FINNISH FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE GREAT LAKES MINING REGION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT 1972-1978
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Maurice Olson  
January 31, 1974

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SUBJECT: Recent Logging History

SOURCE: Maurice Olson -- a "grass roots", tobacco-chewing, crank. He has been the lumberyard man for the Celotex Corporation (L'Anse, Michigan) for over thirty years. His knowledge of the "nitty-gritty" ins and outs of the logging industry and its history is encyclopedic. He is one of those persons men in upper management very discretely approach when they need advice. He is the "granddaddy" of Celotex.

Interviewer: Allan Lavery

R: We don't own but just a few acres of land out here where we dispose our waste and as far as timber lands, we don't have a thing. So, we buy all our wood. All our wood is bought and it's all bought in round wood. We've been buying wood, hundred inch wood, right along, see; and now we're started to take in some longer stuff. We're making a little test to see if we can get more production in the woods, taking longer wood in here and that, and eventually we want to install a tree-length chipper, you know, one that we can ship the whole tree through the chipper and chip her up and that without cutting it up. So, I buy all the wood and, oh, I'd say it's about...I'd say about eighty percent of it is from local...right within thirty miles of here...the wood comes from. We don't go out too far. We do when we need wood real bad, we ship wood in by rail and long-haul truck and that; and, we buy all the wood by weight and on...oh, on our...let's me see this...on a hundred thirty mile haul we pay a price...seven seventy a ton. We buy it all by the ton. And, over a third...we only have two brackets...under thirty miles and over thirty miles, we pay the eight dollars and twenty cent. Of course, when I have wood shipped in by rail, we buy that all by the cord then. This is the only wood we buy by the cord...when we stick scale it on the cars and that and, of course, this wood is expensive. It costs us more...we have to pay the freight and the loading charge and unloading and if there's wiring, we have to pay for that; and, I said, it gets real expensive. But, let's see, most of our wood comes within thirty miles of here. Very little out any farther than that.

I: Why does it cost more by freight...by rail?

R: Yeah, well I said, see we have to pay the freight charge then where we buy wood here, seven seventy a ton or... which amounts to...I think it amounts to about...or a little over nineteen dollars a cord by stick scale...we have to pay that plus the freight on it, see, and this
freight runs...oh...six - eight dollars a cord for the freight on the wood. For instance, like I bought some wood a week or so ago up in the Copper Country, up in Lake Linden, and I had to pay the trucking charge down here for that.

I: You paid the freight?

R: This fellow had this wood set in on a landing and, of course, he had so much in this wood...he had about eighteen dollars a cord stuck in this wood. Well, naturally he wouldn't sell it for less than that, so I bought it from him for eighteen dollars a cord plus I paid for the trucking it down here...would be five dollars. Now, that would cost us twenty-three dollars a cord, see. Well, this is what you run into when you can't buy the wood locally. We never had a problem before. We've had some slow times...wood was hard to get then, but we could always reach way out and get it. But right now, the competition is so keen that everybody is after wood. And, oh...now they're putting in a chipping installation at Mass. American Can is putting this in over there...they're gonna chip wood. This takes a little wood away from us. Not too much, but it takes a little away from us. Then they've started a yard up in Trout Creek and this is taking quite a bit of our wood. I used to have quite a few jobbers and buy a lot of wood down there. Well, not they're taking it in Trout Creek, so I've lost all of that wood.

I: What do you mean by jobbers?

R: Well, this is the guys that put the wood in...what you call the jobber.

I: The ones that...

R: Yeah, the loggers.

I: ...drive the trucks?

R: Yeah, un huh, the guy that actually cuts the tree and brings it in here...he's what you call the jobber...yeah, I mean, that's what we always call them. Well, I said that...that's about all I can say about procuring the wood you know, is gettin it in here unless you have some other questions.

I: Then it all comes by the trucks...I see the tandem trucks.

