

Person interviewed: Rupert Lamphear, Indian Lake, N.Y. 12842

Interviewed by: Janice Oatmen and Cathy Farrell Tape C-14 side 1

Interview conducted by Janice Oatmen and Cathy Farrell with Rupert Lamphear on January 11, 1974

We'll start out with how did you start logging, the business?

Rupert: Well ah I imagine mostly because my father and ya know my older brother, father and course my grandfather they were all, that's bout all there was to do then ya know, a place here.

Many people depending on it for a living, this is what

Rupert: Oh, is oh yes, course before, really before I ah started in they all did ah all the old people and course there's a different types of logging but when I ah started, well it was shortly after I started there was other things come up and course the logging that I done wasn't the same thing they done, they was logging a different kind of timber.

What kind of timber did you use?

Rupert: They was cutting soft wood, ah balsam and spruce and hemlock and anything like that, everbearing tree, like a Christmas tree what you call it, and ah uh course I did log awhile with ah soft wood but then the hardwood they started cutting hardwood before that it wasn't worth nothing only for stove wood and then this guy came from Mass. and he had been logging ah he logged all through Conn. and Mass. and mostly railraod ties, course then there was a big demand for it and he cut mostly for railroad ties. And course he did lumber pine, cut pine out there and then after he came up here and he ah bought timber from Finch Pruyn and Co., ya know and it stumpage and then done his own logging, ah you see what I mean.

What is stumpage?

Rupert: Well it's timber ah they bought the timber standing, then they cut it that's what they call and ah another thing to, I don't know if it'll interest ya but ah when they've logging soft wood everything they cut was ah so much a thousand or so much a market, and the hardwood was so much a thousand and when I went to cutting logs by the thousand I didn't know what they was talking about ya know because the soft wood logs when they was cutting them uh 19" log at top end inside of bark, diameter, it was oh what is 19 19, 361 isn't it, by the gosh I don't know, here's something here, see 3 of them would make what we call a thousand and they markets, ah whatever, whatever dimension would come nearest to 361 would be a market log but a 19 was the nearest and three of them would be 1083, but that's the nearest it would come to ah. Well then when they, as I say they started cutting hardwood and apparently they thought they had hardwood enough in this country to well to waste.

About what year was it that they would start?

Rupert: Well when this Ward started before that as I say all they done was cut stove wood, just to burn and when Ward came here from Mass. there was a belt, I went to work in either 38 or 39 and he was here a year or two I think about a year or two before so probably and I started with well Perry Washburn up

there is who I started with, maybe you never knew him or but I started cutting logs with him, we went to cutting and we cut at that time by the 1000, Perry cut the year before with somebody and course I'd never cut, all the wood I'd ever cut was stove wood, I'd never cut logs by the thousand, I didn't know nothing about it so I got Perry to go with me and uh we cut well I'll show you right here. I got this ready I thought probably you'd want to know. Here is a rule with a doil scale see, there was a lot of different scales, but here is see here is well you wouldn't want that so much cause they didn't cut, they cut through 10's when they had to but that's it, 10", and 18 and here's your regular.

Oh this is a regular scale, log?

Rupert: Now heres your 14 and 14 and 12 foot logs, now a 12 foot log in length, I'm talking about ah well 12" in diameter, right here 75 I think no it's 48 and uh 12 and uh say a 16 foot log it's 90, see it all the way up from uh 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 12, 11, 12, 13, 14, no that's 16, 12 16 is a hundred and I thought I 16 but I've probably forgotten but 12, 16 it is 12 16 is 108, just a different ruler and uh you see you'd have to cut wood to get a 1000 foot let me see whats the first, theres one through 192, whats long on your 12, right there, what's there, whatever it is.

20

Rupert: 20, that's right 20" logs, 192 feet ya see ya got to for 1000 feet.

Oh I see.

