I didn't know of it then. I might have helped pass the time away for you by recalling some of the things that happened when you and I were kids in Elk River. We weren't supposed to be kids then but when I look back 40 long years I realize thats just what we were and full of the devil, though we didn't know it. Ed Duerslen, the owner and editor of the Elk River News, once said to me, "If I had a niece I wouldn't let her come to this town with all you young punks prowling around with your tongues hanging out and panting like a lot of hot cougers."

I hope some time I can get out there again and have a good visit with you before we get too old and still have good memories. I have heard recently about some of the old timers, - Bob Swadener, the engineer, now in charge of switching lines in and out of San Francisco. Charlie Fern and his wife have both for years worked at a State Hospital for demented people in Wisconsin. Dan McAllister is still very active, lives in Minneapolis, sells insurance for the Travelers Insurance Company.

I still work for the Weyerhaeuser organization. On January 2nd I will have been on their payrolls without the loss of a single day for 46 years. And you are very close to it or if you started with T.P. Jones around Harvard in 1905 you started before I did.

I never expected to work for them away back here in this tiny State of Delaware. At first I didn't like it here at all but Lois and I have become reconciled to the Eastern ways and customs and we have become acquainted with some very fine people. We like this mild climate. Of course we are only a short drive to the Atlantic Coast and the new Memorial bridge over the Delaware River built at a cost of nearly sixty million dollars will open for traffic this coming August 16th then it will be a simple matter to drive over to Atlantic City or to Ocean City and admire the bathing beauties on a Sunday afternoon. Only trouble is the congested automobile traffic. You actually have to be caught in it to believe it could be so terribly heavy. Dover, Delaware, the Delaware State Capitol, is only 41 miles south of Wilmington. We left Dover yesterday afternoon at 4:30 P.M. and arrived home just at 7:38 P.M. Sometimes we were held up at every cross road for traffic to clear before the highway police would let us through and at one cross road we waited for 16 minutes. There are too many people and too many cars for the size of these little states. I prefer Idaho over any of them.

I have a large picture of the old Elk River plant and the town hanging on my wall and I get a lot of satisfaction of showing it to people who happen to be in. I have often wondered what happened to some of the buildings since the sawmill plant was burned. Some time when you have some extra time on your hands and you feel in the mood to write I would certainly appreciate hearing from you telling me about your family, about the old town, about any of the old timers still living in that vacinity, etc.

Sincerely,

W. Maxwell