R: Yeah...oh yeah, it's all trucked into here except for this little wood we buy on rail and we're not getting any wood on rail right now. In fact, I just started to make arrangements with a few guys to ship some wood in by rail and if they do it, I don't know. I haven't heard from them if they are or if they aren't or what they're gonna do. But I said, as far as having our own
loggers, you know, or our own jobs...our company or
that, we don't have anything to do with any kind of
logging or gettin this wood in to us, see, except for
just buying it and paying for it. That's the whole
deal.

I: Has the company ever had anything set up like that in
the past?

R: No, we've never jobbed ourselves. Oh, back eight
nine years ago, we had our own equipment. Of course,
we had two hundred and forty-three thousand acres of
land which we sold to the Mead Corporation and we used
to log that. We had our own land to log but we always
hired contractors to do the logging and that. But, we
did have our own equipment. We had bulldozers, graders
and trucks and that for building road...all road build-
ing material. We used to build roads for the jobbers
and they'd go in and log it then.

I: When was that?

R: About eight years, isn't it Wade? About eight years
ago we sold out to 'em and so then we just started to
buy everything on the open market.

I: How much have you bought in the last month? How much
wood comes in here? How many tons?

R: Oh, how much? Well, now, we haven't been averaging
too good, I'll tell you, for this time of the year we've
had a real rough time of it and I don't think we've
averaged about a hundred cords a day comin in here right
now. And, in the months of November...month of November
and December...ahhh...around a hundred cords a day we're
takin in here...which isn't up to par...I said we shou
d be getting upwards around two hundred cords a day in
here to make things last during the break-up and every-
thing in the spring of the year when we won't be getting
any wood for the last part of March and April.

I: The break-up?

R: That's...yeah, that's

I: What's that?

R: You don't...you're not...

I: I'm not familiar...

R: You're not familiar with that. Well, I'll tell you, in
Oh, the ground gets soft.

The ground gets soft and then they put the road restrictions on...you're only allowed to haul so much, you know, per truck. Well, lot of these empty trucks wouldn't hardly be legal with the bare truck on the road.

Empty truck?

Empty truck, yeah. See, because of the softness and that so we have to have a pretty good supply of wood to last us through...oh you can figure any time after the fifteenth of March. Fifteenth of March until the first of May then we won't be getting in anything.

No...none of 'em?

No

Then it goes up again during the summer

Oh yeah, then the summer and that's fine again and then you get towards the fall of the year when you start to get wet weather again...I mean it slows down again then, so, you have your slack times. Of course, a wet year could raise the devil with us...ah...I mean during the summer, lots of rain and that there's lots of places you can't get in then.

Why do you think the amount of wood coming in is only half of what it could be?

Well, it's been because of the weather. It was awfully wet, you know, here in the fall of the year. You know, we had lots of rain and the roads were really slippery and greasy with mud and that and it's just starting to free up now. Well, now they're starting to have snow bother 'em; so, I said, after while this will all settle down and oh, I think the holidays have a lot to do with it too and this, you know, and deer season is bad. In November, maybe they don't like to work in the woods during deer season and there's lots of them like to hunt and it's always a slow time of the year here then.

Instead of working, they go hunting.

Yeah...yeah...yeah. So, I said that's...ah...maybe I tell you...what I do is in the spring of the year, I send out a letter...I have a kind of a form letter that I send to...I have all my jobbers listed here...every one...and I send most of 'em a letter like that...it's
a sort of a questionnaire and then ask them how much wood they'll have and that and they fill in this here and send it back to me and in this way I get my...I can figure out more and give 'em a purchase order for what they get.

I: Do you have regular...the same jobbers...

R: Oh no...I said, they're coming and going...there's different ones changing and, you know, one of the old ones are quitting well then there's new ones starting up and that and, of course, they come in here and ask me and I take their names down and addresses and send 'em one of these letters when the time of the year comes around to renew the contracts and that. I don't know, was that one for last year?

I: Has the price that you're paying now gone up?

