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Forestry Summer Camp
Coolin, Idaho 1948
of Gene Hertel

The following impressions of the Iowa State College forestry summer camp are based upon memories and excerpts from letters and field notes written fifty years ago.

Thursday, June 17, 1948, Ames
Grand Island, NE. Several of us forestry students left Ames headed for Idaho. We were riding in the back of an Iowa State forestry department truck, lolling around on the duffel bags and bed rolls being transported to camp. We were getting a free ride, since the truck was going and it cost the department no more to let us ride. There were three or four of us in the back of the truck. One of our fellow students was driving, and one riding shotgun. Arrive in Grand Island about 3 PM having trouble with the truck. Spent the chilly night in a little park.

Friday, June 18, Grand Island, NB—Dubois, WY.
Stopped for a drink (non-alcoholic) about nine AM. A cold ride this morning. All eleven of us, from the two trucks, slept in one cabin in Dubois. The management probably frowned on this arrangement, but it worked out all right.

Saturday, June 19, Butte, MT—Camp
Drove through Yellowstone National Park and stopped to see Old Faithful. Four of us took advantage of an indoor, warm-water swimming pool and stayed in just long enough to miss the geyser show. Then it was on to wait another time to see the eruption. Slept out in our sleeping bags on the edge Butte.

Sunday, June 20, Butte, MT—Camp
Drove through the scenic mountain country and arrived at the camp late at night. The former Civilian Conservation Corps camp, where we spent the next few weeks, was located on the Priest River near Coolin, Idaho. The camp had barracks buildings, a mess hall, and a swinging cable-hung bridge across the Priest River. It was good to stop riding and be in a dry building. Roger Crabbs and I are talking about buying a canoe after camp and floating the Missouri River home.

Note: A typical day starts with rolling out of bed-rolls a little before seven, breakfast at seven, and leave camp at eight with our lunch (peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a cheese sandwich, and an orange.) Return to camp in the afternoon, eat at six and try to get the day’s report written.

Tuesday, June 22.
Visited the Potlatch sawmill in Couer d’Alene, ID today. It is supposed to be one of the largest mills in the country. Head-rig very impressive with a steam fed carriage and a double cutting band head-saw. They cut mostly white pine, with some Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine, red cedar and white fir. All logs were brought to the mill via Couer d’Alene Lake, so the mill pond was unlimited, extending into the lake as far as needed. Sawmill slabs were sent to the Teepee burner and the sawdust made into Pesti-logs.

Wednesday, June 23.
Toured the National Pole and Treating Company Plant in Hillyard, Washington. They treated poles of Ponde-
roa pine, larch, and lodgepole pine. Railroad ties were of Douglas fir, larch and ponderosa.

**Thursday, June 24**

Visited the Inland Empire Paper Company in Millwood, Washington. The plant used fir, spruce, hemlock, and some cottonwood. The mill capacity was 25 tons of special paper and 60 to 75 tons of newsprint per day.

**Friday, June 25**

Visited the Diamond Match Mill in Priest Lake, Idaho. The mill used sawdust for fuel and burned the slabs (burning verboten, today).

**Sunday, June 27**

A few of us took one of the trucks to town to see the movie "Green Dolphin Street." We were supposed to hand in all reports up to date by noon Saturday, but I got caught in a wood cutting detail and worked until noon. Cut down a 150 feet tree. Quite a crash when it came down.

**Monday, June 28**

Visited the Doolittle Sawmill in Priest River, Idaho. We were interested to learn the head sawyer and the saw filer each earned $1.80 per hour.

**Tuesday, June 29**

Visited the Armstrong and Krizentsky Shingle Mill and the E.C. Olson Sawmill in Priest River, Idaho.

The single mill used a section of the Doolittle Mill-Pond. Sawing shingles was a very fascinating operation. A rather hazardous task and one of the sawyers was minus a finger or two. Western-red cedar was the species.

The sawmill had a direct steam driven carriage with two men riding. One man set the thickness of the cut and the other controlled the manually operated "dogs" to hold the logs as they moved past the headsaw. The Olson mill had produced lath from waste slabs and edgings at one time.

There were Forest Service fire control people in camp lecturing about two hours this morning.

**Wednesday, June 30**

We were each assigned to fire crews in the afternoon. Practiced building fire lines with hand tools. Finished about four. Jose Gallegos, Tom Cochran and I went ground squirrel shooting until dinnertime. After we ate, I went fishing and caught two small trout. Not enough to dirty a skillet.

**Friday, July 2**

Visited the Diamond Match Mill in Newport, Washington. Both commercial lumber and match stock, from excellent quality white pine, was produced at the mill. Match stock was air seasoned in a yard with a 32 million board foot capacity. After seasoning, the match stock was sent to Spokane to be cut into blocks of match length, then match making plants in Ohio, New York or California.

