

Crater Lake Camp Profile

Name: Crater Lake

Time Period: Summer, 1914

Theme: Logging, Tie Making for Continental Tie and Lumber Company

Significance in American History:

The logging industry sprang up in the West near mining, railroad construction, shipbuilding and large scale construction projects. These were places that needed timber and lots of it. Originally getting the logs to the sites where they were needed was dependent on building flumes and having rivers to float them from the forests where they were cut. As railroads spread across the country, the timber became easier to move longer distances; however the trend was still to supply endeavors close to the source of lumber as much as possible and the building of railroads was an endeavor that needed lumber ties. The logging industry attracted laborers who were recent immigrants as well as American born workers. It was a diverse and hardy breed that often traveled to wherever the demand and availability of lumber was high, some with, but most without, families. They worked hard and played hard. They were athletic and especially enjoyed playing baseball. The sawdust league that stretched from British Columbia to California was one the toughest amateur baseball leagues in the country. This year is significant in laboring history because of the Ludlow Massacre 100 miles north in Colorado on April 20, 1914.

Characters.

"Swede" Nordstrom. An immigrant from Sweden, he went to Minnesota where his uncle lived, but had a disagreement with his older cousin and was asked to leave. He started to go to Oregon when someone told him about the work in Northern New Mexico. He thought it was Mexico and wanted to see another country; so he ended up here by mistake, but was happy to find work with the Continental Tie and Lumber Company. "Swede" would speak with an Swedish accent, but even using a few words like "yah" instead of yes could give him some definition from the rest of the camp's characters.

"The Blue Nose". Called a "Blue Nose" because he was born in Canada, he worked the Rocky Mountain slopes of British Columbia, then into Klamath County, Oregon, until he witnessed a terrible fire that started in the sawmill down river, killed many loggers and demolished the camp where he was working. He heard that there were Douglas fir in the Southern Rockies; so wandered down to New Mexico and got work here although he thinks the trees here are a poor excuse for the ones he used to fell farther north. "Blue Nose" is very skiddish about fire.

Oscar Pope. (Based in part on Oscar Page) Born on a farm in Missouri, Oscar moved West and mastered every job in the logging camp near Wendling, Oregon. He courted and married a girl named Alice who died in childbirth. The baby boy died, too. Heart-broken he left Oregon to go back to the family farm, but stopped over here to make some money.

Torger. A Norwegian from Michigan, Torger worked the forests up north in the Great Lakes country until he got tired of the cold and decided to try working for CT&L. He misses Norwegian cooking and especially pickled fish. A hint of accent or words to indicate his Norwegian background would be nice.

Jimmy McGee. From an Irish family who came to the US to escape the Potato Famine, Jimmy logged in Maine and Minnesota as he drifted across the country and landed in New Mexico. Irish music, dances, songs and stories could be his specialty.

"Dirty Shirt" Sam. His whole family has been in logging since the gold rush in California where they started felling trees in the Sierra Nevada. He got his name because he doesn't like to change his shirt and is periodically thrown into the nearest water by his buddies to bath and wash that shirt despite his protest. His mother used to do his laundry in the Sierra Nevada. In fact, she and his sisters made almost as much money as the men by cooking and washing at the logging camp where he grew up.

Archie Binns. A man of all trades, Archie has been a bull-whacker, a stage coach driver, a blacksmith, a cook and just about any thing a person could do to make a few dollars out West. He can't seem to settle down anywhere anymore than he can settle for doing any one line of work. He has a slew of stories and/or songs about his travels and adventures.

Otto. A German immigrant who had worked in the mines of Elizabethtown, then north into Colorado, and finally in Ludlow, Colorado. When the Ludlow Massacre occurred last April, Otto lost his wife, two children and a brother in the machine gun fire, explosions and fire at the tent city where the striking workers were living. He left Ludlow and crossed the state border on foot to get away from the violence that had erupted between mine management and the workers who attempted to form unions that would negotiate better wages and work conditions. He was flat broke and signed on with the CT&N as a logger.

"Moose". Nicknamed perhaps because he's a noticeably big man or perhaps because he's equally small; because he eats like a moose or killed one once and ate it; maybe because he's as clumsy as a moose -- you make up the story and its details. He worked in the forests along the Pacific Coast in Washington, Oregon, and down to the Mt. Shasta region before hearing that there were beautiful señoritas by the dozens in New Mexico, and so he headed this way to see for himself.

Historical Background of Camp.

When a railroad was attracted to Cimarron, it's coming allowed the vast resources of timber in the area to be utilized. Lumber was in high demand for railroad ties, support beams for mining, and local housing. The St. Louis, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Railroad Company built a spur into Cimarron from Raton in 1906. It was called the swastika line. The trains were emblazoned with the swastika -- a symbol that was familiar to the area because of its use by Native Americans on pottery and jewelry. Ponderosa Pine (Western Yellow Pine to the loggers) and Douglas Fir (Red Spruce to the loggers) were the most prominent types of timber in this area.

Thomas Schomburg started the Continental Tie and Lumber Company (CT & L) and the Cimarron and Northwestern Railway (the C&N). Frank Springer was one of the financial investors. The C&N was incorporated in January, 1907. Plans were soon underway to purchase rights of way up the Ponil Canyon. The railroad began on the east side of Cimarron. It crossed the corner of the French Ranch and continued through the Chase Orchard. It forked at what we now know as Six-Mile Gate and continued up the North Ponil Canyon. It crossed the Ponil fifty-one times and was 22 miles long. The grade was steady at 2% as it climbed a total of 1400 feet. There was also a telephone line established parallel to the railroad to make communication easy. The C&N made it's first run on January 6, 1908.