R: Well, yeah. The price has gone up from this, see and yeah, we're up to...yeah, see we've raised the price here not to long ago...up forty cents a ton and we didn't have any long haul thing in this or that one. So, I said, this'll have to be revised here this year. But we do this all in the spring of the year see and then things are all starting over. Now, ever since they started here, we used to give out a purchase order for three months at a time. We were divided into three months. January, February and March; April, May and June, and that, you know, and we renewed them every three months. But, there was a lot of confusion and stuff about people couldn't plan ahead enough, so now we started...so we award a purchase order for the whole year now...from well like after the break-up...after March, I'll fix up new purchase orders for everybody for the whole following year. This is the way we do it now. Then, we can al...if there's any changes made and that, you know, price change or anything, we make that on a different order. See, all our...we bring in wood and our pay starts on a Thursday, we have Friday, Saturday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and all of this is turned into the office and it's run through the computer and that and these people are paid...they're paid on Thursday for these following days and we don't...we used to pay every load that comes in here, see. We used to make out a check for every single load that come in here. I used to make out the checks right here. But, it got so much book work and so involved, so then they installed the computers and so everything is in the computer now.

I: All this happened within the last year or what?

R: Well, within the last year I guess it was. Now, this
really isn't the one; but it's a sheet out of the computer with all the active jobbers listed on it; their names and they have a...we have a contract number and a vendors' number that goes on all our scale tickets that goes into this machine and that...like...I'll get it out here...here's a scale ticket right here that's made out...this is one of the guys, Jarue, and we take out...he's cutting on Mead's land and he's one of Mead's jobbers, but he hauls stuff in here. Well, we take out forty-two cents a thousand pounds here for payment to Mead for stumpage payment; so, whenever I make out a ticket like this with these two numbers on it like here, and that's turned in and they run this through the computer, that automatically takes forty-two cents out of that weight that he's got coming for Mead; so see, Mead always...they're always sure of gettin their stumpage and their money and he gets his.

I: Is he being paid by Mead and by Celotex?

R: No, he is being paid by us, see; but we take out...Mead has money coming. Mead owns the timber that he's cutting. So, they've got money coming for this timber; so we take it out of that and send it to Mead. So he don't have no book work or anything or anything to bother about the stumpage of that wood. That's all done through the computers here. So, you understand now how that works?

I: How did you get into that kind of deal? You get the wood from Mead for here...

R: Yeah, well see we have...

I: And the independent jobber rates...

R: Yeah, well we have an agreement...we have an agreement with Mead that when we sold them the land that they would supply us with so much wood, see. So, they have their jobbers haul into us and all we take out is their stumpage and we get the timber. This is just the aspen though. We don't take anything but aspen here and no other species.

I: Not at all?

R: No...no, they take...Mead takes everything else and just furnishes us with some aspen, yeah. I don't know of anything else.

I: How many trucks come in here to get a hundred tons? How much is on one truck?

R: Oh, there's...they run...here's a truck that they grossed sixty thousand pounds. His net weight was thirty-five
thousand, so he had...he had over seventeen ton on that truck. Here's another one here that grossed fifty-three thousand pounds...his net was thirty-three thousand. Here's another one here that he grossed sixty-two thousand and he netted thirty-three thousand. They average, I'd say around sixty-thousand pounds, you know. They gross...net weight is around seventeen - eighteen ton, yeah. This is all tandem trucks...good sized trucks.

I: You weigh 'em when they come?
R: We weigh 'em when they come in, we weigh 'em when they go out empty. That's where we get our net weight off of this, see. They're all weighed in and they're all weighed out.

I: Do they unload their own trucks?
R: No, we unload for 'em.

I: How many employees are working in the yard?
R: Right there! One!

I: That's all we have.
R: He unloads the trucks
I: He unloads the trucks and feeds the wood into the mill.
R: Well, I'll let you take a look right here

Stop in tape.

R: Where this wood is piled up on this platform down there like dock...way over there, it's across...lots of live chain that feeds the wood into the mill. It goes into the...in on a belt and then in on a belt and into the chipper and then these two big...see those two silos?