Went for a walk before dinner, following a small creek near camp. Came upon a tent camp along the stream and farther along watched a man fishing. He was catching small trout. Nice mountain country: clear rivers and streams, a great mixture of tree species, mountain elevations for great views, interesting animals. Living here all year would be a challenge, though. Returning to camp along a side-hill road, I was startled by the whirling wings of a nighthawk pulling out of a dive only a few yards from me. I hadn't experienced this before and have been aware of the birds since, especially in the Ames night sky.

**Saturday, July 3**

We quit classes at noon so Roger Crabbs and I decided to hike to Looking Glass Lookout visible from camp, but a few miles away. Left camp a quarter to five and traveled until 9:50 PM. Slept on a rocky ledge.

**Sunday, July 4**

Arouse at 5:30 and reached the tower about eight. A young couple from Boston was living in the tower. They lived in the 12 feet by 12 feet tower room, forty-five feet above ground. We each got a couple of cups of coffee. It tasted very good after breakfast of beans and crackers. Even a peanut butter and jelly sand-
wich would have been welcome. After our short visit, we took the road eleven miles back to camp. We encountered a mad grouse hen with six little chicks. She wasn’t about to let us near the little ones. Fairly high on the slope of Looking Glass Mountain we saw some virgin timber. It was mostly white pine and western red cedar. In many places half the trees were over 200 feet tall. I was sore and stiff by the time we got back to camp but was pleased we had made the hike and saw so many neat things along the way.

Monday, July 5
It rained very hard at times today. I had kitchen police beginning today and helped peel about a bushel of potatoes. No classes today. Some of the guys went to Glacier National Park, but I chose to stay in camp. Had enough truck riding, I guess.

Tuesday, July 6
Visited the E. C. Olson Logging operation. Five crews were on the site felling with hand crosscut saws. These guys were good. One of each two-man crew carried a bottle of kerosene in his pocket to treat a sap-stick­ing blade without missing a stroke. They were cutting out ribbons of white pine “sawdust” four inches long. Beautiful white pine timber.

Wednesday, July 7
Toured the White Pine Sash Company and the Specialty Wood Products, Inc., both in Spokane, Washington. The sash company was using a “paint lock” system rather than putty for door glass. Thin strips of wood held the glass in place to be sealed when the door is painted. They also had an electronic gluing machine for making wide door panels. It was possible to set glue in ten to fifteen seconds versus the three or four hours at air temperatures.

The specialty wood product company produced wood flour from sawdust, shavings, and other sawmill waste, mostly of white and ponderosa pines. The final product was sold to manufacturers of linoleum and plastics.

Also toured the E.C. Olson Dry Kiln Plant in Spokane.

Wednesday, July 9
Went to town tonight.

Sunday, July 11
My last day of kitchen police for the duration. Thank goodness! Saw the movie “Good News” tonight.

Monday, July 12
Changed the work from utilization to mensuration (measurement). Started out by running a four-mile long, closed (nearly closed, anyway) transverse, compass line around the boundary of the timber tract we were to cruise during the following ten days. There were black bears and deer in the area.

After dinner we tried drowning some ground squirrels from their holes. It was a familiar activity for an Iowa farm boy. One did come out but we didn’t get him. From this excitement to throwing rocks at bottles floating in the river. All this school work and boredom made any diversion a welcome relief.

Tuesday, July 13
The leader of the KP crew overslept and we were awakened by Prof. MacDonald coming into the barracks to get the KP workers. He informed us the cooks were about mad enough to quit.

Drew up maps of the area to be cruised, ready to start tomorrow. We are to do a line and plot cruise of ten percent of the area, recording tree species and timber volumes. Finished the map at 9:30 p.m.

Friday, July 16
Spent the morning cruising. Startled a third-grown fawn on the cruise line and a lot of grouse. Mosqui­toes were drawing blood regularly.
Saturday, July 17
Cruised in the morning and I went fishing with Bob Muhm this afternoon. We caught a few trout and cooked them in the kitchen. Played horseshoes until it got so dark we had to locate the stake by the sparks of the last shoe thrown.

The professors seem to be stretching the course work so the veteran will not be fouled up on the GI Bill. They were expecting us to spend some time fighting forest fires, but the rain has kept the fire danger low.

Wednesday, July 21
Took a long and interesting trip to Diamond Match’s logging operation on Priest Lake. Rode in the trucks, as usual, to get to Coolin and from there rode on a barge to upper Priest Lake. From there we took trucks to the logging camp at the head of their flume. The flume carried logs six-miles to be dropped into the lake. We walked the flume’s entire length on our return to the barge.

Skidding was done with Caterpillsars and horses. Horses were used on the steeper and rockier terrain. The maximum skidding distance was three miles. All logs were skidded to the flume which was built (at a cost of $15,000 per mile) in lieu of roads in this very steep country. Logs moved through the flume at an average of 14.5 miles per hour, carried along by 15,000 gallons of water per minute. The steepest flume gradient was nine percent. Logs were rafted up on Priest Lake and later moved to the Priest River and Pend Oreille River to be sawn in downstream mills.

