

9 MAY 1999

MY DEAR MR. GALE:

"ANYONE CAN MAKE HISTORY; ONLY A GREAT MAN CAN RECORD IT...PRESERVE IT....

THANK YOU FOR THE NEAT LETTER, SIR, YOU MADE MY DAY! JUST THE FACT THAT YOU WERE PLEASED WITH A BIT OF MY WORK IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO PROVIDE THIS AMATEUR WITH A GENEROUS HELPING OF LIFE'S ESPECIAL AND EXCLUSIVE PLEASURES. SO, MR. GALE, AGAIN I AM THE ONE TO BE FOREVER GRATEFUL ---- THANK MILLIONS FOR THIS NEW HIGH, AND HONEST I AM, WHEN I TELL YOU THIS. "THE BIG SWEDE" IS JUST AS PROUD AS I AM, TO BE INCLUDED IN YOUR GREAT ENDEAVORS, OF THAT I AM UNQUESTIONABLY POSITIVE. YOU TWO HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON, YOU KNOW, AS YOU, YOURSELF, COMMAND A KIND OF REVERENCE AMONG REGIONAL HISTORY BUFFS, CHRONICLEERS, MUCH THE SAME AS AXEL "DOES" (GLASSES ARE STILL RAISED, ONCE IN A WHILE ACROSS HIS BELOVED NORTH IDAHO, IN TOASTS TO "THE BIG SWEDE", FROM THOSE FEW REMAINING "ARCHANGELS OF HIS LUMBERJACKS" AND THEIR MANY DESCENDENTS). I, TOO, PROUDLY RAISE MY GLASS HIGH TO YOU BOTH.....

IT IS A MARVELOUS, YES, A MIRACULOUS, THING, THAT YOU CONTINUE IN HOT PURSUIT OF YOUR PERPETUAL AMBITION ----AT 90 YET! (MAY I ADD ONE OF MY OWN OBSERVATIONS, MR. GALE, WHICH, FOR MANY A MOON, I HAVE THOUGHT MOST INTERESTING. AT 90 YEARS YOUNG, YOU HAVE, IN MY ESTIMATION, AN EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG --- AND STRONG-WILLED --- PENMANSHIP, AMPLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE FIRM, SMOOTH PRESSURE ON YOUR PEN --- PLUS THE "FREE-FLOWING", CONFIDENT DICTION --- ALL POINTING, UNMISTAKABLY, TO HEARTY, ROBUST HEALTH). CONGRATS AND THANK YOU, SIR, FOR STAYING HEALTHY FOR US AND CONTINUING YOUR HISTORICAL ENDEAVORS, WHICH ARE SO VITALLY IMPORTANT TO US ALL.

I KNOW YOU ARE AWARE OF THE ALL TOO FEW FOLKS THAT HAVE EVER DISPLAYED ANY DESIRE OR COMMITMENT, THROUGH ALL THESE MANY YEARS, TO HELP YOU PRESERVE THE WARM AND FASCINATING POTLATCH LUMBER COMPANY HISTORY. EVEN THE HUGE, MULTI-NATIONAL POTLATCH CORPORATION, THE COLD, UNCARING VERSION OF TOO MANY OF TODAY'S INDUSTRIAL DESCENDANTS FINANCES MINIMAL FORMAL OR OFFICIAL PROGRAMS TOWARDS THIS END. SAD, IT IS, THAT SO LITTLE ATTENTION IS PAID TO PLCo., AS THAT VERY ^{HISTORY} ALSO ENCOMPASSES THE HISTORIES OF EACH TOWN, LARGE OR SMALL, OF

MUCH OF CLEARWATER AND LATAH COUNTIES OF NORTHERN IDAHO. ALL I CAN SAY OF THAT SCORE IS "THANK HEAVENS FOR LEE GALE, SR.!"

I AM TRULY AND TOTALLY EXCITED ABOUT THIS NEW "POTLATCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY." PLEASE, SIR, TELL ME HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH SUCH AN INSPIRITED GROUP. I CAN'T WAIT! IT WOULD SEEM THAT IT'S PRETTY LATE IN THE GAME TO OFFER YOU ANY PERTINATE INFO ON PLCo., BUT THEIR NEW TITLE DEFINITELY "PULLS OUT THE STOPS" AND PROVIDES FOR A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME AND PLAYING FIELD. HOWEVER, MY REAL INTEREST SUDDENLY WANED, WHEN "THE COMPANY" WAS REPROGRAMMED, REMODELED, RE-SCHEDULED, RECREATED --- MODERNIZED --- "TO PROFITABLY COMPETE WITH THE ^{IN} BURGEONING, NEW WORLD MARKET." SURVIVING FOR TWENTY PLEASANT YEARS FOLLOWING THE MERGER OF WEYERHAESER'S 3 NORTH IDAHO AFFILIATES, IN 1931, WITH POTLATCH'S RENOWNED FRIENDLINESS, FAIRNESS AND COMRADERY --- BUT THIS IS ALL PART OF ANOTHER STORY, A FASCINATING, UNFORGETTABLE STORY.....LET IT SUFFICE TO SAY THAT THIS STORY WILL BE FORTHCOMING, BUT IN 1931, THE MERGER DELETED THE ORIGINAL NAME "POTLATCH LUMBER COMPANY", ERASING IT'S HOMEY INDIVIDUALITY, THEN CALLING IT "THE BOVILL UNIT OF POTLATCH FORESTS, INCORPORATED", A KIND OF DEGRADATION. THE "DEATH KNELL" CAME IN 1951, WHEN THE GLOWING, FRIENDLY, "POTLATCH RED" PAINT WAS CHANGED FOREVER TO A SICKLY GREY. (OH, OH! YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DELETE THE WORD "FOREVER", MR. GALE, AS I AM REASONABLY SURE THAT THE YEAR WAS 1972, WHEN THE COMPANY COLOR OF SICKLY GRAY WAS CHANGED TO "SICK AS A DOG" GREEN.....NAME CHANGED TO "POTLATCH CORPORATION".

THANX MILLIONS FOR YOUR THOUGHTFULNESS, MR. GALE, I DID, AS A MATTER OF FACT, HAVE A COPY OF W.L. MAXWELL'S LETTER TO DAD. I WHIPPED A LETTER RIGHT BACK, USING THE RETURN ADDRESS ON THE SENDERS ENVELOPE, HOPING AGAINST HOPE TO GLEAN ADDITIONAL PAGES FROM THAT DIARY. MY LUCK IS LEGENDARY.....MONOTONOUSLY MEDIOCRE.....

DOES THIS ANCIENT "ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENT TO NOSTALGIA" TEASE UP A TEAR...? I KNOW YOU RECOGNIZE THIS DARLIN' OLE ANTIQUE AS ONE OF THE LAST REMINDERS OF POTLATCH LUMBER COMPANY'S PRESENCE AT ELK RIVER....STILL FUNCTIONAL AT 90 YRS.AS ARE YOU, MY FRIEND LEEGALE.....