I: 

R: Well, after...the wood chips are blown from the chipper into those two silos and then from there into the plant and so we gotta take this wood...he either takes it off the truck or off the decks and he sets it on these two chains over there and that's the way it goes into the plant. Well, I said when he gets that filled and he has
no room for anything, he decks out in the yard then or when no trucks are in, he takes out of the decks and puts her in there. Well, that's about what that amounts to; it's just a process of...if you don't have a truck in here, he takes off the decks. If he's got trucks in there, we put it right into the mill and is ground up into chips then. Well, we chip about...oh a hundred and sixty - a hundred and seventy cords a day...when we're chippin. See, we don't run every day.

I: If you did, you'd chip more than you were getting in.

R: Oh yeah, right. now. But you see, we run a mineral board here where...this is what we're in the process of changing over right now from mineral to wood products. When mineral goes, no wood products in that atoll. Well, here comes a truck now. He's got long wood, this fellow sees.

Stop in tape.

R: And, well we make sheeting, regular four by eight or four by nine, whatever it is, takes a sheet for sheeting on a house and that. And this is what most...well now, you take like the oldest wood on the yard like this wood over here, you see, that's...it's stained. It's not too old, I mean, it's real good wood; but it gets stained like this. This is what we use in making sheeting that we don't paint that or anything and they mix asbestos in it...or not asbestos, I'm sorry, asphalt. It's granulated asphalt that's mixed in with it. It makes it weather proof and water proof and everything else. It's a regular brown colored board. Were you down by the plant?

I: No, but I've been down there.

R: Un huh. Well, this is a big product...the big product is the sheeting is I'd say the biggest volume and then there's the ceiling tile and that is a lot less than the sheeting.

I: The materials for the mineral board, the asphalt and the sheeting, are from the local area though.

R: No, this is all shipped in for here. There's nothing local about that at all. In fact, the asbestos comes from South Africa.

I: South Africa?

R: South Africa and Canada sends some here. Most of it comes in bags from South Africa and the mineral comes from Illinois.
I: The mineral is...?

R: That's the...this is...it's white, it's manufactured, it's from the steel mills.

I: Is it a waste product?

R: Yeah, it's a waste product from the steel mills. It's well I don't know, what do you call it...it's slag or whatever it is that you get outa the steel mills and this is processed in a plant down in Illinois and it's shipped up here in big bales.

I: Is it shipped by rail?

R: Most of it by rail. Yeah, it's trucked up here too, yeah it is. Well, I don't know about what else there is to tell you about this...if you've got some questions, I can...

I: I have a question. How much of this mineral board is produced here? Who buys it? Where is it shipped? Where is it sold to?

R: It's shipped all over the United States, this mineral board. It's a terrific product, I mean, they've got orders for...oh back orders for I don't know how many million feet, you know, that they've got back orders for on this board and they ship it all over the United States. In fact, the product here...this plant was actually built to supply five or six different states and actually they supply a lot more than that, you know, because they're shipping it all over the place.

I: These five or six different states were meant to be around Michigan?

R: Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, I imagine Illinois and Indiana and into Ohio.

I: The Midwest Region.

R: Yeah...'cause we have (???) corporation that I don't know what they have now...thirty-eight or forty plants around the United States, you know, all over, and it's all building material they make.

I: You say Jim Walter's Corporation?

R: This is the Celotex Corporation here, but it's a subsidiary of Jim Walter's Corporation from Tampa, Florida.
I: How big is it?

R: Well, I said they have about forty plants or something around there anyway. It's quite large.

Stop in tape.

I: Was this plant built here...it's built for what it's producing now.

R: Yeah, this plant was built for the product it's making right now. In fact, when we opened up this plant, it was strictly wood. Then they put this mineral board in a little later on and that, but we used to run strictly on wood products. It was built...in fact there used to be a sawmill here...Ford Motor Company had a mill here...was a great big sawmill down there right where the plant sets and then they...Celotex came in here and built this great big plant here. It's well, I don't know, I think it's a twenty-two million dollar plant. It's quite large.

I: How many men work in it?

R: Around three hundred...that's all...in the plant. Besides them, there are probably a thousand or more work in the woods to supply this. Quite a number of people work in the woods cuttin this wood and that for this.

I: It's a big help to the local economy.