Friday, July 23
Tonight we finished the map and timber volume table for the cruise. After about ten hours of adding and figuring, I was ready for bed.

We had an evening campfire followed by a dance here tonight. Signs were posted which read “Girls wanted, dance at Camp 127. 108 men await you—Transpor-

Saturday, July 24
A US Forest Service person gave a lecture this morning. The fellow talked slowly with a lot of illustrations so by the time the lecture was over I had a five pages report written and didn’t have to copy it over (grade received, unknown).

After lunch Ben Gallegos and I went fishing in Big Creek, which flows near camp. We caught a bunch of small trout and brought them back for our dinner. Ben’s brother Jose was on KP, so he saved us some donuts and bananas and cantaloupe.

Sunday, July 25
Stan Jarrad and I went squirrel shooting this morning. Didn’t hit many, but did get a picture of one. Had a ham and mashed potato lunch at camp cooked by the professor wives. The regular cooks were on vacation.

After lights-out we all lay on our bunks telling and listening to one story after another. We had been here so long all the good stories have been told and retold. Now when someone comes up with a new joke everyone tried not to laugh. Amusing to have dead silence after a joke and someone would say, “that gets a minus one thousand on the Colgate laugh meter.”

Monday, July 26
One more day of mensuration, then a new course. Our barrack group had a softball game with the guys from another. We go beat 15 to zip. I played one game of horseshoe just before dark. Played a couple of games of Pinochle until bedtime.
Tuesday, July 27

I finished mensuration tonight and now it’s on to silviculture for the rest of the time in camp.

Thursday, July 29

At a campfire tonight a local performing group called “The Unwholesome Four” entertained. They did country western music and were to perform at the local nightspot “The Green Owl” later in the evening.

Friday, July 30

Went up to Looking Glass Lookout and the scenery was great. It was cloudy when we left camp so; unfortunately, I left the camera behind. Visited the U.S. Forest Experiment Station, just a mile or so up the road from camp. Stan Jarrad and I roasted marshmallows over a small wood-chip fire near the mess hall. The fire brought the thought to him, so we did it.

Monday, August 2

Lectures all day and tonight.

Thursday, August 5

Had two lectures on fire control. I took them both down in ink and handed them in without editing. Saves a lot of time, but the reports aren’t too good. Wrote the reports from 12:30 until six tonight.

Finally found a good use for the Biltmore stick. One of the cooks baked a three-foot by two-foot cake today and used the stick to guide her knife as she cut even pieces. We had ice cream with the cake—good! This from the nice cook who weighs a lot and is happy.

Traded haircuts with one of the fellows. My first since leaving Ames. Since time here is getting short, some of the guys are shaving their beards. They call me “two shaves” now because every time I use my electric razor, it fouls up the radios to the point it seems I must be shaving twice a day. Lots of cussing' when

I started the razor.

Saturday, August 8

Went to a movie in town tonight.

Wednesday, August 11

We had a Weyerhaeuser movie tonight which proposed a means of settling the dispute between the “sportsmen” who want all the trees left uncut and other whose livelihoods depend upon the harvesting products. The issue has different players today, but will, apparently, never be resolved.

Thursday, August 12

Finished the silviculture course notebook. One of the cooks had orchids this morning. I asked her where she got them. She said, “You get things like that when you’re old.” We wound up with one less cook when two of them got in an altercation that came to blows. It was a long summer for everyone, it seems.

Saturday, August 14

Probable date we left camp to head for Ames. Again rode in the back of the department trucks.

Monday, August 16

I sent two telegrams home with information on our estimated time of arrival in Ames.

The second, from Pine Bluffs, Wyoming, at 9:18 am, with the word to disregard the first message due to truck trouble. The new estimated time to arrive, “Indefinite, perhaps Tuesday.” The actual arrival in Ames is lost to memory after fifty years, as are a lot of other details.

An incident, which I cannot attribute to a specific date, happened as we were returning from a field trip. We were standing in the back of the open truck as it and a second truck drove down the dusty road toward camp. I was standing in the forward right corner of
the truck bed with Stan Jarrard directly behind me. As we drove along, I was throwing rocks at the telephone poles we passed. On one backward motion, rock in hand, my finger caught Stan's glasses and he was suddenly half blinded as I threw the rock and snatched his glasses from his face. The glasses flew out of the truck and landed in the road ditch. Both trucks ground to a halt and all the tired, dirty, hungry students turned out to look for the ill-fated glasses. I was partially redeemed when the glasses were found unbroken in the dusty grass. Needless to say, I was pretty unpopular. As for Stan, it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy.

Professors, G.B. MacDonald, D.W. Bensend, and A.W. Goodspeed, taught the courses. I remember no other staff members or teaching personnel.