

# Life with Brice: Don West - 'General Bull of the Woods'

**LIFE, from Page 1:**  
from Highway 101. Don, from the ages of 14 through 17, worked on various ranches for his family. He remembers across from Pacific High School site years ago stood an old CCC camp building and camp.



Brice Wagner

**First job**  
His first job working in timber was at where the present Pacific High school sits now logging old growth timber with Vic Horner and Golden Allan.

Vic Horner taught Don many ins and outs of hand bucking the huge timber, and I am sure broke him in to working around skidding logs.

Don mentions the famous Madden Mine was still operating when he was a small child. Madden mine was south of where present Pacific High is located.

Don's early years took him to the woods bucking with a hand cutting saw, and also two man falling saws cutting timber. He stood many an hour on the "springboards" pulling on a "miserable whip."

**Favorite chainsaw**  
Don's favorite chain saw was a McCullough brand. He packed a McCullough 60 inch bar saw hundreds of times into the woods. He also experienced the early super heavy two man gas chain saws. He said "when you were on the stinger end you got

Contributed photo  
**RIGHT: Don West is shown with some of his co-workers and one of the huge old growth trees which they harvested back in the day.**

**CENTER: The cattle are shown grazing in the Marsh Ranch pastures with the Elk River shimmering in the foreground. The fall colors and fog have come to Elk River.**

**BELOW: The salmon have been running up the mouth of the Elk River recently.**

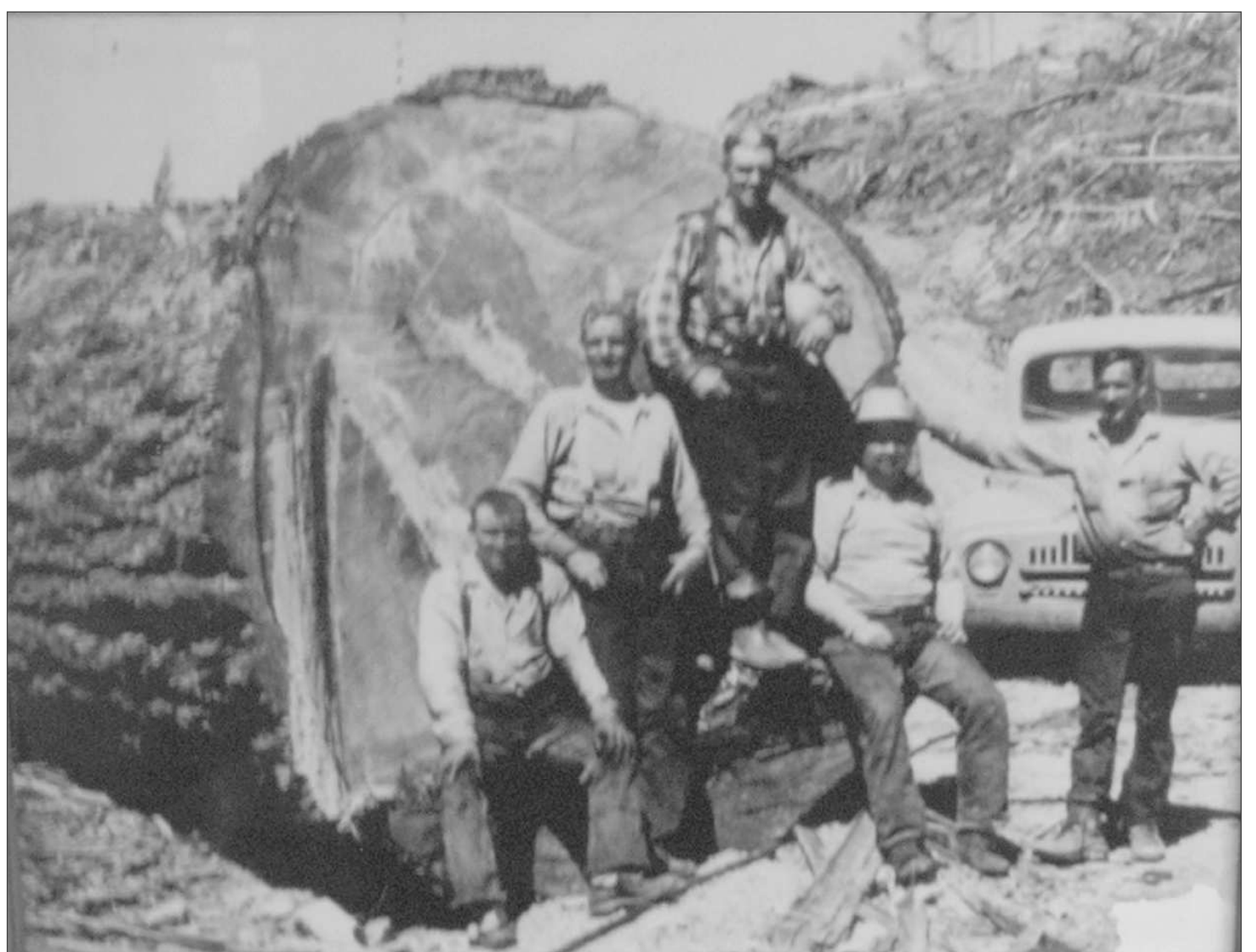
a lot of saw dust and pitch slinging on you as you worked the opposite end of the saw from the power head."