R: Oh yes, I'm telling you, it's really somethin.

I: When was the plant built? It looks like a new place

R: It's new...about 195...around 1958. I've been...I've been with Celotex for eighteen years.

I: Well, what did Celotex have here in '56 and '57 when you started?

R: When I started?

I: I mean when you got the job.

R: I was the first man started to work for Celotex here. Yeah, all that was here was just a big opening. Of course I worked in the woods all the time for them...see they had the land and they started to log and I worked in the woods for 'em. Yeah, we had...one time here we had well, the forest manager, and the head forester that worked down in the office down here, and I was the District forester here and we had another District forester at Champion and
we had... I had one, two, three, four... I had five men under me working for me here besides four men working in the woods in equipment... bulldozers and trucks and that building roads. So most of our work was done... oh what'd it take about three years to build this plant, hey? About that... took about three years to build it. Well, then we started to bring in wood here for it and I don't remember just when we started in production.

Well, it must have been the sixties because I started in '59.

R: You started in '59

And it was still under construction

R: Yeah, it must have been in the sixties sometime that they started production here.

They started those test runs... they test run it for quite awhile before they (?)?

R: Yeah

I: Well, how is the pay for working here?

R: What do you mean? For hourly pay... for myself or...

I: Is it a good way to make a living?

R: Yeah, well... of course I'm on salary and the pay isn't too bad... of course I said... I'll tell you you make better is you're working by the hour... you'd make more money. I said... well I make over ten thousand dollars a year here... and that's good for this country. It's not good now for a man to spend... I dunno four years in school and that and then try to make a livin like that isn't too good. I've never had really... I've never had any schooling, you know, I've said, I've worked for forty-three years in the woods, so... and I've said I'm on my last year right now. I'm gonna retire next September... gonna call it quits then. So... but it's been real good work, I tell ya... I've no regrets.

in tape.

I: Do environmentalists bother you much about pollution or anything like that?

R: No... I said, we've had a real good goal in here and a real good relationship with the water resources and everything... commission and that, I said we have a real
terrific...oh here's another one coming.

Stop in tape.

R: ...keep an eye on us, you know, so we didn't pollute the lake and the stuff runs into the lake and that, and... but I said, they never caused us any trouble. We did pertnear everything...let me get this thing here...this is an aerial photo of our system. Now, our plant is up in here...up up here. Now, this stuff...this effluent that comes out of this water that's squeezed out of this board and that is pumped up a pipeline that runs through here and we have two ponds up here...this is a pond and this is a pond. And we built these up there.

I: Is that about a half a mile?

R: Yeah...I said, yeah it's just about a half mile up there. Well then, this water is pumped into these ponds all winter long...summer comes and the ground thaws out and that, the water is pumped on the pipeline...this pipeline runs through here, it runs down...way down to this field down here and now this is real sandy country down in here in the place and this is why they picked this. This is real light sand and this is all cleared. This has all been tiled underneath the ground, it's all been tiled and you can see the rows through here, see them rows?

I: Yeah, I see them.

R: That's a sprinkler system...this is a sprinkler system that turns and throws this water out on the ground...thows it way out and that, so maybe there'll be a bank of sprinklers right here that's working now...then automatically that'll switch off from this bank here maybe to one way over here that'll spray for so long, then it'll spray over here for so long and it keeps rotating like that. This water seeps through the ground through this tile and it seeps out and here's the drainage ditch then...this water when it drains out and comes down through this ditch here, it's they say, pure enough to drink, you know. Now, this field has been planted with different kind of grasses and this grasses they really thrive in there and it's greener than there was grass that you can't walk through it's so...it grew so good.

Stop in tape.

R: Everything runs out through here and then then there's a creek that runs through here and the water comes back into that creek and it comes right back into the lake here and it's all pure water. But they, when they're
spraying this, they keep a man up there, they keep testing this water and the stuff all the time so that it's no pollution in it or that.

I: How did you come up with this system?