Foremen from the lumber company established timber camps up and down the railway route. In areas with many trees, a small sawmill might have been built as well. Otherwise all the trees were sent to a nearby mill. If the mill was close, the logs were skidded. If the mill was further away, the logs were transported on a wagon. Two of the biggest camps in the area were at the crossing of the Metcalf and North Ponil Canyons, and at Ring, northwest of Ponil Park and ten miles north of Philmont.

The men were paid for the lumber delivered, rather than working for the railroad or lumber company. The three main products demanded were mine props, railroad ties and lumber for buildings. Mine props were 5-9 feet long with 7-8 inch tops. The most popular lumber was the peeled red spruce because it didn't rot in the damp mines. Mine props were somewhat delicate to make, and crews usually consisted of 2-3 men or a family. Lumber was rough cut in the local mills at Ponil or Ring, then sent by railroad down to Cimarron to be finished and dried. Railroad ties were hewed by hand, usually from red spruce. In 1913 a tie-treating business was built in Cimarron with great success.

Future of Camp.

Timber soon ran low, and the railroad built out thirteen miles from Ponil Park southwest to Bonito (north of what is now Dan Beard). A new mill was built in this location. The first five years of the railroad were the most profitable, and by 1916 the railway company had pulled back down the canyon. In 1922 tracks were laid up the Middle Ponil (to Philmont's Ponil Camp) and then along the South Ponil to where Pueblano is today. A road was even built to the top of Wilson Mesa. However, the company never acquired the timber rights in that area, and by 1930 the CT&L Company was gone.

Characters' Clothing and Appearance.

Henley knit shirts, flannel collared or cotton collarless shirts; fuller button-fly trousers of the period in heavy cottons (pants were worn about a size larger than we do now), twill, denim and wool; button on suspenders; and work boots for day. For Company Meeting: Nicer cotton shirts with collars, some vests of wool or leather for warmth, or jackets, roll neck sweaters, cardigan sweaters with collars or V-neck in dark and neutral colors and long johns; rougher, serviceable fabrics and clean shoes or boots for company meeting.

Accessories include: Handkerchiefs, white or subtle print, no bandanas; Pocket watches; Socks, optional colors; Leather work gloves; Hats, billed caps, period narrow brim and bowler styles but not brand new looking, well-worn. See photos and drawings in the books listed in the reference section and photos of models in the online training Chapter 3.

Appearance: Clean and orderly as much as possible; dirty only as work has made you; logging equipment and tools, well organized, hairstyles of the period were short -- to the ears and above nape of the neck -- but without "buzzed" or shaved areas. Some could be a little stragglier, but not long (shoulder) hair. No obviously dyed hair colors or personal jewelry.

Language.

There is a logging vocabulary and slang that is unique to that line of work. See former camp director reports and the references at the end of this profile for specific lists. English is the language spoken although flavored whenever possible with indications of the characters' first country origins. Accents and logging lingo need to be accurate. Research, practice and do the best you can to portray the characters respectfully. "Beverly Hillbillies" accents would not be appropriate.

Props.

Logging equipment and tools, musical instruments, cookware and kitchen utensils that are appropriate for the period if campers visit "the bunkhouse"; ball game equipment.

Activities.

Spar Pole Climbing, Tie Making, Company Meeting around the Campfire

Staff Roles and Responsibilities as Historical Interpreters.

Loggers including the Bull of the Woods, Buckers, Fallers, High Climbers, Peelers, Tie Makers, River Pigs, Bull Whackers, Choke Setters, Skid Greasers, Bolt Punchers, maybe a Chute Flagman.. or at least knowledge of these roles in logging.

Greeting Crews – In character, first person interp

Check in – Out of character, third person interp

Spar Pole Climbing -- In character

Tie Making -- In character

Company Meeting around the Campfire -- **In character**

Campers' Roles. New loggers**Positive Values to Depict at this Camp.**

- Willingness to work hard
 - Diversity of class, nationality, and ethnicity working as a team
 - Perseverance through ups and downs of fortune
 - Knowledge and respect of the forests and natural resources
 - Appreciation of music and how it describes different experiences and bridges people's differences.
 - Respect for one's living conditions, represented by both the way the "bunkhouse" is kept
- Relationship to the Goals of the BSA:**
- Respect for laboring class people, their hard work and contributions to society
 - Emphasis that all people, regardless of birth status, can aspire to become successful through hard work and diligence, despite the separation of social classes that existed at this time in history.
 - Knowledge of how mining and railroads stimulated logging as well as shaped and changed Western America
 - Acknowledging the diversity that has made America the country it is

References.

Available in Seton Museum Library and most libraries by interlibrary loan.

The Loggers. By the Editors of Time-Life Books with text by Richard L. Williams. Time-Life Books Series: The Old West, 1976. Excellent resource. See page 38 for "Lingo"; pages 128-167 for details of loggers experiences, stories, etc.; pages 118-127 for different logging jobs/roles; pages 131-137 for Paul Bunyan tales; great photos throughout for clothing, hats, props, settings.

Glory Days of Logging. by Ralph W. Andrews

This Was Logging. by Ralph W. Andrews

Out in God's Country: A History of Colfax County, New Mexico. by Larry Murphy

Philmont : A History of New Mexico's Cimarron Country. by Lawrence R. Murphy

New Mexico: A Brief Multi-History. by Ruben Salaz Marquez

New Mexico: A History by Joseph P. Sanchez, Robert L. Spude, and Arthur R. Gomez.

More Development is needed on music and stories that will be unique to the Crater Lake and Pueblano company meetings. They should not be heard anywhere else at Philmont and be specific to the characters, period and logging of these camps. Make on line searches.