Rupert: See what I mean, it wouldn't quite make a 1000 cause you lack oh 8, about 8 feet on the log but you got to have 5 of them to run ya round 1000 feet so and when we started cutting we cut for 220 a thousand, we got \$2.20 for cutting a 1000 feet. And then I guess I cut a year or two and then I went as woods boss and rest probably 25 years, well probably 41-64 I was woods boss and

Where did you log?

Rupert: Where'd we log, well we logged until well lets see now, honey wasn't it 1946 we moved to Newcomb wasn't it, yep 1946 right, we logged up here till 1946, all round what they call now the Cedar River Headquarters if ya know where I mean, we logged in there and then in towards ah well I can't think what the name of the mountain is from the Cedar River road you look right on to that whole range, I'll tell ya in a minute, oh gee whiz, well I'll think of the name anyway but oh all through that country and then in back of ah well where Harry McCanes , they call Harry McCanes place there and all the way up the Cedar and on the right hand side of the rode from headquarters in through and t en in 1946 we got that timber cut and we moved to Newcomb, I was over there from 46 till Jan. 30, 1964, that's when I got done there but now you're interested in the

How'd you get the logs out of the woods?

Rupert: When we first went up there they had ah well he hired a few, couple tractors and they were small tractors ya know, they wasn't much better then a pair of horses and they was logging with horses some, he had 2 or 3 pair of his own and this girl probably did you ever no Walter Morehouse, no probably not he's been dead a few years, well Walt used to work for him and use his own team and they would ah cut the logs and then just pull them out on the well

they'd what we call a head block, you wouldn't know, well anyway we'd lay a log down, then put a couple skids up on to a log just to get them up to where you could roll them onto a sleigh to move up grade and they'd pull them on with horses and then draw um up from there they roll um, it was all hand work. I know Perry Washburn my brother in law ah loaded logs there for 2 - 3 winters and then they were drawn ah if it was way back sometimes they would draw um and then load um on to a truck when they got to the roads, ya know if it was in the summertime course we didn't have very good roads back in the woods and they figured on doing most of their logging, what they could was in the winter when, but they drew from way back up in that mtn. there ah to the mill and the mill

Where was your mill?

Rupert: Well he had 2 see different mills, he had, did he have a mill where, yes I think he had a mill, one the last mill right where Dick Frulla's saw mill is, then he had one or two over where he first started one or two back in the woods and had a saw mill right back in there, two sawmills he had when he first started and then he moved it out and moved the logs to them cause he thought it was better than it was moving the mill all over the in the woods.

They brought them out to the mill and then were used mainly around here or?

Rupert: No, no no I I'll get ya straight on it, they ah using no hardwood anyway, what I mean ah they wouldn't think of using a hardwood board on a building which they didn't much today but ah what he done the first oh I don't think we did till Newcomb, after we went over there, yes I guess maybe we did but when they brought um to the mill they sawed um out into well that's where women's shoe heels, them tall heels, I helped load a good deal women's shoe heels, they drawed um out and saw um and put upon we call them sticks up on some , ties, railroad ties cause you saw a lot of them and they'd every little while there'd be one of them would end up be bad and they it, and we'd lay it down and put lumber on that, then they'd load it on a truck, all hand work nothing to load it with though, draw it down to North Creek for shoe heel stock, load it into a freight car and then draw it I don't know where that went, I I be honest with you but the biggest share of his lumber, right up intill the war and through the war was ah it went to ah Granville and you know where that is, well it went into that place, course I'll tell ya he's sent a lot of lumber in ah that was called cot, cot bed wasn't it, yea cot bed.

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Rupert: It went there, it went into ah army cots and stuff and for that reason that's where he had the priority of even over Finch & Pruyn Co., that meant, ya see why it was called 100% defence time of the war, the army cots, cause they had to have the army cots and Finch and Pruyn down there course there's was just pulp and that was going into paper for everything and that's how he happened to get the first power saws. He was the one got the first 2 or 3 power saws that I ever see and then after we went to and these was drawed on a 2 different kind of riggs, the first things they had was what they called a dreigh, it was one big sled and had just one bunk across it, we called them bunks and