R: Well, this was a company from down in...I don't know exactly, I think they were from this engineer...the guy from Texas I think. It's a real expensive system...they spent lots of money...I think over a half a million dollars puttin' that in, but it really works. It really is a good rig.

I: Did they do it voluntarily or?

R: Yeah, voluntarily. We tried...we tried two other systems before that. They had a system up there in tile where they used to...this water just run out...run out onto the ground in the woods; but then the starches and sugar and stuff in this effluent, it'd seal the ground right up and then run right off then see. But, this here system really works. We tried spraying with these sprays right in the woods...cripe, it killed everything that was...looked just like a forest fire went through there...killed everything deader than the devil up there. So, they come up with this system and it's really working real good.

I: It cost, you say a half a million dollars...

R: Well, I said that this is what I heard...I mean just hearsay and that...somethin like that. It must have cost that much anyhow because it's...it was quite a project.

I: Does it cost a lot to maintain it?

R: No, this is one thing. I said, I don't think they even had a man up there last summer watching this. Used to have a man up there all the time watching this; but I don't think they even got that now. They take a trip up there once in awhile to see if it's working and she goes all automatic.

End of Side A

I: What kind of tiles are under there...what are the tile made out of that are there?

R: Now I'm not to sure about that. I'm not too familiar with that but I think it's regular four-inch tile that's down five feet in the ground. I think it's five feet deep and I'm sure it's four-inch regular...
I: ...clay tile.

R: ...clay tile, yeah; and the piping I know...the pipeline and that's transite pipe, you know, that's cement manufactured pipe, you know, cement.

I: Oh, pieces that fit together.

R: Yeah...but what I said, you'd have to find out from somebody else besides me how that system works because I'm not too...I've been around it alot and that, but...

I: You said you worked in the woods for forty-three years?

R: Yup!

I: Did you ever drive any of the trucks like these?

R: You musta hadda job like that

R: Cripes almighty, I said I cut my teeth driving them trucks and tractors and...but I said I was a cruiser most of my life.

I: Timber cruiser?

R: Timber cruising, yeah, I said, yeah. I was a timber cruiser for Ford up here and that's how come I got up here with Celotex. See, Ford Motor Company sold Celotex land. They sold 'em two hundred and forty-three thousand acres...well I was cruising for Ford then and then I went to work for Celotex. Before that I worked for different companies and that...here, in Minnesota and Wisconsin and all over the place.

I: Was the Ford operation a big one?

R: Yeah, when I started working for 'em they had a half million acres...pertainall hardwood too. Most of it hardwood timber, yeah.

I: Maples and birch?

R: Yeah

I: What were they manufacturing from that?

R: Well, we had a sawmill here, one in Alberta...had that...we owned that...Ford owned that sawmill in Alberta and we had a big sawmill in Iron Mountain, one in Big Bay and
that Pequaming Mill out here. And we used to supply them mills, all them mills with logs and then, of course, they made...there was lot of wooden parts in cars back, you know, years ago and later on it was the station wagon. And, I'll tell you, the truck platforms and that for trucks was a big item, here, you know, for lumber and that and had an awful lot of lumber for crating and that they used for all the cars they shipped and that.

Stop in tape.

I: Have you ever sold any logs from the yard here to other companies?

R: Well, we pick out sawbolts here, see. The good big stuff and we have it sawed across the road over here and we make our own palets here and this is the only thing we have it sawed for is lumber for these palets. They have a disposable palet here they use and it's made out of half-inch lumber so it's all just cheap lumber they used for it.

I: Is it aspen?

R: Yeah, aspen...all aspen, yeah. So, that's the only thing that we sell.

I: You said that you had some competition.

R: Some what?

I: Competition from Mead, American Can Company...?

R: Well, Mead, American Can, Charmin, Kimberly Clarke, Consolidated, they're all after timber now. A few years back there wasn't none of 'em around here.

I: They're all asking for timber from this local area...within thirty miles of here.

R: Yeah...oh yeah...they're all...timber's/hard to get so they're they gotta get out and get her.

I: What about the quality of the timber now? Is it any better or any worse than it has been?