**Worked for lotsa' companies**

Don worked many areas of both Coos and Curry County. He cut huge old growth up Coos River as well as old growth up Sixes for Moore Mill and also cut timber for N.B Marsh logging up Sixes River. Some of the companies Don worked for are Coos Bay Lumber Company, N.S.P, Port Orford, N.B. Marsh Logging, Port Orford, Moore Mill lumber Company, Kerber Logging, Port Orford, Floyd Griffey Logging (no he didn't work for Griffey and Laird), and probably some others he didn't recall.

**Enjoyed hobbies**

His hobbies in all these years include wood carving, carving gunstocks, river and ocean fishing, and an avid hunter. On display in his living room is a nice set of horns that are three point on one side and four point on



the other. He harvested this buck on his 80th birthday.

Years back, Don and his wife and friends would camp at Blacklock Point and harvest rock oysters, dig clams, and surf fish. They would stay out on site for four or five days at a time. Now the area is closed off to vehicle traffic that stops large camps from existing.

In 1979 Don had a tree kick back and injure him. He was hurt in the shoulders, neck, and elbow. After much rehabilitation he tried to work the woods again but it just wasn't a go for him, and the State finally gave him total disablement through state comp.

**Thank you, Don ...**

The Port Orford News is very appreciative of all our veteran loggers who made it through the risks of cutting, bucking, yarding, hauling in our local natural resources,

Next week: Part II, "Our timber harvest ..."

**Fall is here ... some past history**

On Elk River the annual calf crop at Marsh Ranch puts on weight daily and it won't be long before the fall cattle (calves) shipment.

This represents most cow/calf cattle operations in Curry County, though some sell soon-



er because of the amount of pasture available to each operation, plus price offered. Night time temperatures have dropped so the change of season is on us. Pasture growth for cattle starts to slow down also with

colder nights that drop soil temperatures. The experts say ideally soil temperatures need to be 50 degrees plus for ideal pasture growth.

Marsh Ranch continues to irrigate to keep lots of pasture growing for the cattle waiting shipment day. Once calves are shipped, this takes off the pressure of fall grazing as with lower numbers of cattle grazing. Mid-winter last of December and for a time after that mother cows start birthing and the new calf raising starts over again for a new season. During that time Pacific storms come in and cattle must be watched and fed massive amounts of local grown grass/clover hay.

**A 'Scout' on Humbug ...**

Port Orford/Langlois lifetime resident Jack Smith says, "I have seen geese flying south in the first week this September. As well as other migratory."

I now think of Jack, especially every time northbound on Highway 101 in the Humbug

area and glancing up on the southeastern part of Humbug I'll remember Jack saying, "I ate lunch one day on top of Humbug in my International scout 4x4."

How was this possible a reader will ask?

Well, Jack Smith was involved in logging that particular area many years ago for the folks that owned Humbug Lodge. The parcel that was Humbug Lodge was many acres also going up that face of Humbug Mountain. Jack drove his 4-wheel drive Scout to the top or near top one day and ate his lunch.

Jack said they short-logged the timber shipping it. Andy Trivett and Albert Billings hauled the logs with their short logger trucks. The short logs were hauled to Port Orford Plywood on Cape Blanco Road.

P.O. Plywood was a veneer plant operation, and never adding on a finish end to make plywood as a finished product, only raw veneer.

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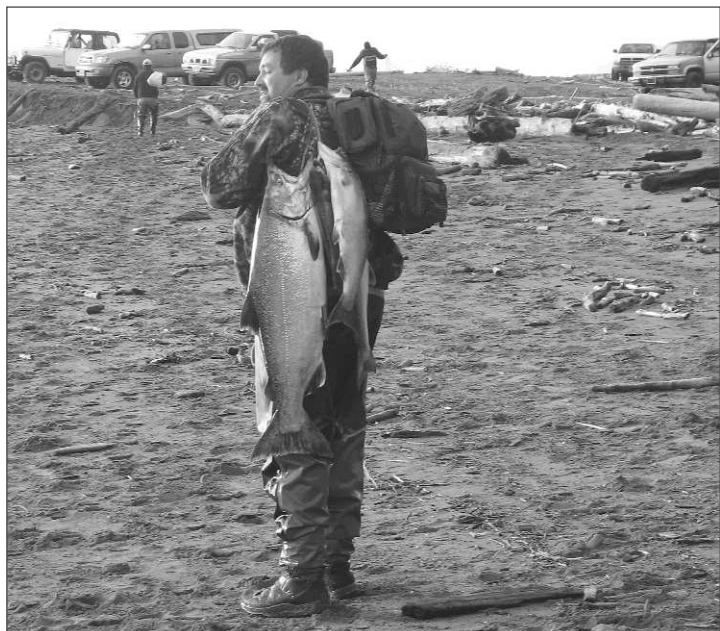
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