and that's what the logs laid on and there was nothing, the other end was dragging on the ground, ya see just and they used that you could swing any where with them ya know and course they had um chains to fasten on and then after they got rid of them they got um a regular big sleigh with two great big runners and course they was iron heavy, they to get tractors and they put them ah two bunks on them and they used to have chains and I can't think what they called them but they used to roll one log onto a bunk on one corner and they'd work it with this chain and it had a wall I've got one down in the woods if I had it up here I could show you what I mean and you could draw, draw it right down tight to hold the chain around the one, then you roll the other logs on, when you get over to the other side of the bunk tighten that one there, then the two outside ones couldn't get off, then, that was called a big sled and we used to draw logs on that to the mill. Well I don't know if you'd want to know, he had two other outfits he drewed, he had ah one thing he drew out with and they was made, if you didn't have a good truck road you couldn't get over quite a bad road just bad enough so a truck wouldn't get over it, and that was called a athey wagon, an athey wagon and that had bunks on it and things and they would tip down and you could load um, then we got a loader, they called them a we always called them a jammer and everybody knows around here cause most of ums what we got today to load logs, crotchet chain, hook on to the end of the log to roll um up on a drum and pull the log up over, that was after they quit loading by hand and they let um on the truck that way and then that I was gonna tell ya about the athey wagon, had a track on it, big heavy track, just like a tractor would have and had a tongue on it, hooked the tractor on there and then he, he commensed to get tractors and he had several tractors and then we went to Newcomb he was still using the ~~sleds~~ sleds, but uh he bought these you've probably seen them, arches, two great big wheels and a roller on top, and you'd pull the and that went right over to the wynch on the tractor and they put it in gear and course that, ya hook onto a log and it would pull the log right up off the ground, then ya just had those two big wheels that carried the load and he commenced to get them and I remember the first one I see I said I won't be with him a great while cause I didn't like um but after I used them a little while I'd never go back to ah

How bout some tales about logging and interesting things that happened to you back in the woods or something?

Rupert: Well, there's one thing I can say that I was awful thankful I never had a, never had a man killed.

What did you do with a man if they were injured back in the woods?

Rupert: Well you get them out the same way they brought me out one time, I came from way up Cedar River with a I got hit with a log ya know jammed against in the road was all mud and the mud came up over the sled, up between the planks that I had laid on and they took me from there and brought me out here and put me in a car and took me down, no doctor here and I went to ah Dr. Glenn, he's dead now.

Where was that?

Rupert: North Creek, you cross that bridge just as you're going out and then turn left there and well uh I always said I was never hurt only that one time. I thought everything, I thought it was crushed inside because ya know it seemed just like everything was going to come right up my mouth ya know

and ah I couldn't turn my hand over without hurtin me and I never went to the hospital and I was only of just oh about I don't believe it was over three weeks, then I went back to work course I had kinda easy work, just starting but I had, oh I could tell ya a lot of things that happened ya know if I could just ah, my brother in law, do you know my sister Effy, she ah well he was working for this fellow in, Ward, in a Bill was all Caterpillars ~~tractors~~ tractors ya know and my brother he was driving a tractor and he was all international, well when Bill came here, what he brought first was all caterpillars but he went out and he bought an international and they tried it out and it worked good amd my brother Earl liked it so he let him use that and they was always one just kinda trying to outdo the other, course that's what he wanted was more logs and I'll tell you something about that made me just think about it, that ah international, the first winter they had it I wasn't there but Perry Washburn was and maybe my brother was, they ah, he had a job in back of Harry McCanes and he let this job to th~~is~~ Dick Frulla up here, he just came here from Vermont and the other guys name was ah, what was that guys name hon that I worked with when I was in with Dick Frulla and he had a brother here. These two fellows they took this job and they'd draw that timber from back of Harry McCanes on one of these slides I'm telling you about, from there down to where the mill is. Dick Frulla's mill is now, they came right down the main highway after they come on to it and what I was going to tell you about the tractor, Bill didn't think to much of the international tractor so ah they was getting these logs out and they had that tractor go through the ice, they tried to cross and there wasn't enough ice to carry and the tractor went through and all that was in site was the exhaust pipe sticking out of the and that was in there for quite a few hours.