R: Well, I said, the quality of this stuff that we get, I mean, it's never changed, you know. It's aspen...it's always been hauled good wood and we get very little poor quality in wood as far that's concerned. I check for seconds when we're talking of quality in Popal...as long
as it's sound it's good. I mean, like hardwoods and that when you're sawing it for grades, that's a little different, but our wood...it's all good stuff, yeah.

I: Do you think the area can keep producing enough wood to keep the plant going here?

R: Oh, I said, for quite a few years yet, I believe. But I think they're gonna have to start using different species. See, we could use any species here as far...we don't have to use popal. Hell, we've made that board out of all different kinds of hardwoods and everything and they've tested out all well. The hardwood...it's using all maple and birch and stuff like that, this board gets a little heavy then and this is what bothers...the only thing that bothers is the freight rate. Freight rate is...

I: The weight?

R: The weight, yeah, see, it's heavier, the hardwood. Of course I said that when was made to use any species...when they built this plant here.

I: Oh, I thought you said it was made just for aspen.

R: No...no...no...no. This plant was made for using all different species. But they started using aspen and aspen was so damn easy use and made such good board, they stuck right with it, see.

I: Why is it so easy to use?

R: Because it's got real good fiber. Hell, there's no...aspen's got real good fiber in it as far as a wood product and it's easy to work with...real easy. It cooks up good, you know. I think they use a cooking process that's like two minutes or somethin.

I: Would you say that there's more aspen also here than there is anything else?

R: Oh no.

I: Supply?

R: Oh no, I said there's a better supply of hardwood, you know.

I: Better than aspen?

R: Oh yeah...I said this is primarily a hardwood country right through here...all through here. The only reason
we got this aspen here is the big fires they used to have here years ago. It's burnt the country over so many times that the aspen started growing and took ahold. Any more?

I: If I wanted to get a job here now, what requirements would I have to have? I'm not saying I do...

R: Yeah...well I said I don't know. The requirements...they'd want to...they'd want to know if you had a forestry background anyhow. You have to have some kind of forestry work to fill a job like this. When a man tells you that he's got a couple loads of aspen to sell, you gotta know the difference between aspen and...you gotta know the species and that, I suppose; and if they wanted to buy some timber or something...some land or something, you'd have to know how to go and look at it and cruise it and put a value on it.

I: Is that what you do? You say you buy the timber...you don't just write letters to the jobbers.

R: Well, when I'm buying timber...but now say maybe I have to go up and buy some stumpage...try and buy the timber from somebody...I have to be able to look at that and cruise it and figure out the value on it and you wouldn't wanna be gettin beat on it...buyin somethin that wasn't there or that, you know. But I said, I'm sure that you'd have to have a forestry background to, you know, to hold down a job like this which you're gettin...I hope anyhow.

I: Do you look at all the wood that you buy before it's cut?

R: Oh no. I said there...not the stuff that you buy...like this fellow that just brought this load in here...I said that that's the only time that I seen it, but I said, you know, you know what you're buyin when you...but what I'm talking about is if I was to go out and buy the wood, the stuff standing in the woods, see. And then I'd have to have someone job it for me. See, we do that too, you know. I go out and buy it and we haven't been doing it but we're starting to do some of that now or else maybe someone wants you to look at some timber. One of these guys that wants to buy this timber and they want you to go look at it and see if it's...what it's worth and that so they can buy it and then in turn sell it back to you. Well, here comes another one.

Stop in tape.

I: Do you get any wood from state land...state forests?
R: Oh yes...I said a lot of our wood...yeah that's another thing. We buy our wood...we got a lot of it on state land, federal forests, U.S. Forest Service land, Indian...the Bureau of Indian Affairs, we get a lot of wood from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They own a lot of land around here and most of their land is aspen land and we buy a lot of their sales. And then, of course private land too. We buy it from any place we can get it, you know.

I: Then there's a lot of people depending on Celotex.

R: Oh yes, there's a lot of people depending on us and...

I: You're depending on them.

R: And we're depending on them too, that's right

I: Does the state help out with consulting on matter?