Did he get hurt?

Rupert: Anyway for they got it out and they brought it, I was up to the village when they brought it down, they took it down to the lower end, the garage where Oh I don't know who does run it now, down the lower end of the left, below the church there a little bit.

Mahoney?

Rupert: Mahoney right you are and there was another fellow in there then and they thought probably it would freeze up and bust ya know, they took it in there and thawed it out a little bit and it never, so then he thought they must be pretty good so

So you crossed right across the ice with tractors and stuff lots of times, cross the lakes and things?

Rupert: Uh no I wouldn't, over there when I was over there to Newcomb we used to do, I have went along the edge of the lake but cause the water would be down and mostly the ice would be on sand ya know, I got some but ah these, Earl and my brother, Earl was my brother, Andy my brother in law, ah they both went from here to Newcomb with us, and um you'd oughta see um come down some of these hills with a tractor, boy I'm telling you, I'm telling you they both had a lot of nerve and they got to much nerve, I wouldn't , I wouldn't have it, I said boy you can't do it, not here, boy I'm telling you, cause I've seen um go down by with that red international and Perry Washburn will tell you the same when they come down that hill with snow flying you couldn't see the color of that tractor till they struck the bottom of the hill, the way we done though course a lot of snow maybe 4 ft. or better ya know and we

just plow it narrow so you had a channel down the hill, then there was nothing you could put on back in the woods, no sand or nothing, wouldn't do any good anyways cause the tractor tore it up, oh yea

How bout hunting and things, did you do much hunting up in there?

Rupert: Oh no, no no I didn't, I wouldn't take a gun to camp, I'll tell ya why I didn't, ah Bill Ward himself, they didn't want him to ah course up here he stayed in that, ya know where he lived up here, ya know where that place is they got the horses, just as you go into the woods above Dick's sawmill, ya know where you go into the last woods before you get to headquarters, this side of Harry McCanes place, there's a place on the right there, but they keep horses there, well Bill lived in them camps all the while he was here and then when he moved over to Newcomb he was going in camp and they wouldn't have no guns in camp, he was an awful man to hunt ya know, an awful man for guns so he bought that place down there by ah there's a lake over there, it's where that Jewish place was, what's the name of that lake over there Nina where Bill lived?

That's okay Rupert, we just

Rupert: I can't remember, well so he bought that and had all his guns there and then he oh up there where we worked where the mill was, where he had his mill over there was a belt, it was right around 3/4 of a mile from Tahawas mines if you've ever been over there, have you ever been over there, have you, well it's on the left, if you ever did go over there, you can tell because it's it was all a big barn at one time, a fire went through there I think in 1930.

Yea could you tell us about the big fire in Indian Lake, do you remember that?

Rupert: No that's before my, oh I've heard um tell about it, I've heard uh, I'll tell ya one thing that ~~from~~ I've heard an old man tell me that he says this one but I don't know I'm not but uh from Long Lake he says this fire that burnt through what we call the Big H up here, ya know where that is, towards Blue Mountain, he says that fire started over round Long Lake and that's the same fire that went through here, which has been burned some time. I know because that's why you've got this second growth hardwood and uh we hunt over towards Peaked Mt. and uh that's not the same fire because that started up here by oh you know where the two bridges is up in Big Brook, well that started right up that area somewhere and that went right through ah what we call Parkerville, over where they live and uh this is what I do know about that because my father was living I don't know just exactly where but he lived over round Parkerville, there was 4 or 5 houses there, 4 or 5 families and uh somebody came and told them that this fire got to going and uh they better throw the stuff in water and get out. So they did, they went down and oh threw a lot of bedding and stuff and they got out, personally I don't know where they went but it ah burned down through there and it burnt that old dam out, twas a wooden dam see and the logs were dry, it burnt that out and they lost everything and uh we I helped put the dam in when it was cement dam and way down in there 10 feet down in there we found ah

Tape ends