R: Well, I said, they watch their own kinds and that to see that it's done right and that.

I: They contract...how do they do it?

R: Well, they put their land up for sale. They put their stumpage up for sale and these guys bid on it and whoever gets the sale then turns around and sells it to me. So, this is the way this is done. I said, I don't have anything to do with the state land or anything. All I have to do is with buying the timber from it. We very seldom ever bid on any of this land, see, in competition with these other guys. We let the jobbers...this logger do the bidding and then we buy the stumpage...the pulp wood from them, that's the way we do it.

I: Then you're getting logs from state land and the land of these other large companies and from the Indian lands and you must get some from small private land...

R: Oh yes, lots of it. Even down to one load. Yeah, I said, now I said, I have arrangements with one guy here...he's a trucker...he's got two big trucks...two big trucks that he hauls with. Well, these people come to him and ask him that say that I've got one load of pulp wood that I've cut. Would you haul it for me or get rid of it. So he'll go take that and haul that wood into us and we pay him for it and he in turn pays the guy. Lot of farmers...lot of farmers with...that'll cut just parttime. We take all their wood. I've got a long list here of jobbers that some of them they only haul in one - two loads a year. But we take everything...that they...anything. In fact, I hadda-a guy come in here the other day, he had six thousand
pounds on a load...that's all.

I: Yeah, the farmers can make some money in the winter when.

R: Oh yeah, when there's nothing else to do, they can cut a few loads of wood and bring it in here...we pay 'em for it and that's all there is to it.

I: You pay them with checks?

R: Oh yeah, pay with check everything...yeah, everything is paid by check.

I: I mean, you put their sale through the computer like you put the rest of the...

R: Oh yes...everything is...everything is done exactly the same way, yup. Think fast because I've gotta go pretty quick.

Stop in tape

R: This isn't as interesting a job as you might think it would be, you know. I mean it's a kind of a...to me it's a kind of a dull job because I've always had...the jobs I've had in the woods department, I was always out, you know. Either taking care of jobs in the woods or getting her logged or else I was cruising or something. I said, I've always liked to cruise better than anything. I said I used to love that and just everyday, everyday, cruise. Cripes, I said, I've spent half my life on snowshoes. I said, I've been out and I've been out cruising and camped out in the wintertime and I had one cruising job one time in Minnesota, another fellow and I we camped out up there for six months straight...right out in the woods. Yup, stayed right out in the brush. The only way we could get in there...they'd get into us, they'd fly in with a little float plane and land on a lake and that.

I: What's the name of that man, that trucker that hauls those small loads up for farmers and those people?

R: Well, he don't haul small loads, I mean they're not all small loads, they're big loads...he got big trucks...he got big diesel Fords...Hemila, Kenny.

I: I'd like to talk to him too. Where does he live?

R: He lives in Pelkie or someplace, I don't know. He's here everyday.

I: He's one of your jobbers?
R: Well, he just trucks. He hauls for all these different jobbers around here and that, yeah. Yeah, he's got two trucks and his dad has got one big truck...they're all brand new Ford trucks...real nice trucks and that.

Is that all he does then, is just drive trucks?

R: Yeah, that's all they do, yeah. Yeah, they don't cut anything or anything, they just haul for people.

I: I'm not familiar with something like this.

R: No, they just haul, yeah. Well, it beats...you know, most of these fellows, they can't afford these trucks...to buy them...drive them big trucks, they cost forty thousand dollars a piece. I said, you take this little guy that's in on getting a half a load a day or one load a day, or like that, he can't afford to have a truck like that, so this fellow that's got these trucks he does the hauling. He hauls for all different guys and that, you know.

I: Do you know Matt Oja?

R: I knew Matt, oh yeah

I: Did you work for him?

R: No I never

I: Work with him?

R: No, I said, Matt Oja...I did a little work around where they were and that and I've said I've known Matt for a long time...I was in this country pertnear the same time he was. He's older than I am though.

I: He said I could come over and talk to him.

R: Yeah, he's a pretty interesting old fellow, you know, you bet, yeah. He's the old timer.

End of Side B